

Course Outline

Education, politics and society

Cross listed Elective

Course Instructor: Dr. Sriti Ganguly, JSLH

In the popular imagination, formal education is always perceived as positive, promising and neutral. However, time and again scholars have challenged the popular perception of formal education as an apolitical force in society. Intellectuals and sociologists of education, from Paulo Freire to Pierre Bourdieu, Michael Apple, Henry Giroux, Stephen Ball and Annette Lareau, all have unpacked both the danger and promise inherent in education to reproduce as well as resist existing hierarchies. This course seeks to provide students with insights into the critical sociological perspectives on education. How have different scholars who have shaped the field of sociology and politics of education approached its role in society? What kind of relationship and interaction does education share with other social institutions like family, caste, class, race, religion and the state? What transpires within schools and classrooms? Can the same classroom produce different experiences? Can education be used as a tool for resistance?

While the course will begin by introducing students to sociological theories on education and theoretical frameworks, it will use ethnographic studies, particularly from the Indian context to shed light on classroom processes, socialization, the linkages between family, home and school and questions of privilege, merit and disadvantage. The last module of the course will also delve into some aspects of educational policy.

Learning objectives

Unpacking the linkages between education and society

Exploring the field of sociology of education and the works of its key thinkers- 1) Functionalist theories, 2) Education and Social Reproduction and 3) Education and Resistance

Understand education vis a vis social stratification

Understanding concepts: privilege, cultural capital, meritocracy, ideological state apparatus

Understand classroom transactions, power and the role of the teacher in reproduction and resistance

Understanding equality of opportunity, educational disparities based on social identities.