

EDU 310/610: THE AMERICAN SCHOOL (3 CREDITS)
TUESDAY & THURSDAY | 9:30AM-10:50AM
SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY | FALL 2025

Tuesday Lecture Meeting

Mario Rios Perez, PhD (he, him, his)
Classroom: Hall of Languages 214
Office Hours: Tuesdays, 12:00pm-1:30pm
Office Room: Huntington Hall 404
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Thursday Discussion Meeting

<i>Calissa A. Brown (she, her, hers)</i>	<i>Tori Pratt (they, them)</i>
Classroom: Newhouse 1 212	Classroom: Hall of Languages 214
Email: cbrown66@syr.edu	Email: sdpratt@syr.edu

Caitlin Cafiero (she, they)
Classroom: Marshall Square Mall 208B
Email: cscafier@syr.edu

CATALOG DESCRIPTION

Issues that impinge on teachers, teaching, and schools in today's society.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

You will identify policies and laws that have shaped the development of the teaching profession.
You will summarize how social, economic, and political contexts influence public education.
You will explain how ideas about democracy, inclusion, and equity are reflected in school structures.
You will devise actionable policies or feasible instructional plans that will reshape educational practice.

Commented [MP1]: Personalized SLO's. Made theme clearer and directed them to students.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION & GOALS

Schools have long been central to American society, serving as beacons of economic opportunity, pillars of democratic change, and symbols of social equality. They have also been instruments of exclusion, inequality, and colonialism, reflecting and reinforcing broader societal structures. This course will explore how these roles have evolved over time and the implications for contemporary education. By examining a wide range of topics and considering the broader social context, we will uncover the complex interplay between schools and society and gain a deeper understanding of current educational debates in the United States.

This course will examine schools as dynamic institutions that have evolved over time. We will begin by exploring the various definitions of an American school and the diverse educational experiences and institutions it encompasses. Throughout the semester, we will revisit these themes to understand how people have been educated and why schools have remained so central to the American democratic project. We will also delve into the reasons why policymakers and community leaders prioritize education. For example, policymakers may support schools for economic benefits, while community leaders may value them for their role in civic engagement.

Overall, this course aims to examine how the social and political functions of American schools have evolved over time. By understanding and analyzing these changes, the goal is to foster a dialogue on current educational debates that often involve schools playing various political and economic roles.

Please note that we reserve the right to alter and modify the readings, schedule, due dates, and other aspects of this syllabus.

GRADING

Scale

A	94-100%	B	84-87	C	74-77	F	65-below
A-	90-93	B-	80-83	C-	70-73	I	Incomplete
B+	88-89	C+	78-79	D	66-69		

100 points possible

15 points: Education Goals Paper (due week 4)

20 points: Mid Semester Assignment (due week 9)

25 points: Final Assignment (due week 15)

30 points: Discussion Section & Related Assignments

10 points: Participation & Engagement

Commented [MP2]: Made participation grade more explicit. In prior iterations, these points were part of the discussion section grade.

MAJOR ASSIGNMENTS

Graduate students will receive slightly distinct instructions for each assignment.

Educational Goals Paper (15%): Write a 3 page (approximately 750 words), double-spaced paper that discusses your and your family's perspective on the social purposes of education. Due on Friday, September 19th by 11:59pm. More TBA.

Mid Semester Assignment (20%): Write a 6 page (approximately 1,500 words), double-spaced paper that critically examines the documentary film we view on week 6 and your participation in the clinical simulation. Due on Friday, October 24th by 11:59pm. More TBA.

Final Assignment (25%): Develop a culminating project that examines the readings, lectures, and discussions. Due on Friday, December 5th by 11:59pm. More TBA.

Discussion Section & Related Assignments (30%): Complete Blackboard posts and other related class assignments and activities as determined by your teaching assistant. The specificity of this part of your grade is addressed in the syllabus for your discussion section.

Participation & Engagement (10%): We value your ideas, analysis, and experiences and therefore look forward to your active participation in class. This part of your grade encompasses your engagement in discussions and lectures, preparedness in class, and participation level in classroom activities. Missing class or being disengaged will adversely affect your grade. I welcome you to meet with me or your TA if you have any questions about any concerns regarding your participation and engagement in class.

GENERAL POLICIES

Accommodations

SU values diversity and inclusion; we are committed to a climate of mutual respect and full participation. There may be aspects of the instruction or design of this course that result in barriers to your inclusion and full participation in this course.

The TAs and I invite you to meet with us to discuss strategies and/or accommodations (academic adjustments) that may be essential to your success and to collaborate with the Center for Disability Resources (CDR) in this process. CDR is responsible for coordinating disability-related academic accommodations and will work with you to develop an access plan.

Commented [MP3]: Made the language more welcoming.

Since academic accommodations may require early planning and generally are not provided retroactively, please contact CDR as soon as possible to begin this process. Visit their website at <https://disabilityresources.syr.edu>, call them at (315) 443-4498, or email them at disabilityresources@syr.edu for more information. We are happy to support you in the process.

Discussion Section with Your TA

Your discussion section is not only a required component of this course but also involves a significant part of your learning this semester. Attending, showing engagement, and completing assignments in your discussion section will ensure that you succeed in this course. I encourage you to consult with your TA for more information about their expectations, assignments, and office hours. The TAs welcome you to meet with them as they are here to help you succeed and learn the material in this course.

Commented [MP4]: Made language more positive and welcoming.

Late and Missed Assignments

We understand that there are many situations that will impact your ability to successfully meet deadlines in this course. In those instances, we welcome you to email or meet with us to make alternative plans. If no arrangement has been made have been and agreed between you and your TA, the standard deduction for all late assignments will be 2.5% per day the assignment is past due.

Commented [MP5]: Made language more empathetic.

Attendance & Absences

You are required to attend lectures and discussion sections. To confirm your attendance, we will circulate a sign-in sheet in class. You are responsible for signing the sheet when it is circulated, and you may not sign it for other students. If a peer signs in for you, both you and your peer will be marked absent for that day, and it will be considered a violation of SU's Academic Integrity Policy.

Commented [MP6]: Made expectations more explicit.

Excused absences are family and personal emergencies, illnesses, and faith-based observances. Contact your TA at least one week in advance of a planned absence. Showing up to class late or leaving early without prior communication with your TA will be considered an absence. In the case of illness or emergency, contact your TA as soon as possible as you may need to provide formal documentation.

Commented [MP7]: Added an "excused absence" statement.

Unexcused absences will adversely affect your overall grade in this course. You are allowed a total of two unexcused absences for the entire semester. Two absences equal one week of classes. Each successive absence, in lecture or discussion, will reduce your final grade by 2.5% for each day missed. Missing too many class sessions, excused or unexcused, will negatively impact your final grade and it is likely that you may fail the course.

If you miss classes for a medical or personal reason, contact your academic advisor in the Office of Academic & Student Services or in your home school/college. They will contact us regarding your class absences. The SU Dean of Students Office will help you notify us if you will be absent for an extended period (more than 48 hours). For more information, visit Student Outreach and Support.

Faith Tradition Observances

SU's [faith-based observance notification and policy](#) recognizes the diversity of faiths represented among the campus community and protects your rights to observe religious holidays according to your religious tradition. Under the policy, you are provided an opportunity to make up course requirements that may be missed due to a religious observance, provided you notify the professor or your TA no later than the academic drop deadline. For observances occurring before the drop deadline, notification is required at least two academic days in advance. Student deadlines and the notification form are posted in MySlice under Enrollment -> Religious Observance.

Academic Integrity Policy

As a pre-eminent and inclusive student-focused research institution, Syracuse University considers academic integrity at the forefront of learning, serving as a core value and guiding pillar of education. Syracuse University's Academic Integrity Policy provides students with the necessary guidelines to complete academic work with integrity throughout their studies. Students are required to uphold both course-specific and university-wide academic integrity expectations such as crediting your sources, doing your own work, communicating honestly, and supporting academic integrity. The full Syracuse University Academic Integrity Policy can be found by visiting class.syr.edu, selecting, "Academic Integrity," and "Expectations and Policy."

Upholding Academic Integrity includes the protection of faculty's intellectual property. Students should not upload, distribute, or share instructors' course materials, including presentations, assignments, exams, or other evaluative materials without permission. Using websites that charge fees or require uploading of course material (e.g., Chegg, Course Hero) to obtain exam solutions or assignments completed by others, which are then presented as your own violates academic integrity expectations in this course and may be classified as a Level 3 violation. All academic integrity expectations that apply to in-person assignments, quizzes, and exams also apply online.

Students found in violation of the policy are subject to grade sanctions determined by the course instructor and non-grade sanctions determined by the School or College where the course is offered. Students may not drop or withdraw from courses in which they face a suspected violation. Any established violation in this course may result in course failure regardless of violation level.

Reusing Your Own Work & Self-Citation

Your success in this course is based on your continual reengagement with the material. It is for this reason that we expect you to submit new work for assignments. We understand that in some cases it might seem natural for you to copy material that you have already completed in this course or in other related courses. In exceptional cases, we will welcome you to build on prior work, but this will require that you have written approval from your Teaching Assistant in this course and from your previous instructor. Our intention with this policy is to encourage the development of current work, even when you are building on prior experiences and research.

Using Artificial Intelligence (AI) Software

Based on the specific learning outcomes, goals, and assignments in this course, the use of generative artificial intelligence to complete assignments will only be permitted when explicit permission has been granted by me or your TA. Consult the instructions for each assignment, quiz, and exam for more information about what AI tools are permitted and to what extent, as well as citation requirements. If no

Commented [MP8]: Rewrote and re-titled this section. It was previously titled, "Using your own work." It is much clearer, explicit, and welcoming.

instructions are provided for a specific assignment, then no use of any AI tool is permitted. Any use of generative AI beyond that which is detailed in the instructions for each assignment is explicitly prohibited except when documented permission is granted.

Commented [MP9]: Made this statement more explicit and aligned it with SU policy.

Video & Audio Recording in Class

Requests to record for disability accommodations should be made to the [Center for Disability Resources](#). Since accommodations may require early planning and are not provided retroactively, students should contact CDR regarding accommodation needs as soon as possible.

Commented [MP10]: Reorganized the sentence structure and organization to make it clearer.

If you would like to record or photograph any class session, other than for the reasons supported by CDR, you must first request permission from me and must agree that your recordings or class transcripts will not be shared with anyone else. If you have a compelling reason to share any classroom recording or photograph with anyone outside of this class, you must first have written permission from me. If your recording captures student images and/or a class discussion, you also need to have written permission from every student in the course. Publishing recorded class sessions (even a small portion of them) or transcripts on social media or through any platform for wider public distribution is strictly prohibited. If you violate this policy, you are subject to referral to the [Office of Community Standards](#).

Technology in the Classroom

We value the use of technology for educational purposes but believe that using it inappropriately in class will obstruct your own learning and that of your peers. Tech devices can become distractions and disrupt the overall learning environment. Earbuds or headphones are not allowed unless approved by me, as they can limit active participation and prevent you from listening to me, your TAs, and your peers. Phones, laptops, and tablets are permitted for educational purposes only, meaning they should be used for activities directly related to the course material. Using loud or disruptive devices or engaging in online activities that are not relevant to the class are considered violations of this policy. The TAs and I will periodically implement “no tech-times” to encourage focused listening, critical thinking, and engagement with the material.

Commented [MP11]: Made the language more welcoming

Violating this policy will result in a loss of participation points, being marked absent, and/or being asked to leave the class. Requests to use technology for disability accommodations should be made to the Center for Disability Resources.

Expectations When Meeting Online

Although this course is taught in-person, there will be occasions (i.e., inclement weather, guest speaker visits, travel schedules, etc.) when we will meet online as a group. Your success in this course depends significantly upon your presence and engagement, including when we meet online. To maintain the same level of interaction and collaboration we expect that you will have your camera on during these online synchronous meetings and that you will participate in activities via the chat room or mic. There is no way for us to verify your attendance and participation unless we see you. You will be counted absent if you fail to turn on your camera. If you cannot turn on your camera for the entirety of an online meeting, please notify your TA over email 24 hours in advance.

Commented [MP12]: Clarified my expectations and made language more welcoming.

Email Correspondence

Most of the communication occurring outside of our class meetings times will be via email, so check your SU email account regularly, especially when there is inclement weather as we might cancel class or move to an online format.

To expedite an email response from us, it is critical that you include the course number and the main idea of your message in the subject line (e.g., "EDU 310/610: Would Like to Meet About Final"), a salutation (e.g., "Dear Professor Perez), and a clear message. Following this method will help us respond to you in an adequate timeframe given the high volume of non-course related emails we receive.

Office Hours

We encourage you to visit us during our weekly office hours. We set these office hours aside for you. While we enjoy having many different students in this class, from education majors and minors to students from across the university, our class time does not always allow for substantial one-on-one conversations. Come visit us!

Commented [MP13]: Added this statement to encourage students to visit me and TAs during office hours.

WEEKLY READINGS

You will be happy to know that there is no material you need to purchase for this course. Everything will be available digitally on our [Blackboard](#) page. Log in during the first week of the semester to ensure you have access to all course content. If you have difficulty logging in, contact ITS Service Centers at help@syr.edu or (315) 443-2677. If you have difficulty accessing the course material or if you need support printing the readings, contact your TA early in the semester to make appropriate arrangements and accommodations.

The readings identified as recommended are required for graduate students in EDU 610. While this material is optional for EDU 310 students, we strongly recommend you consult it to gain a deeper understanding of the weekly topic.

Commented [MP14]: added more emotion and first person conversation, and clarified expectations.

SCHEDULE: READINGS & ASSIGNMENTS

Week 1 INTRODUCTION TO THE COURSE

- Tues, Aug 25 • Objectives, Expectations, and Reflections
- Thurs, Aug 28 • This will be your first discussion section meeting. Check the "Groups" tab in Blackboard for your TA assignment and meeting location

Commented [MP15]: In general, i cut out out of class readings and integrated the critical parts in my lectures or in classroom discussion. I went with "less" can be more, in some instances.

COMPLETE STUDENT SURVEY AND UPLOAD PROFILE PHOTO VIA BLACKBOARD BY FRIDAY, AUG 29.

Week 2 COMPETING GOALS OF AMERICAN EDUCATION

- Tues, Sept 2 • Required: bell hooks, "Chapter 2: Democratic Education," in bell hooks, *Teaching Critical Thinking: Practical Wisdom* (Routledge, 2009): 13-18.
- Required: James Baldwin (1963), "A Talk to Teachers," *Counterpoints* 107: 123-131.
- Recommended: Heather Hollingsworth and Jamie Stengle, "Oklahoma Ideology Test for Teachers from New York and California Draws Criticism," *The Associated Press*, August 19, 2025.
- Thurs, Sept 4 • Discussion Section With TA

Week 3 EDUCATION AS COLONIZATION

- Tues, Sept 9 • Required: Listen to audio, Martin Luther King, Jr., "The Role of Education in the Civil Rights Movement," Sims Hall, Syracuse University, July 15, 1965 (45 min speech).
- Required: Bryan McKinley Jones Brayboy & K. Tsianina Lomawaima (2018), "Why Don't More Indians Do Better in School? The Battle between U.S. Schooling & American Indian/Alaska Native Education," *Dædalus* 177, 2: 82-94.

- Recommended: Watch video, *How the US Stole Thousands of Native American Children* (13 min, 2019).
- Recommended: Deirdre Almeida (1997), "The Hidden Half: A History of Native American Women's Education," *Harvard Educational Review* 67, 4: 757-772.

Thurs, Sept 11 ● Discussion Section With TA

Week 4 INVENTING A COMMON PURPOSE

- Tues, Sept 16 ● Required: Benjamin Justice (2023), "Schooling as a White Good," *History of Education Quarterly* 63, 2: 154-178.
- Required: Audrey Thomas McCluskey (1997), "'We Specialize in the Wholly Impossible': Black Women School Founders and Their Mission," *Signs* 22, 2: 403-426.
 - Recommended: Watch video, Center for K-12 Black History & Racial Literacy (2022), *Dr. Jarvis Givens: The Art of Black Teaching* (52 min).
 - Recommended: Watch documentary, PBS, "How Muslims Influenced Thomas Jefferson and America's Founders" (2024, 24 min).

Thurs, Sept 18 ● Discussion Section With TA

EDUCATION GOALS PAPER: DUE FRIDAY, SEPT 19th BY 11:59PM

Week 5 URBAN SCHOOLING & THE SURVEILLANCE STATE (Brown & Perez)

- Tues, Sept 23 ● Required: Rebecca Epstein, et.al., *Girlhood Interrupted: The Erasure of Black Girls' Childhood* (Center on Poverty & Inequality, Georgetown Law, 2017).
- Recommended: James D. Anderson, "Chapter 6: The Black Public High School and the Reproduction of Caste in the Urban South, 1880-1935," in JD Anderson, *The Education of Blacks in the South, 1860-1935* (University of North Carolina Press, 1988): 186-237.
 - Classroom Guest: Dr. Ben Dotger, Syracuse University

Thurs, Sept 25 ● Discussion Section With TA

Week 6 THE CRIMINALIZATION OF BLACK GIRLS IN SCHOOLS/FILM WEEK

- Tues, Sept 30 ● Watch Film in Class: *Pushout: The Criminalization of Black Girls in Schools* (79 minutes, 2019), A film by Monique W. Morris and Jacoba Atlas.
- Required: Selection from Monique Morris, *Sing a Rhythm, Dance a Blues Liberatory Education for Black and Brown Girls* (The New Press, 2022): pages 43-85.
 - Recommended: Kearl, Benjamin, Renae D Mayes, & Riley Drake (2024), "Affirming Black Joy & Homeplace: A Call to Action for Practitioner Preparation Programs." *Theory into Practice* 63, 1: 58-67.

Thurs, Oct 2 ● Discussion Section With TA

Week 7 CRITICAL ISSUES IN EDUCATION: CLINICAL SIMULATIONS

- Tues, Oct 7 ● Participate in Clinical Simulations with the School of Education's Center for Experiential Pedagogy and Practice (Location TBD)
- Thurs, Oct 9 ● Participate in Clinical Simulations with the School of Education's Center for Experiential Pedagogy and Practice (Location TBD)

Week 8 STATE & FEDERAL POLICIES

- Tues, Oct 14 ● NO MEETING ON TUESDAY, IT IS FALL BREAK. OUR NEXT MEETING IS THURSDAY.

- Required: Bettina Love, "Chapter 2: Black Children at Risk," in B. Love, *Punished for Dreaming: How School Reform Harms Black Children and How we Heal* (St. Martin's Press, 2023): 42-61.
- Required: Watch video, Vox Media (2022), *Why US Schools are at the Center of Trans Rights* (9 min).
- Required: Watch video, Vox Media (2019), *How Florida Legally Terrorized Gay Students* (12 min).
- Recommended: *Parental Rights in Education Bill*, Florida House of Representatives Bill (HB) 1557, 2022.

Thurs, Oct 16 ● Lecture or Discussion Section With TA

Week 9 CRITICAL SIMULATIONS DEBRIEF & MIDSEMESTER WORKSHOP

- Tues, Oct 21 ● Guest, Dr. Ben Dotger, Tori Pratt, and CEPP
- Thurs, Oct 23 ● Discussion Section With TA

MID SEMESTER ASSIGNMENT: DUE FRIDAY, OCTOBER 24th BY 11:59PM

Week 10 CONSTRUCTING dis/ABILITY & INCLUSION (Cafiero)

- Tues, Oct 28 ● Required: Zeus Leonardo & Alicia A. Broderick (2011), "Smartness as Property, A Critical Exploration of Intersections Between Whiteness and Disability Studies," *Teachers College Record* 13, 10: 2206-2232.
- Required: Amy E. Fisher, Benjamin W. Fisher, & Kirsten S. Railey (2021), "Disciplinary Disparities by Race & Disability: Using DisCrit Theory to Examine the Manifestation Determination Review Process in Special Education in the United States," *Race Ethnicity and Education* 24, 6: 755-769.
- Recommended: Watch documentary, *Forget Me Not: Inclusion in the Classroom* (Rota6 Films, 2021: 100 min).
- Thurs, Oct 30 ● Discussion Section With TA

Week 11 CONFERENCE WEEK & PREPARING FOR THE FINAL PROJECT

- Tues, Nov 4 ● Required: Read Final Project Instructions
- Required: Review student projects that are posted on Blackboard
- Thurs, Nov 6 ● Discussion Section With TA

Week 12 THE RIGHT TO LEARN & TEACH

- Tues, Nov 11 ● Required: Watch video, Independent Lens (2017), *Jose and Mr. Ramos: The Dreamer* (8 min).
- Required: Kate Rousmaniere, "Chapter 11: The Myth that Good Teachers are Born, Not Made," In Sherman Dorn & David A. Gamson, eds., *23 Myths About the History of American Schools: What the Truth Can Tell us, and Why it Matters* (Teachers College Press, 2024): 109-117.
- Recommended: Diana D'Amico Pawlewicz, "Chapter 15: The Myth of Harmful Teacher Tenure," In Sherman Dorn & David A. Gamson, eds., *23 Myths About the History of American Schools: What the Truth Can Tell us, and Why it Matters* (Teachers College Press, 2024): 149-157.

Thurs, Nov 13 • Discussion Section With TA

Week 13 CRITICAL FUTURES OF EDUCATION

Tues, Nov 18 • Required: Bettina L. Love, "Our Schools Need Abolitionists, Not Reformers," In Denisha Jones & Jesse Hagopian, eds., *Black Lives Matter at School: An Uprising for Educational Justice* (Haymarket Books, 2020): 131-133.
 • Required: Watch video, Bettina L. Love (2014), *Hip Hop, Grit, and Academic Success* (15 min).
 • Recommended: Valerie Hill-Jackson, "...And Then There Were None: Reversing the Exodus of Black Women from the Teaching Profession," In Ayana Kee Campoli & Dyanis Conrad-Popova, eds., *Invisible Threads: Working Conditions, Interpersonal Relationships, and Turnover Among Black Female Teachers* (Emerald Publishing Limited, 2017): 9-48.

Thurs, Nov 20 • Discussion Section With TA

Week 14 NO CLASS-THANKSGIVING BREAK

Tues, Nov 25 • No Class

Thurs, Nov 27 • No Class

Week 15 FINAL PROJECT WORKSHOP & DISCUSSION

Tues, Dec 2 • Required: In-Class Activities

Thurs, Dec 4 • Discussion Section With TA: Final Project Preparation

FINAL ASSIGNMENT DUE ON FRIDAY, DECEMBER 5TH BY 11:59PM (EST)

Commented [MP16]: I moved up the due date one week and provided students more prep time.