

# Sociology of Education Syllabus

## SOCI 385 – Fall 2024

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*Educational systems themselves are thus, in a sense, ideologies. They rationalize in modern terms and remove from sacred and primordial explanations the nature and organization of personnel and knowledge in modern society.*

- Meyer (1977: 66)

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**Professor:** Dr. Erick Axxe (he/they)  
**Office:** Mills 220  
**Class time:** TR 9:45-11 am

**Email:** axxe@hendrix.edu  
**Student hours:** MWF10-11AM or by [appointment](#)  
**Class location:** Mills 307

### Course Description

Education is a core social institution in our society. It is comprised of a set of social structures that organize our lives and meet our needs as humans. This course applies a sociological lens to the study of education, with a particular focus on the U.S. context.

It is organized into four sections. First, we learn the history of education and sociological theories used to understand the institution. Second, we empirically examine education's impact on outcomes such as learning, social mobility, health, and identity formation. Third, we investigate the structural, organizational, group, and micro-interactional forces that shape students' educational experiences and outcomes. Fourth, we examine contemporary changes to educational structures like its privatization, its integration with athletics, and its changing admission practices. Our course focuses on various levels of education, including K-12 and higher education, as well as the diversity of schools and schooling processes.

This course meets in person two times a week (see above for specific details). Throughout the semester, students are expected to submit reading notes, complete course assignments, complete a midterm and a final exam, and develop a group research project, which will include a paper and presentation. Course materials will be available via Microsoft Teams. The syllabus is subject to change; any changes would be announced during class and on Teams.

### Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course, students will be able to:

- **Understand** the central tenets of various sociological theories of education and educational inequality and **identify** these theoretical perspectives in contemporary explanations, debates, and policy decisions;

- **Interpret** scientific articles, specifically statistical and qualitative data presented in figures, graphs, narratives, and other visual formats, **describe** the key results shown within them, and **draw conclusions** from these data about trends in educational inequality;
- **Reflect** on their own standing and experiences in the hierarchical educational system and how it is related to their family background and ascribed characteristics.
- **Analyze** educational programs through an empirical analysis and **connect** those patterns to sociological theories.

## Classroom Etiquette

Please support each other and the instructor by giving your full attention and participation during class, and avoid engaging in distracting behaviors. You are strongly encouraged to ask questions and participate in discussions. For productive discussions, it is essential that both students and the professor come prepared by completing the assigned readings. Differing points of view should be treated with respect. Disagreements are expected, and expressing different viewpoints is encouraged, provided it is done respectfully. Hostile or derogatory comments or behaviors will not be tolerated.

## Required Materials and/or Technologies

- Please bring a laptop, tablet, or cell phone to class.
- All other materials (readings, videos, podcasts, etc.) will be posted on Teams.

[Course Schedule](#) [click link to see, subject to change]

# Grading and Faculty Response

## How Your Grade is Calculated

Assignment Category	Weight
Reading notes	25%
Course assignments	30%
Midterm exam	10%
Final exam	15%
Final project	20%

## Descriptions of Major Course Assignments

### Reading notes

**Description:** On days when a reading is assigned, students must submit their reading notes. These notes should include definitions of key terms, questions about themes that are unclear, and at least one discussion question. Reading notes are due by 9:00 AM on class days.

**Academic Integrity and Collaboration:** You must complete assignments independently, without collaborating with your peers, unless the instructions explicitly allow it.

### Course assignments

**Description:** Our final project (paper and presentation) will be scaffolded into smaller assignments throughout the semester. Assignments will vary from analyses of data to infographics on a topic. Please refer to the course schedule for due dates.

**Academic Integrity and Collaboration:** You must complete assignments independently, without collaborating with your peers, unless the assignment instructions state otherwise. You may use other course materials (i.e., notes and readings) to complete these assignments.

### Midterm and final exams

**Description:** The midterm and final exams will be taken during class time. The exams will consist of prompts to which you will respond. The exams may also include a limited number of multiple-choice questions. You will be allowed to bring in a sheet of paper (8.5 x 11 inches) with hand-written notes to reference during the exams. The exam dates are October 15<sup>th</sup> and December 5<sup>th</sup>.

**Academic integrity and collaboration:** Exams should be your own original work. In formal assignments, you should follow ASA style to cite the ideas and words of your research sources.

### Final Project (paper and presentation)

**Description:** You will conduct an analysis of an educational institution and present your results as a paper and presentation. Final projects will be completed in small groups (3-4 students). Papers and presentations will be submitted on December 10<sup>th</sup> at 8:30 am. Additional details will be distributed during class on September 26<sup>th</sup>.

**Academic integrity and collaboration:** Your written assignments should be your own original work. In formal assignments, you should follow ASA style to cite the ideas and words of your research sources. You are encouraged to ask a trusted person to proofread your assignments before you turn them in but no one else should revise or rewrite your work. In general, you are prohibited in university courses from turning in work from a past class to your current class, even if you modify it.

### Late Assignments

Please refer to Teams for due dates. Due dates are set to help you stay on pace and to allow timely feedback that will help you complete subsequent assignments.

Unexcused, late assignments will receive a maximum of 85% of the original grade. *Assignments will not be accepted a week after the original deadline.*

### **Instructor Feedback and Response Time**

I am providing the following list to give you an idea of my intended availability throughout the course.

- **Preferred contact method:** If you have a question, please contact me first through our course's [discussion board Q & A on Teams](#). If your question is specific to you, please email my Hendrix email address (axxe@hendrix.edu). I will reply to emails within **48 hours on days when class is in session at the university**.
- **Class announcements:** I will send all important class-wide messages through the [General](#) tab on Teams.
- **Grading and feedback:** For assignments submitted before the due date, you can expect feedback and grades within **seven days**. Assignments submitted after the due date may have reduced feedback, and grades may take longer to be posted.

### **Grading Scale**

89.5–100: A

79.5–89.49: B

69.5–79.49: C

59.5–69.49: D

Below 59.49: F

**Academic integrity:** Hendrix College is committed to high standards of honesty and fairness in academic pursuits. Such standards are central to the process of intellectual inquiry, the development of character, and the preservation of the integrity of the community.

Please familiarize yourself with the statement of Academic Integrity, which can be found at:

[https://www.hendrix.edu/Catalog/2024-2025/Academic\\_Policies\\_and\\_Regulations/Policies\\_and\\_Appeals/D\\_6\\_c\\_Academic\\_Integrity/](https://www.hendrix.edu/Catalog/2024-2025/Academic_Policies_and_Regulations/Policies_and_Appeals/D_6_c_Academic_Integrity/)

**Statement on diversity:** Hendrix College values a diverse learning environment as outlined in the College's Statement on Diversity. All members of this community are expected to contribute to a respectful, welcoming, and inclusive environment for every other member of the community. If you believe you have been the subject of discrimination, please contact the Title IX Coordinator (Jennifer Fulbright [titleix@hendrix.edu](mailto:titleix@hendrix.edu), 501-505-2901). If you have ideas for improving the inclusivity of the classroom experience please feel free to contact Dr. Axxe. For more information on Hendrix non-discrimination policies visit [Hendrix.edu/nondiscrimination](https://hendrix.edu/nondiscrimination).

### **Title IX Reports of Discrimination Based on Sex, including Sexual Harassment, Sexual Assault, Stalking, Dating Violence, or Gender-Based Harassment:**

All faculty and staff at Hendrix College are designated as a "Responsible Employee" and are mandated reporters required to report Sexual Misconduct. Hendrix College requires all faculty and staff to report sexual harassment, sexual assault, dating and domestic violence, and stalking against a student or employee to the Title IX Coordinator, Dr. Jennifer Fulbright at [fulbright@hendrix.edu](mailto:fulbright@hendrix.edu) or 501-505-2901. Hendrix College cares about the safety of our employees and students and has created this notice because

interpersonal violence and sex discrimination in all forms are unacceptable. Hendrix College is committed to holding perpetrators accountable and keeping reporting parties safe. Student's privacy is of utmost importance and Hendrix College will strive to protect your privacy to the extent possible while complying with all applicable federal, state, and local laws and regulations as well as Hendrix College policy.

Students who desire that details of the incident be kept confidential have two options.

1. Request to speak with a licensed counselor (service available free to students and employees can utilize the Employee Assistance Program), or
2. contact an off-campus rape crisis center.

### **Pregnant and Parenting Students**

Title IX prohibits discrimination against a student based on pregnancy, childbirth, false pregnancy, termination of pregnancy, or recovery from any of these conditions; and for parenting a child under one year of age. To learn more about how to request support for pregnant and parenting students, contact Title IX Coordinator, Dr. Jennifer Fulbright at [fulbright@hendrix.edu](mailto:fulbright@hendrix.edu) or 501-505-2901.

**Health and wellbeing:** Hendrix recognizes that many students face mental and/or physical health challenges. If your health status will impact attendance or assignments, please communicate with me as soon as possible. If you would like to implement academic accommodations, contact Julie Brown in the office of Academic Success ([brownj@hendrix.edu](mailto:brownj@hendrix.edu)). To maintain optimal health, please utilize campus resources like Hendrix Medical Clinic or Counseling Services (501.450.1448). Your health and wellbeing are important.

**Course attendance:** As is stated in the Hendrix catalog [here](#), regular student attendance in class is necessary and central component of the Hendrix experience and your learning. Failing to attend class can negatively impact your own learning and the experience of other students and your professor.

Just like your future employers, I expect you to come to work consistently and on time by attending class consistently and on time, even on days when you're not at your best, you don't feel like you're at 100%, and you don't feel excited about coming to work. You don't have to be a rockstar every day, but you do have to show up and do the work on all or most of the days. If you cannot attend class, **I expect you to let me know before class starts.** I do not require a reason for missing class. Without prior notification (a.k.a. no call, no show), your absence will be unexcused. **Three unexcused absences will lead to a 10 percentage point reduction in your final grade.** Students will be excused for absences resulting from observance of religious holidays, cases of illness, and athletic competition, as well as any additional reasons as determined by the classroom teacher (e.g., conference travel, Model UN). Students do not need to present third-party documentation for absences related to physical or mental illness. Misrepresenting reasons for an absence to a classroom teacher is a violation of the Academic Integrity Policy. Please consider the likelihood of spreading illness when making these decisions.

Students are expected to review the materials they miss during class. In-class assignments can be submitted for excused absences but not for unexcused absences. Because repeated absences impair academic performance regardless of the reason for the absences, **classroom teachers shall contact the student and report repeated absences to their advisor.** If attendance does not improve, the classroom teacher shall inform the Office of Academic Success.

**After following this procedure, classroom teachers may, at their professional discretion, remove from their courses any student whose unexcused absences over any three-week period reach or exceed 50% by notifying the Registrar prior to the deadline for withdrawing from a course.** A student removed from a course under these circumstances will be notified by the Office of the Registrar through the student's Hendrix email account. A student may appeal this action by contacting the Registrar within three business days of the drop notice date. The Registrar will forward the appeal to the Academic Appeals Committee for review and action.

**Technology:** I ask that you please bring a laptop, tablet, or cell phone to class for handouts and quizzes. All readings will be distributed digitally, so this will also allow you to have the materials in class. Much of the technology we interact with is made to be addictive. I suggest you find and use resources that will help you resist distractions. [Here's](#) a website with a list of website blockers. Similar software exists for apps on phones and tablets.

## Other Useful Resources

*Any student who has difficulty affording groceries or accessing sufficient food to eat every day, or who lacks a safe and stable place to live, and believes this may affect their performance in the course, is urged to contact the Dean of Students for support. Furthermore, please notify me if you are comfortable in doing so. This will enable me to provide any resources that I may possess.*

- **Local housing shelters and women's shelters:** [Research](#) indicates that a number of low-income college students face homelessness or transient/insecure housing accommodations. [Affordable Colleges Online's website](#) provides statistics about college homelessness as well a way to locate local services.
- **Food Pantries:** [Here's a list of local food pantries.](#)
- **Zotero:** [Zotero](#) is a free citation management software.
- **Grammarly:** [Grammarly](#) is a free software that checks and suggests fixes to grammatical errors.
- **The Writing Center:** The Writing Center is a community of peers ready to assist you with your writing projects, in all genres and fields, and at any stage of development. We work with you in one-on-one meetings that you can book in advance or request during our office hours. In-person appointments will follow all pertinent COVID safety protocols. Virtual appointments are available for medical reasons or by special arrangement. To book appointments, and for more information, visit [www.hendrix.edu/writingcenter/](http://www.hendrix.edu/writingcenter/) or contact [pruneda@hendrix.edu](mailto:pruneda@hendrix.edu). We look forward to working with you!
- **Hendrix Bailey Library:** Bailey Library's mission is to collaborate and empower all members of our community so that they become their best selves, cherish the scope of human knowledge, and positively contribute to the librarians are happy to help locate quality resources supporting research and classroom work and to assist with the critical evaluation of academic information. Librarians and Library Associates provide individual research assistance by appointment. The library building is open seven days a week, and access to the library's online resources is available 24/7. You can visit the library's website at <https://www.hendrix.edu/baileylibrary/> for more information, to book an appointment, and to access the library's Discovery search, Class Guides, and full-text article databases.
- **ADA accommodations:** **As your instructor, it is my legal obligation to ensure that all students have equal access to course materials and equal opportunity to perform well in the course.** It is the policy of Hendrix College to accommodate students with disabilities, pursuant to federal and state law. Students should contact Julie Brown in the Office of Academic Success (505.2954; [brownj@hendrix.edu](mailto:brownj@hendrix.edu)) to begin the accommodation process. Any student seeking accommodation in relation to a recognized disability should inform the instructor at the beginning of the course.