COURSE DESCRIPTION:
This course focuses on inequalities in the education system with particular attention to race and class. The course covers concepts and problems such as tracking, oppositional culture, stereotype threat, and status problems in the classroom. Students will read in-depth about oppositional culture and nurture vs. nature explanations for the test score gap between class and race groups.

The following books are assigned. You may buy them or read them on reserve at Baker Library:


COURSE REQUIREMENTS:
Class performance: You are expected to attend every class and participate in all discussions. Your grade will be based on the quality of your participation, not the quantity. To earn a good participation grade you should 1) complete the readings before class, 2) come to class, and 3) make insightful comments. Your work in small groups as well as whole class discussions will be the basis for your performance grade.

Papers: You will turn in two 5-7 page papers applying the theories and concepts covered in class. Your grade will be based on the originality and thoughtfulness of the ideas, the use of course materials, and the parsimony, clarity, and felicity of the writing. Late papers will lose 1 full letter grade every 12 hours. Papers turned in more than 24 hours late will lose 2 letter grades. This policy is designed for unavoidable lateness, not
an option you should “choose” to exercise. Please do not ask for extensions on due dates. You should anticipate the inevitable disasters that occur near a deadline, including breakdowns in health, computers, or family affairs, and assure you meet the deadlines in spite of them. Note: Each paper submitted for credit in this course must be turned in on paper as well as electronically via Canvas. Submission of such work will be taken as your agreement that it may be electronically tested for plagiarized content, and your acceptance of all Dartmouth College regulations on academic integrity.

Exam Questions: By noon on Wednesday of the ninth week of classes, you must submit 3 exam questions (multiple choice, short answer, or essay) you would like to see on the exam, via text-only email (no attachments, please!), to Professor Herman. The exam questions should cut across topics on the syllabus and require integration and synthesis. A good question has the following characteristics: a) it deals with an important idea from the course, b) the “question” part of the question focuses on what it is important to understand about that idea, and c) the wrong answers should each capture a “reasonable” misunderstanding of the idea so that answering question correctly will distinguish people who really understood the concept from those who did not. In writing your questions, think about what someone who has taken this class seriously should know. For a good hint: ask questions that capture something you found compelling in one of our small group discussions. For a final check on whether you have a good question: try to answer it, particularly if it is an essay question (write an outline, not the whole essay). If your question(s) are included in the exam, your exam grade will get a bonus of 2 extra credit points per included question.

Exam: The exam is open book and based on the readings, lectures, and discussions in class. The exam will be composed of questions written by members of this class, plus a few from students in previous years just to keep you on your toes. However, you should keep in mind that your questions may be reworded or even rewritten for clarity and appropriateness. You must bring your laptop to write the essay question part of the exam. The exam will require you to know the reading and lecture material and will assume that you have gone some way in synthesizing the themes. A good way to study for this exam is to meet with a study group and go through your readings and lecture notes with a pack of small post-its. Flag and annotate what you think are the most important points of each text and lecture so that you can find them easily because you won’t have much time to search for things during the exam. Also, keep a reading journal over the course of the quarter and write a paragraph or two on the main points of each reading. I will hand out all the exam questions a few days before the exam so you can meet with your study group and work out good answers together prior to the exam. However, during the exam you must work by yourself and use only your own materials. Finally, and obviously, make sure you have done all the readings and taken good notes in class – particularly during small group work. Exam grades will be based on how clearly you answer the questions, make good arguments and use course materials.

Reading Journals: You will hand in a journal entry consisting of two typed pages about each week’s readings. Your journal must include a brief statement paraphrasing (in your own words, no quotes!) the major findings of each reading and then a reaction to the
readings either separately or as a group. Your reaction can include any of (but are not restricted to) the following: your opinion of the study’s methodology or theory, arguments supporting or rejecting the findings, or your personal reactions to the reading. I will grade each journal entry on a pass/fail basis. If you turn the journal in on time and it reflects your thoughtful reading of the assignment, you will earn credit. If you earn credit for 8 or 9 of the journal entries, you will receive an A for this portion of your grade. If you earn credit for 7 journals you will earn a B, 6 = C, 5 = D, 4 and less = F.

GRADING:
Your final grade will be computed as follows:
- 20 points from class participation
- 30 points for the papers
- 30 points for the final exam
- 20 points from reading journals

OTHER MISCELLANEOUS INFORMATION:
I dislike having rules and penalties. In a perfect world, every student would be self-motivated by love for the subject to pay rapt attention in every class and turn in every assignment on time. However, my experience with the real world has led me to state the following in my syllabus:

Extensions: With the astonishing incidence of sickness and death that invariably occurs just around due dates, my policy is to let you know in advance that if you need to hand in something late because of family illness, serious personal illness, or a death in the family, I'll need to have a written communication (a dated note from the funeral home or the doctor). You get one 24-hour exception to this rule, no questions asked. Save it for an emergency and remember to tell me in writing when/if you want to invoke it.

Academic integrity: A few years ago, two of my students turned in papers that they had not written themselves. When I discovered this, my heart sank. I had trusted these students without question. I will trust you the same way, and in return I ask that you do your own work honestly. If you run out of time or ideas, have a personal issue, or some other unexpected problem – contact me. I'm here to help you learn. It's better to turn in your own work a little late and take whatever penalty comes with it than to fail the course and permanently mar your academic reputation because of academic dishonesty. Here is a link to Sources and Citation at Dartmouth College http://writing-speech.dartmouth.edu/learning/materials/sources-and-citations-dartmouth#1

In class behavior: Unless your spouse is serving in a foreign war and you only get one bi-weekly phone call, please turn off your cell phone in my class. Store the phone somewhere other than on your physical person. Get enough sleep that you can sit upright and use the restroom before class. Anything that makes you seem less than 100% prepared and focused on the class will affect your participation grade.

Computers: Unless you have specific accommodations from the Student Accessibility Services Office, you must take notes by hand in my class. Fried (2008) and Muller &
Oppenheimer (2014) show that handwriting notes is far superior to typing them.¹ ² There may be a few occasions on which you may use your laptop to do group work in class. On those occasions, please keep your email, Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, Snapchat—or anything else that could distract you from the classroom task – closed/off.

**Accommodations:** If you have a disability that may need disability-related academic adjustments and services for this course please see me privately as early in the term as possible. Students requiring disability-related academic adjustments and services must consult the Student Accessibility Services office (646-9900, Student.Accessibility.Services@Dartmouth.edu). Once SAS has authorized services, students must show the originally signed SAS Services and Consent Form and/or a letter on SAS letterhead to their professor. As a first step, if students have questions about whether they qualify to receive academic adjustments and services, they should contact the SAS office. All inquiries and discussions will remain confidential.

**Grades:** If you wish to discuss one of your grades with me, you must write me an email describing your concerns. I will meet with you after you have demonstrated the depth of your concern and documented the reasons you feel a change is appropriate.

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¹ “Students who used laptops in class spent considerable time multitasking and…laptop use posed a significant distraction to both users and fellow students. Most importantly, the level of laptop use was negatively related to several measures of student learning, including self-reported understanding of course material and overall course performance.” Carrie B. Fried. 2008. In-class laptop use and its effects on student learning. Computers & Education. Vol. 50(3): 906-914.

² “Even when laptops are used solely to take notes, they may still be impairing learning because their use results in shallower processing…Students who took notes on laptops performed worse on conceptual questions than students who took notes longhand. Whereas taking more notes can be beneficial, laptop note takers’ tendency to transcribe lectures verbatim rather than processing information and reframing it in their own words is detrimental to learning.” Muller & Oppenheimer (2014), The Pen Is Mightier Than the Keyboard Advantages of Longhand Over Laptop Note Taking, Psychological Science, 25, 6, 1159-1168.
READING LIST AND DISCUSSION TOPICS

Week 1 – Course introduction / theories of educational inequality

Week 2 – Current and past inequality research

Week 3: Racial composition of schools
- Ayscue, J.B., & Orfield, G. (2016) Perpetuating separate and unequal worlds of educational opportunity through district lines: school segregation by race and poverty, pp. 45-71 in *Race, Equity, and Education: Sixty Years from Brown*, Noguera, Pierce, and Ahram (Eds.), New York, NY: Springer.
Week 4: Black-white test score gap


Week 5: Oppositional Culture


Week 6 – Tracking

• Oakes, J. (2005) *Keeping Track* Yale Press. Read chapters 1-2, 7, and 11-12 carefully; skim the rest.

**Week 6: Status problems in the classroom**

**Week 7: Stereotype threat**

**Week 9: Affirmative action**


**Week 10: Alternative paths to diversity**

  - Flores, S., and Horn, C. “Texas Top Ten Percent Plan: How It Works, What Are Its Limits, and Recommendations to Consider”

**Optional (good review for the exam):**