

EDUC 610: *Brown v. Board of Education* **Brown University, Fall 2019**

Instructor: Professor Tracy Steffes
Email: Tracy_Steffes@Brown.edu
Office Location: 164 Angell St, room 209
Office Phone: (401) 863-2894
Office Hours: Wednesdays 10-11 and by appointment. Sign up via google calendar (while logged into your Brown account).
Class Time, Location: Mondays, 3:00-5:30, Smith-Buananno 101

Course Description and Learning Aims:

In the landmark 1954 decision *Brown v. Board of Education*, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that state-mandated school segregation was unconstitutional because it denied black children equal educational opportunities. This class will explore the *Brown* decision and the subsequent legal and policy efforts to implement school desegregation and define equal education. We will use primary and secondary sources to wrestle with the legal, political, social, and moral questions raised by these efforts and will work to frame our own interpretations of the legacy of *Brown* for education. Consequently, the first and primary goal of the course is to familiarize students with the major players, events, and issues in the history of school desegregation, including scholarly debates over the history of school desegregation, equality of educational opportunity, and the legacies of *Brown* which continue to define debates over education policies today. Students should be able to identify and evaluate these debates as well as take positions on contemporary issues that are informed by historical understandings from the course. Furthermore, as a sophomore seminar, this course aims to develop students' academic skills and contribute to liberal learning. Students should be able to: conduct close, empathetic, critical readings of primary texts; identify, evaluate, and synthesize arguments and interpretations of secondary sources; communicate clearly and effectively, orally and in writing; make and support arguments with evidence and reasoning; consider and weigh alternate arguments and perspectives; develop and clearly convey their own reasoned interpretations on the issues of the course.

Course Requirements:

1. *Class Citizenship and Participation* (20%).

Careful preparation for class and faithful attendance is expected; more one absence will (usually) affect your grade. Good class citizenship means not only talking in class, but also active listening, asking good questions, engaging with classmates, and contributing in meaningful ways to all of our class activities with an eye toward enriching our discussions and contributing to everyone's learning. You will also be asked to lead class discussion for one pre-determined class period as part of a small group of 2-3 students. Your group should meet with me during office hours preceding the class you'll lead to discuss the learning goals and activities you have planned. Finally, as part of this participation, I may ask for short pieces of writing during class or submitted in advance, including short response papers or discussion questions.

2. *Journal* (10%)

You will also be required to keep a *journal* throughout the semester as an aid to participation. Writing is often constitutive of thinking and the goal of the journal is to help you to reflect on and engage with course readings and discussions. You will write two substantial entries for every class (a page or more in a regular size notebook): one entry in preparation for class and one additional entry after every class discussion. The journal is a personal piece of writing and not a formal paper and therefore the ideas

and expressions are more important than the form; don't worry if it rambles, shifts topics, is contradictory, or has problems of language and spelling. The journal is a place for you to work out your ideas. Because the journal only works when it is a habit, I will be collecting and evaluating the journal at unannounced times throughout the semester. Make sure to *bring the journal to every class*; you will not get credit for that check-in if you do not have the journal when it is collected. Finally, make sure to keep the journal in a notebook which is used only for that purpose; please *keep class notes in a separate place*.

3. *Short papers (20%).*

You will be required to submit two short papers (out of four options) based on class readings due via Canvas the morning of class. These papers will be a maximum of five pages (and sometimes less) and will ask you to practice different kinds of writing aimed at different audiences. You may submit more than two assignments; I will count the highest two paper grades. Except in extraordinary circumstances (documented medical or family emergencies), late papers will not be accepted and extensions will not be granted.

3. *Research Project on Select City (30%)*

This semester-long small group project will have three components. First, each group must give one 20 minute presentation on an assigned date that provides the class an in-depth look at desegregation in that city, with particular emphasis on the era/issues covered in that class period (i.e. Prince Edward County's story of massive resistance in the 1950s, Detroit's struggle with busing and desegregation in the 1970s) (10% of grade) Handouts, visual aids, and creative, engaging presentation of material is encouraged—you will be teaching the rest of the class about your city. Try to avoid a lot of very specific detail; give us the key elements of the story and your analysis about how it helps us understand the readings and key themes of that class period.

Second, in the last class, each group will give a final presentation (about 10 minutes) in which they update us on developments in that city since the time period covered in their presentation and reflect on its current educational situation (5% of grade). Again, the emphasis should be less on giving us a detailed blow-by-blow of events and more on analyzing what the experience of this city teaches us about the *Brown* decision and its legacy, including consideration of educational equity in that place today. How does it reflect, expand, or challenge the general themes and readings of the course?

Finally, each student must submit a final written product that addresses these same themes; for most students this will be a short paper, however, students may propose an alternate project, individually or as a group, such as a video or website due the Monday following your final presentation (15% of grade). For each component, you will be assessed on the quality of the finished product as well as your contributions to the group (if applicable).

4. *Final Exam Paper (20%).*

There will be a comprehensive take-home essay that asks you to analyze, synthesize, and reflect on important course themes and readings. Details will be discussed in class.

Note on Course Workload: The total of in-class and out of class work for a full credit course at Brown is approximately 180 hours over the length of the semester. In this class, students can expect to spend 39 hours in class (3 hours x 13 weeks), 91 hours preparing for class (reading and writing in your journal, 7 hours per week), 10 hours on the short papers, 30 hours on the city research project and its components, 10 hours on the final paper. Actual times will vary for each student; final grades are not determined by the amount of time a student spends on the course.

Course Policies:

1. *Laptop policy.* In general, laptop computer use is not permitted during class because the screen presents barriers to discussion and engagement that form the core of the class. Tablets and text readers

are okay if they do not distract you or other students from class discussion. You should bring copies of all readings to class for use in discussion.

2. *Academic accommodations.* I'm committed to the full inclusion of all students. If you have a documented disability and require academic accommodations, please speak with me early in the semester and register with Student and Employee Accessibility Services (SEAS).

3. *Inclusive Classroom Environment.* We are a community that is learning together and working through challenging and sensitive ideas. It is therefore imperative that there is an atmosphere of trust and mutual respect in the classroom. I am committed to the inclusion of all students in the classroom and representation of diverse voices and views and will work hard to foster this environment, but we all share some responsibility to ensure that all members of the class are heard and respected. Please let me know if something said or done in the classroom, by either myself or other students, that undermines this goal of a safe, inclusive, and respectful learning community.

Required Readings: (Available at the Bookstore and on 3 hour reserve at the library)

Cecelski, David. *Along Freedom Road: Hyde County, North Carolina and the Fate of Black Schools in the South*. University of North Carolina Press, 1994.

Grundy, Pamela. *Color & Character: West Charlotte High and the American Struggle over Educational Equality*, 2017.

Martin, Waldo E., ed. *Brown v. Board of Education: A Brief History with Documents*. Bedford/ St. Martins, 1998.

Patterson, James T. *Brown v. Board of Education: A Civil Rights Milestone and its Troubled Legacy*. Oxford University Press, 2001.

Ryan, James E. *Five Miles Away, A World Apart: One City, Two Schools, and the Story of Educational Opportunity in Modern America*, 2010.

Documents and articles on Canvas

Course Schedule: (subject to change)

Sept. 9 *Brown v. Board of Education: Introduction to the case and the course*
In class: Handout, *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954).

Sept. 16 **Segregated Schooling, North and South**
Plessy v. Ferguson, 163 U.S. 538 (1896), in Waldo Martin, *Brown v. Board of Education: A Brief History with Documents*, pp. 76-86.
Julius Rosenwald Fund, *School Money in Black and White* (1932) (24 pp)
Davison Douglas, "The Spread of Northern School Segregation, 1890-1940" from *Jim Crow Moves North: The Battle over Northern School Segregation, 1865-1954* (2005), 123-166.
W.E.B. Dubois, "Does the Negro Need Separate Schools?" (1935) in Martin, *Brown: A Brief History with Documents*, pp 91-100.

Recommended: "Remembering Jim Crow," American Radioworks (2001) (1 hour)

Paper #1 due, Wednesday, September 23 at 9am, via Canvas.

Sept. 23

The Legal Challenge to Segregation

James Patterson, *Brown v. Board of Education: A Civil Rights Milestone and its Troubled Legacy*, preface-chapter 3, pp. xiii-69.

Richard Kluger, "Together Let Us Sweetly Live" from *Simple Justice: The History of Brown v. Board of Education and Black America's Struggle for Equality* (1975), pp. 3-26.

Sweatt v. Painter and *McLaurin v. Oklahoma State Regents* in Martin, *Brown v. Board of Ed: A Brief History with Documents*, pp. 110-120

Briggs v. Elliott in Martin, *Brown: A Brief History with Documents*, pp. 126-137.

Briefs in *Brown v. Board of Education* in Martin, *Brown: A Brief History with Documents*, pp. 137-156.

"Separate but Unequal: How a Student-Led Protest Helped Change the Nation," Part I, NPR Morning Edition story by Juan Williams (2004) (7.5 min).

Sept. 30

Reactions to *Brown v. Board of Education* and the Dilemmas of Enforcement

Patterson, *Brown v. Board*, chapters 4-5, pp. 70-117.

James Ryan, *Five Miles Away, A World Apart*, chapter 1, pp. 21-61.

Briefs on *Brown II* (1955) in Martin, *Brown: A Brief History with Documents*, pp 175-98.

Documents on the reaction to Brown from Martin, *Brown: A Brief History with Documents*: newspaper editorials (pp. 199-207); political cartoons (pp. 213-218); "Southern Manifesto" (pp. 220-223).

Excerpt on Little Rock Central High School desegregation conflict from "Eyes on the Prize," Vol. 2. (available on "movies" tab in Canvas, 30 mins.)

Ruby Bridges interviews on her role in desegregating New Orleans schools: BBC radio interview (9 min.) and CBS Evening News (3.5 min).

Recommended: "Crossing the Color Line," NPR Talk of the Nation roundtable about the experiences of the first black students to desegregate schools (47 min).

In class: Presentation on **Baltimore, Maryland**.

"Brown v. Board: Letters to Eisenhower" NPR All Things Considered (2004)

Paper #2 due Wednesday Oct. 7 via canvas by 9:00 am.

Oct. 7

New Commitments to Desegregation: Grassroots and Federal Pressure

Patterson, *Brown v. Board of Education*, chapters 6-7, pp 118-169.

Martin Luther King Jr., "Letter from a Birmingham Jail" (1963) (14pp).

Stokely Carmichael, "Black Power" (1966) (11pp).

"No More: The Children of Birmingham 1963 and the Turning Point of the Civil Rights Movement," National History Day project by Miranda and McKay Jessup (YouTube, 2013) (10 min).

Thomas Sugrue, "God Have Pity on Such a City," in *Sweet Land of Liberty: The Forgotten Struggle for Civil Rights in the North* (2008): 163-99.

Excerpt from *Green v. County Board of New Kent County* (1968)

In class: Presentation on **Prince Edward County, Virginia**.

Oct. 14

No Class—Indigenous People's Day

- Oct. 21 The Burdens of Desegregation for Black Schools and Communities**
David Cecelski, *Along Freedom Road: Hyde County, North Carolina and the Fate of Black Schools in the South*, 7-174.

In class: Presentation on **Nashville, TN.**

Paper #3 due Wednesday Oct. 28 at 9am via canvas.

- Oct. 28 The Problem of Residential and “De Facto” Segregation and Battle over Busing**
Ryan, *Five Miles Away, A World Apart*, chapter 2, pp. 63-117.
Jeanne Theoharis, “‘I’d Rather Go to School in the South’: How Boston’s School Desegregation Complicates the Civil Rights Paradigm,” from *Freedom North: Black Freedom Struggles Outside the South, 1940-1980*, pp. 125-151.
Excerpt from Eyes on the Prize on Boston desegregation conflict (30 mins)
Pamela Grundy, *Color & Character: West Charlotte High and the American Struggle over Educational Equality* (2017), pp. 59-109.
Excerpt from *Milliken v. Bradley* (14 pp)

In class: Presentation on **Milwaukee, Wisconsin**

Paper #4 Thursday, Nov 4 at 9am via canvas.

- Nov 4 The Political and Legal Retreat from School Desegregation**
Grundy, *Color & Character*, pp. 112-90.
Gary Orfield, “Turning Back to Segregation,” in *Dismantling Desegregation*, pp.1-22.
Susan Eaton and Christina Meldrum, “Broken Promises: Resegregation in Norfolk, Virginia in *Dismantling Desegregation: The Quiet Reversal of Brown v. Board of Education*, pp. 115-142.

In class: Presentation: **Wilmington, Delaware**

- Nov. 11 Educational Equity without Integration?: Finance and Choice**
Ryan, *Five Miles Away, A World Apart*, chapters 3-6, pp. 121-238.
Howard Fuller, “The Continuing Struggle for School Choice” (2004) (4pp).
Mark Bernstein, “Why I’m Wary of Charters” (1999).

In class: Presentation: **Kansas City, Missouri**

- Nov 18 Educational Equity Without Integration II?: Community Control, Socioeconomic Integration, and Accountability Reforms**
Ryan, *Five Miles Away, A World Apart*, chapter 7-8 and epilogue, pp. 239-307.
Christine Faltz and Donald Leake, “The All-Black School: Inherently Unequal or Cultural Based Alternative?” in *Beyond Desegregation: The Politics of Quality in African American Schooling* (1996), pp. 227-252.
Susan Lee Flispach and Karen Banks, “Moving Beyond Race: Socioeconomic Diversity

as a Race Neutral Approach to Desegregation in Wake County Schools,” *School Resegregation: Must the South Turn Back?* (2005): 261-80.

Nov. 25 Thanksgiving Break—No class

Dec. 2 Second Generation Segregation?: New Dimensions of Racial Inequality

Little Rock Central: 50 Years Later (HBO Films, 2007) (100 min).

Jeannie Oakes, “Keeping Track, Part I” in *Phi Delta Kappan* (1995)

Daniel Losen, “Discipline Policies, Successful Schools, and Racial Justice,” National Education Policy Center report, 2011.

In class: Final City Project Presentations

Dec. 9 Assessing the Legacy of Brown and the Future of Educational Equity

Excerpt from *Parents Involved in Community Schools v. Seattle School Dist. No. 1* (2007) (7pp)

Amy Stuart Wells et. al, “Refusing to Leave Desegregation Behind: From Graduates of Diverse Schools to the Supreme Court,” *Teachers College Record* (2008).

Erica Frankenberg, “Integration after *Parents Involved*: What Does Research Suggest about Available Options?” in *Integrating Schools in a Changing Society*, pp. 53-74.

Nikole Hannah-Jones, “It Was Never About Busing,” *New York Times*, July 12, 2019.

John A. Powell, “A New Theory of Integrated Education: True Integration” in *School Resegregation: Must the South Turn Back?*, ed. John Boger and Gary Orfield (2005), pp. 281-304.

In Class: Final City Project Presentations

Final City project paper due Thursday, December 12 via Canvas by 9 am.

Final Course paper due Friday, December 20 via Canvas by 9 am.