

IN SEARCH OF THE PERFECT SCHOOL (PSY 1055)

Course Syllabus Fall 2016

COURSE TIME: Tuesdays from 1:07pm – 3:00pm
COURSE LOCATION: William James Hall, Room 401
COURSE WEBSITE: <https://canvas.harvard.edu/courses/15627>

INSTRUCTOR: Amy Dent
E-MAIL ADDRESS: amydent@fas.harvard.edu

OFFICE HOURS: Tuesdays from 3:30pm – 6:30pm (beginning 9/13) and by email request
OFFICE LOCATION: TBD

COURSE OVERVIEW

Pundits and policymakers from across the political spectrum agree that the American education system is in urgent need of reform. Buildings are overcrowded and neglected. Textbooks are tattered and outdated. Teachers are overworked, and students are uninspired. We know a failing school when we see one, but what's the formula for a great school? This question has commanded the attention of education researchers and policymakers for decades, while recent reform initiatives have cast a national spotlight on the quality of American schools. Underlying these policies is an understanding that access to the best education can profoundly shape a student's future, both within the classroom and well beyond it.

This course will explore how to define the perfect school and what would bring it to life. Guided by these overarching questions, you will be introduced to theory, research, and policy in both psychology and education, with a particular focus on the application of educational psychology in secondary school. This focus serves as a window into many of the most topical and interesting issues facing our students and schools.

This course provides a unique opportunity for classroom instruction and evaluation to model many of the concepts you will learn about. Throughout the semester, you will have an opportunity to engage in seminar-style discussion, spirited debate, and mastery-oriented assignments. The course will culminate in a final paper and class presentation in which you will propose your vision for the "perfect" middle or high school. In doing so, you will creatively integrate and apply the policy, theory, and research discussed throughout the semester.

COURSE GOALS

The overarching goals for your growth in this course are organized around three main elements of scholarship that we will discuss throughout the semester:

- 1) scholarly inquiry
- 2) scholarly thinking
- 3) scholarly writing

Many hallmark skills of an undergraduate education are embedded within these elements of scholarship, supporting your academic success at Harvard and professional success long after graduation. That path is unique to each student, so you are encouraged to create *personal goals* for this course that reflect who and what you want to become that I am happy to discuss or develop with you. My *course goals* for all of you include:

- 1) Developing your skills as a scholarly thinker, becoming critical consumers and creative translators of psychological science.
- 2) Developing your skills as a scholarly writer, coming into your own “voice” with greater confidence.
- 3) Developing the self-regulatory skills that enable personal, academic, and professional goals.
- 4) Understanding the “nested ecological levels” in which educational phenomena occur and how they interact to create complex contexts for students’ experiences and outcomes in school.
- 5) Understanding the educational and developmental psychology principles relevant to those contexts.
- 6) Understanding the statistical and methodological principles relevant to those contexts.

COURSE MATERIALS

Required readings draw from a variety of sources, including book chapters, reports of research, theoretical reviews, and executive summaries from policy institutes. All required readings are listed in the course schedule and either linked on the course website or reserved at the library. Please visit the Reserves List on the course website for information about retrieving the book from which an excerpt is assigned during the final (i.e., “Country”) section of this course. If you are unable to access the linked or reserved required readings before the class day for which they are assigned, it is your responsibility to secure them through another means. Linked required readings can be retrieved from the library’s online databases using their citation information, while the book from which an excerpt is assigned can be borrowed through InterLibrary Loan or purchased online. Please note that the ordering of references in the course schedule is the recommended sequence in which to read them.

All PowerPoint presentations and weekly discussion questions generated by your classmates will be available on the course website. Periodically throughout the semester, relevant news articles will also be posted on the course website. If you happen to find a news article that complements the course material, you're welcome to circulate it among your classmates this way!

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS

Participation. Spirited class discussion and debate are highly encouraged. The quality of these conversations and what you gain from them depend on your active engagement. Therefore, regular class participation is required and part of your final course grade. Approximately halfway through the semester, you will receive informal written feedback from me about your involvement in class discussions including a “working grade” on a scale of 1 to 10 that reflects your participation to that point of the semester. This grade is not set in stone, with your final participation grade influenced by the *quantity* and *quality* of involvement in class discussions throughout the entire semester. Beyond this opportunity for feedback, you are welcome to speak with me about your class participation at any point of the semester. For example, I am happy to privately discuss any concerns you may have about this form of public speaking or strategies to make you feel more comfortable and confident in doing so. Aside from the working grade I will provide approximately halfway through the semester, I will not comment about your final participation grade before assigning it.

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS (continued)

Discussion Questions. In order to facilitate critical evaluation of the required readings and lively discussion about them, you are expected to submit two discussion questions that come to mind while completing the required readings each week. These questions could identify a limitation of research, an application of theory, or a creative connection between the readings. You are not limited to these options and are expected to “think through” your questions on paper, developing a rationale or explanation of your questions to contextualize them for your classmates and tie them to course themes. You are expected to submit your questions via the course website along with a brief explanation of their connection to the course material by 9:00pm the evening before each class. If you have difficulty submitting discussion questions via the course website, you are responsible for ensuring they are verifiably submitted by the deadline through another means (e.g., by email). I will anonymize and compile these questions, posting them on the course website by 9:00am the next morning. Before coming to class, please take time to read your classmates' questions and reflect on them. After the first week of required readings and again approximately halfway through the semester, you will receive informal written feedback from me about your discussion questions including a “working grade” for them on a scale of 1 to 10. This grade is not set in stone, with your final discussion questions grade influenced by their *timely submission* and *quality* throughout the entire semester. Beyond this opportunity for feedback, you are welcome to speak with me about your discussion questions at any point of the semester. Aside from the working grade I will provide after the first week of assigned readings and approximately halfway through the semester, I will not comment about your final discussion questions grade before assigning it. There are 11 weeks of class with assigned readings, and you are required to submit discussion questions for ten of them.

Thought Papers. After the first and final course sections (i.e., “Introduction” and “Country”), you will submit a two- to three-page double-spaced thought paper that *evaluates* and *integrates* required readings from that unit. Beyond these two expectations, your thought papers are a free space for you to think deeply and critically about any topic within the unit that you found interesting, troubling, or inspiring. This could take the form of a reaction to arguments made in the literature or an application of this literature to practical problems, for example. You must submit each thought paper via the course website by the date and time specified in the course schedule, but you are welcome to do so earlier. If you have difficulty submitting a thought paper via the course website, you are responsible for ensuring it is verifiably submitted by the deadline through another means (e.g., by email). In addition to being a free space to think deeply and critically about topics that pique your interest, thought papers are also a safe space to develop your skills as an academic writer without pressure of “making the grade”. Coming into your own as an academic writer is an exciting and important part of your undergraduate education that is fostered through practice, feedback, and revision. Thought papers are an opportunity for all three, achieved through a “recursive submission process”. This process begins with submitting a polished first draft of each thought paper. This draft *must* reflect your best effort at scholarly writing and thinking, with those that do receiving extensive written feedback from me. Next, you will incorporate my feedback in either: 1) a second draft if you prefer additional feedback accompanied by a working grade or 2) the final version of your thought paper. The Course Deadlines section of this syllabus provides the schedule of first and final draft submissions. In addition to receiving written feedback from me, you are welcome to meet with me to discuss the paper and my comments about it before submitting the final version.

Final Project. The course culminates in a final paper and class presentation in which you will propose the “perfect” secondary school. How would *you* define the perfect school, and what would realize this vision? Framed by these two questions, your proposal should creatively integrate and apply the concepts, theory, research, and policy discussed throughout the semester. You will present your vision of the perfect school along with the theoretical and empirical arguments for it in an 11-15 page paper and a 3-5 minute PowerPoint presentation. The final paper will be submitted recursively in sections, with drafts receiving written feedback from me. Additional information about the final paper and presentation is provided in the “Final Project Overview” at the end of this syllabus. We will return to the project overview throughout the semester, and you’re welcome to discuss this capstone assignment with me any time!

COURSE BREAKDOWN

| | | | |
|------------------------------|------------|--------------|--------------|
| Participation: | 25% | A = 93 - 100 | C = 73 - 76 |
| Discussion Questions: | 20% | A- = 90 - 92 | C- = 70 - 72 |
| Thought Papers: | 10% (each) | B+ = 87 - 89 | D+ = 67 - 69 |
| Final Paper: | 30% | B = 83 - 86 | D = 63 - 66 |
| Final Presentation: | 5% | B- = 80 - 82 | D- = 60 - 62 |
| | | C+ = 77 - 79 | E = < 60 |

COURSE DEADLINES**Deadlines By Type of Assignment:**

| Assignment | Draft | Deadline |
|----------------------------|--------------|------------------------------------|
| Discussion Questions | NA | Mondays at 9:00pm, starting 9/12 |
| Thought Paper: #1 | First | Sunday, 9/25 at 11:59pm |
| | Final | Sunday, 12/18 at 11:59pm |
| Thought Paper: #2 | First | Sunday, 12/4 at 11:59pm |
| | Final | Sunday, 12/18 at 11:59pm |
| Final Paper: Introduction | First | Sunday, 10/2 at 11:59pm |
| | Final | Sunday, 12/18 at 11:59pm |
| Final Paper: Classroom | First | Sunday, 10/30 at 11:59pm |
| | Final | Sunday, 12/18 at 11:59pm |
| Final Paper: School | First | Sunday, 11/20 at 11:59pm |
| | Final | Sunday, 12/18 at 11:59pm |
| Final Paper: Conclusion | First | Sunday, 12/4 at 11:59pm (optional) |
| | Final | Sunday, 12/18 at 11:59pm |
| Final Presentation: Slides | NA | Monday, 11/28 at 11:59pm |

Deadlines By Day of Submission:

| Assignment | Draft | Deadline |
|----------------------------|--------------|------------------------------------|
| Discussion Questions | NA | Mondays at 9:00pm, starting 9/12 |
| Thought Paper: #1 | First | Sunday, 9/25 at 11:59pm |
| Final Paper: Introduction | First | Sunday, 10/2 at 11:59pm |
| Final Paper: Classroom | First | Sunday, 10/30 at 11:59pm |
| Final Paper: School | First | Sunday, 11/20 at 11:59pm |
| Final Presentation: Slides | NA | Monday, 11/28 at 11:59pm |
| Final Paper: Conclusion | First | Sunday, 12/4 at 11:59pm (optional) |
| Thought Paper: #2 | First | Sunday, 12/4 at 11:59pm |
| Thought Paper: #1 | Final | Sunday, 12/18 at 11:59pm |
| Thought Paper: #2 | Final | Sunday, 12/18 at 11:59pm |
| Final Paper: All Sections | Final | Sunday, 12/18 at 11:59pm |

COURSE POLICIES

Academic Integrity. You are expected to act in accordance with Harvard's standards for academic integrity, available at <http://honor.fas.harvard.edu/honor-code>. Please pay particular attention to the causes and consequences of plagiarism, with guidance for how to properly credit source material in your writing available at <http://usingsources.fas.harvard.edu/icb/icb.do?keyword=k70847&tabgroupid=icb.tabgroup106849>.

Accessibility. If you are eligible for academic adjustments or accommodations, please provide a letter from the Accessible Education Office (AEO) and speak with me by Friday, September 16th. Failure to do so may result in my inability to respond accordingly in a timely manner. All conversations will remain confidential, with AEO possibly consulted to ensure appropriate implementation.

Attendance. With class only once a week and discussion such a central component of your experience in this course, regular attendance is necessary to make the most of it. As a result, attendance is required and officially monitored. You may miss a single class without unexcused absences adversely affecting your final course grade, with every unexcused absence thereafter effectively reducing it by 2.5 percentage points for failing to participate in class discussion. If you are unable to attend a class due to illness or extraordinary circumstances, you or someone on your behalf (e.g., House Dean, University Health Services) must email me before that class begins if at all possible. Whether your absence qualifies as excused is ultimately at my discretion, in consultation with your House Dean if necessary or requested.

Collaboration. The creative and collaborative development of ideas is vital to any academic community, including ours as a class. Class discussions are thus a central component of this course that can serve as inspiration or support for your writing assignments. Beyond this form of collaboration, however, you are expected to complete all assignments *entirely independently*.

Late Assignments. Whether a first or final draft, late assignments (including discussion questions) will be accepted only under extraordinary circumstances and ultimately at my discretion. In order to receive an extension, you or someone on your behalf (e.g., House Dean, University Health Services) must email me before the assignment is due if at all possible. Discussion questions will otherwise not be accepted after their weekly deadline, effectively reducing your final course grade by 2 percentage points each occasion that discussion questions are submitted late or not submitted at all. If the first draft of a thought paper or final paper section is submitted late without my permission, you forfeit the opportunity to receive feedback on it from me. Therefore, your initial submission of that thought paper or final paper section effectively becomes your final submission that receives a numerical grade at the same evaluation standard as if it had undergone revision. If the final draft of a thought paper or final paper section is submitted late without my permission, your most recent draft defaults to the one for which you will receive a numerical grade. Failure to submit both the first and final draft of a thought paper or final paper section will result in a numerical score of zero for it. You will be granted a *single* 48-hour deadline "buffer" for *one* first or second, but not final, draft for any reason that does not fall within the extraordinary circumstances warranting an extension. This buffer must be requested by email in advance of the first or second draft deadline for which you plan to use it.

Grading Decisions. If you believe a grading error has been made, please feel free to discuss this concern with me. Aside from computational errors or oversight, however, *grades are not negotiable*.

Personal Technology. You are welcome to use a laptop computer or other device during class for taking notes, accessing course materials, and otherwise supporting your engagement in our weekly discussions. Out of respect for your classmates and academic decorum, however, you are expected to refrain from using personal technology for reasons beyond engaging in the course. If attending to technology for reasons beyond engaging in the course (e.g., checking Facebook, responding to texts or emails) compromises your participation or risks doing so for your classmates, your final participation grade may be reduced as a result.

Tardiness. Class begins promptly at 1:07pm. Arriving late risks missing important announcements about the course schedule or assignments and disrupting class discussion. If you must arrive late to (or leave early from) a certain class for any reason, please make every effort to let me know in advance via email. Repeated or extreme tardiness without an excused reason may reduce your final participation grade.

COURSE SCHEDULE**UNIT I: INTRODUCTION (WEEKS 1-3)****WEEK 1: Starting Our Search for the Perfect School**

During the introductory class, I will provide an overview of the course goals and syllabus.

Together we will brainstorm about the overarching questions of the course:

How should we define the “perfect” school, and what would realize this vision?

September 6: no readings

WEEK 2: In Search of the Perfect Standard: Criteria and Concepts of School Quality

What does it mean for a school to be great? Do test scores tell the whole story?

These are among the questions we will discuss during the second week of class, which will introduce the different definitions and measures of school quality. We will then switch gears to focus on what these measures often attempt to capture: student achievement. To that end, we will build a “conceptual model” of how students learn in order to better understand the psychological processes that give rise to their achievement. This model will serve as the foundation for our discussion of the way classroom-, school-, and country-level factors influence achievement.

September 13:

Morse, R. (2015). How U.S. News calculated the 2015 best high schools rankings. *US News & World Report*.

RTI International. (2015). *Identifying top-performing high schools for the “best high schools” rankings: Analytical methodology and technical appendices*. Raleigh, NC: RTI International.

n.a. (2014). Methodology of Newsweek’s top high school rankings. *Newsweek, LLC*.

Finster, M., & Miller, J. (2014). *Who’s at the top? It depends...: Identification of highest performing schools for Newsweek’s 2014 high school rankings*. Rockville, MD: Westat.

Lee, J., & Shute, V. J. (2010). Personal and social-contextual factors in K-12 academic performance: An integrative perspective on student learning. *Educational Psychologist, 45*, 185-202.

Eccles, J. S., & Wigfield, A. (2002). Motivational beliefs, values, and goals. *Annual Review of Psychology, 53*, 109-132.

WEEK 3: Putting Imperfect Schools in Context

We will ground discussion this week in the classic article by Eccles et al. (1993), which describes how students’ developmental stage interacts with their academic environment. The concepts and questions in this article will frame our exploration of the first two course themes: The Classroom and The School.

September 20:

Eccles, J. S. et al. (1993). The impact of stage-environment fit on young adolescents’ experience in schools and in families. *American Psychologist, 48*, 90-101.

Eccles, J. S., & Roeser, R. W. (2011). Schools as developmental contexts during adolescence. *Journal of Research on Adolescence, 21*, 225-241.

Yeager, D. S., & Dweck, C. S. (2012). Mindsets that promote resilience: When students believe that personal characteristics can be developed. *Educational Psychologist, 47*, 302-314.

Blackwell, L. S., Trzesniewski, K. H., & Dweck, C. S. (2007). Implicit theories of intelligence predict achievement across an adolescent transition: A longitudinal study and an intervention. *Child Development, 78*, 246-263.

UNIT II: THE CLASSROOM (WEEKS 4-6)**WEEK 4: Connecting the Student and the Classroom: Goal Orientations & Structures**

The learning environment that teachers create can have a profound influence on students' academic motivation, interests, and performance. One way teachers shape this classroom learning environment is through its "goal structure", which can foster either mastery or performance goals in students. We will spend this week talking about how teachers create different classroom goal structures and their influence on students' motivation. We will inform this overarching question with a recent critical analysis of achievement goal theory (Senko et al., 2011). Taken together, the readings this week will bring our discussion of *why* and *how* students learn full circle.

September 27:

- Meece, J. L., Anderman, E. M., & Anderman, L. H. (2006). Classroom goal structure, student motivation, and academic achievement. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 57, 487-503.
- Ames, C. (1992). Classrooms: Goals, structures, and student motivation. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 84, 261-271.
- Senko, C., Hulleman, C. S., & Harackiewicz, J.M. (2011). Achievement goal theory at the crossroads: Old controversies, current challenges, and new directions. *Educational Psychologist*, 46, 26-47.

WEEK 5: Approaches to Instruction

Since the rise in popularity and theoretical prominence of discovery learning in the 1960s, researchers, practitioners, and policymakers have debated the relative merits of different approaches to classroom instruction. A myriad of pedagogical approaches have been inspired by this movement over the past 50 years, including problem-based learning, project-based learning, collaborative learning, and mastery learning. A recent meta-analysis (Alfieri et al., 2011) compared the achievement effects of discovery learning and direct instruction, but the relative benefits of several other instructional approaches remain intensely contested within the scholarly literature. This week, we will discuss these different instructional approaches and explore their influence on students' academic achievement, engagement, and motivation.

October 4:

- Windschitl, M. (1999). The challenges of sustaining a constructivist classroom culture. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 136, 751-755.
- Kirschner, P.A., Sweller, J., & Clark, R.E. (2006). Why minimal guidance during instruction does not work: An analysis of the failure of constructivist, discovery, problem-based, experiential, and inquiry-based teaching. *Educational Psychologist*, 41, 75-86.
- Alfieri, L., Brooks, P. J., Aldrich, N.J., & Tenenbaum, H.R. (2011). Does discovery-based instruction enhance learning? *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 103, 1-18.

WEEK 6: Class Size

Parents and policymakers have heralded class size as an important factor for improving student outcomes central to many definitions of an ideal school. Through a historical review of class size reduction research, we will devote this week to critiquing its methodology and implications for our evolving definition of the perfect classroom.

October 11:

- Whitehurst, G. J., & Chingos, M. M. (2011). Class size: What research says and what it means for state policy. *Executive Summary from the Brown Center for Education Policy at Brookings Institute*.
- Nye, B., Hedges, L. V., & Konstantopoulos. (2002). Do low-achieving students benefit more from small class sizes? Evidence from the Tennessee class size experiment. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, 24, 201-217.

UNIT III: THE SCHOOL (WEEKS 7-9)**WEEK 7: School Organization & Climate**

A classic critique and recent review serve as the springboard for our discussion of several school-level factors that interact to influence the academic success and experiences of students.

October 18:

Darling-Hammond, L., Ross, P., & Milliken, M. (2006/2007). High school size, organization, and content: What matters for student success? *Brookings Papers on Education Policy*, 163-203.

WEEK 8: To Group or Not to Group?

Is the perfect school “one size fits all”, or should it be tailored to certain student characteristics such as gender or giftedness? This question will guide our discussion of the controversial benefits attributed to ability grouping and single-sex schools.

October 25:

Neihart, M. (2007). The socioaffective impact of acceleration and ability grouping: Recommendations for best practice. *Gifted Child Quarterly*, 51, 330-341.

From *Taking Sides*:

Meyer, P. (2008). Learning separately: The case for single-sex schools. *Education Next*.

Anfara, V.A., & Mertens, S.B. (2008). Do single-sex classes and schools make a difference? *Middle School Journal*.

WEEK 9: Charter Schools

Charter schools are a relatively new frontier for school reform, inspiring intense debate within both scholarly and popular circles. Personal stories and astounding statistics in *Waiting for “Superman”* captivated the attention of the media and moviegoers alike, but what does research suggest about the academic opportunities and outlook for students attending charter schools?

November 1:

Fryer, R. G. (2012). Learning from the successes and failures of charter schools. *Hamilton Project Discussion Paper*. Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institute.

Tuttle, C. C. et al. (2010). *Student characteristics and achievement in 22 KIPP middle schools: Final report*. Washington D.C.: Mathematica, Inc.

UNIT IV: THE COUNTRY (WEEKS 10-12)**WEEK 10: History and Hurdles of Education Reform**

This week, we will discuss the legacy and lessons of major education reform movements intended to improve the quality of American schools.

November 8:

Jackson, G. B. (2008). *History of American education reform: Lessons for the future* (pp. 233 - 298). Washington, D.C.: Vardquest.

WEEK 11: No Child Left Behind? Learning in the Era of High-Stakes Testing

The No Child Left Behind Act rang in a new era of accountability and standardized testing as the criteria for judging school quality. We will debate the effectiveness of these policies as well as their influence on classroom instruction and achievement-related outcomes, including students' motivation and engagement.

November 15:

Schraw, G. (2010). No school left behind. *Educational Psychologist*, 45, 71-75.

William, D. (2010). Standardized testing and school accountability. *Educational Psychologist*, 45, 107 - 122.

Anderman et al. (2010). Value-added models of assessment: Implications for motivation and accountability. *Educational Psychologist*, 45, 127-137.

WEEK 12: Global Race to the Top: Lessons from Finland

The focus on formal grading and standards-based testing that characterizes American schools is absent from those in Finland, yet their students perform among the highest on international assessments of science, math, and reading. The remarkable story of Finland's schools, with a particular focus on how they foster academic motivation and engagement, will be the topic this week.

November 22:

Hancock, L. (2011). Why are Finland's schools successful? *Smithsonian Magazine*. Available online at: <http://www.smithsonianmag.com/innovation/why-are-finlands-schools-successful-49859555/?all&no-ist>

Aho, E., Pitkanen, K., & Sahlberg, P. (2006). *Policy development and reform principles of basic and secondary education in Finland since 1968* (pp. 120 - 135). Washington, D.C.: World Bank.

WEEK 13: Your Solutions for the Perfect School**November 29: FINAL PROJECT PRESENTATIONS**

IN SEARCH OF THE PERFECT SCHOOL Final Project Overview

This course culminates in a final paper and presentation in which you will propose the "perfect" secondary school. How would you define the perfect school, and what would realize this vision? Framed by these two questions, your proposal should creatively *integrate* and *apply* the concepts, theory, research, and policy discussed throughout the semester. You will present your vision of the perfect school along with the theoretical and empirical arguments for it in an 11-15 page paper and a 3-5 minute PowerPoint presentation. We will discuss both assignments in more detail throughout the semester, but here's an overview so you can start brainstorming and writing as soon as you're ready!

FINAL PAPER

Coming into your own as an academic writer is an exciting and important part of your undergraduate education that is fostered through practice, feedback, and revision. The final paper is an opportunity for all three, achieved through a "recursive submission process". This process begins with submitting a polished first draft of each section described below. These section drafts *must* reflect your best effort at scholarly writing and thinking, with those that do receiving extensive written feedback from me. Next, you will incorporate my feedback in either: 1) a second draft if you prefer additional feedback accompanied by a working grade on any section or 2) the final version of your paper that includes every section. Your revised sections should then be compiled and submitted as a single, APA-formatted document no later than Sunday, 12/18 at 11:59pm. All first section drafts and final papers should be submitted via the course website. If you have difficulty submitting a section draft or final paper via the course website, you are responsible for ensuring it is verifiably submitted by the deadline through another means (e.g., by email).

Your final paper should be organized into the following four sections, with each adhering to proper formatting as defined by the APA Publication Manual:

Introduction (2-3 pages), first draft due on Sunday, 10/2 at 11:59pm

If you had one minute to convince the American public that we should redesign secondary schools, what would you say? Think of the introductory paragraphs as an opportunity to "hook" readers and "sell" them on the importance of both your paper and the topic it explores. This can be the most challenging section of a manuscript, but one that gives you a chance to show off your writing style and passion for the topic at hand. Why should policymakers, practitioners, and parents care about creating the perfect school? Situating this question in both a contemporary and historical context helps sell the importance of answering it! This section of your paper should be grounded in research and theory when either can bolster your claims, but otherwise be creative! Have fun writing it-- your enthusiasm for finding the perfect school will be contagious! The introductory paragraphs should end with a "road map" previewing what readers can expect in the remaining sections of your paper.

The Classroom (4-5 pages), first draft due on Sunday, 10/30 at 11:59pm

The School (4-5 pages), first draft due on Sunday, 11/20 at 11:59pm

Relying heavily on research and theory, you should approach these sections as a more traditional scholarly paper while maintaining your unique writing style. This balancing act is a skill not a talent, and thus the two main sections of your final paper are an opportunity to hone the skill of scholarly writing. Take cues from the assigned readings and notice how they introduce ideas, start paragraphs, and construct sentences.

In *each* of these two main sections of your paper, you must do the following:

- 1) Address all of the major topics we talked about, as defined by our weekly overall themes (e.g., coeducational versus single-sex schools).
- 2) Include at least one additional topic of personal interest beyond those defined by our weekly overall themes.
- 3) Make convincing use of at least one theoretical perspective or model in addition to grounding your arguments in empirical evidence.
- 4) Accurately cite at least five peer-reviewed empirical or theoretical papers beyond those assigned for the course. These articles must have either appeared in journals with a one- or five-year impact factor that exceeds 1.5 or have been cited at least 50 times.

Conclusion (1-2 pages), optional first draft due on Sunday, 12/4 by 11:59pm

The concluding paragraphs of your final paper are where you remind readers of its overarching questions and their practical importance. Doing so is accomplished by circling back to the "selling points" of your Introduction and connecting them with the main points of "The Classroom" and "The School". What does the perfect secondary school look like, and why should we redesign schools in its image? Reminding readers of your answers to these questions will help them remember your paper and its importance.

FINAL PRESENTATION

From freshmen on their first day of college to faculty members giving the final talk of their career, public speaking can be an anxiety-provoking exercise for *anyone* in academia. However, many academics find that practice alleviates this anxiety and helps develop their unique presentation style. This style should showcase your personality, knowledge of the presentation topic, and passion for it. You'll have an opportunity to develop this skill through a 3-5 minute PowerPoint presentation during the last week of class. In this presentation, you will share your vision of the perfect school along with select empirical and theoretical support for it.

FINAL DEADLINES

- The final presentations will occur during class on Tuesday, 11/29.
- PowerPoint presentations must be submitted to me no later than Monday, 11/28 at 11:59pm.
- The final version of your paper is due on Sunday, 12/18 at 11:59pm.