

# 'We Don't Need No Education:'

A Social History of Activism in U.S. Education from the Early Republic to Today

## Course Overview:

From the earliest common schools in the United States until today, education has never 'just' been about the transfer of necessary knowledge from one generation to another. Education at all levels has been used to shape students, whether according to cultural or gender norms, as good citizens, moral individuals, or workers in the machine. This is often called the "hidden curriculum." And yet, students have rarely been the passive clay architects of education often hope them to be. Students have not only rebelled against the content, rules, or environment of their education, but have often used schools as a platform from which to advocate for wider societal change.

In this course students will learn about the history of education on campus in the larger context of the social history of the United States. Students will learn to think critically about their own education and education in general as they situate movements and activism within education into the larger history of the United States. Students will ask and answer questions on the how and



whys of education. How have social movements shaped U.S. schools? How do schools succeed or fail in shaping students? Why have people pushed back against education historically, and why do many continue to do so today? And how have grade schools and campuses become platforms for student activism on campus and beyond? By the end of the course students will have gained a greater thoughtful awareness to their educational environment. Students should also feel empowered to effect change in their campus and beyond.

## Format:

This class will meet for discussion of the assigned readings 1.5 hours twice a week.

## Assignments and grading:

Participation (30%): Students are expected to come to class fully prepared and participate in discussion.

Weekly response papers (30%): Three times during the course, students must pick a week's readings and critically evaluate them in a 2-3 page paper. The choice of which set of readings is up to the students. The emphasis should be on critical analysis, not summary. These papers will be graded on a check, check-minus, check-plus system.

Final Paper (40%): The capstone to the course will be a minimum 10-15 page research paper on a topic related to the course. Alternatively, students may conduct a final project with instructor permission.

## Course Schedule:

### Week 1: Introduction

#### Class 1: Introduction Part 1

- Helen Lefkowitz Horowitz, *Campus Life: Undergraduate Cultures from the End of the Eighteenth Century to the Present* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1987), Chapter 1.

#### Class 2: Introduction Part 2

- Helen Lefkowitz Horowitz, *Campus Life: Undergraduate Cultures from the End of the Eighteenth Century to the Present*, Chapter 2 “College Men: The War Between Students and Faculty.”

### Week 2: Class and Education in Antebellum America

#### Class 1: Emergence of the Middle Class and the ‘American Way’

- Karen Halttunen, *Confidence Men and Painted Women: A Study of Middle-class Culture in America, 1830-1870* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982). Preface, Chapter 1 “The Era of the Confidence Man,” and Chapter 2 “Hypocrisy and Sincerity in the World of Strangers.”
- John R. Thelin, *A History of America Higher Education*, Chapter 1 “Colleges in the Colonial Era” and Chapter 2 “Creating the ‘American Way’ in Higher Education: College-Building, 1785-1860.”

#### Class 2: Enlightenment Thought, Early America, and Women’s Education

- Margaret A. Nash, *Women’s Education in the United States, 1780-1840* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005). Chapters 1,2,4,6.

### Week 3: African Americans and Education

#### Class 1: Early African American Education

- Hilary J. Moss, *Schooling Citizens: The Struggle for African American Education in Antebellum America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009). Chapters 1-4 “African American Activism under the Shadow of Slavery.”

#### Class 2: Abolition Activism

- J. Brent Morris, *Oberlin, Hotbed of Abolitionism: College, Community, and the Fight for Freedom and Equality in Antebellum America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2014). Pages 1-80, 161-211.

## Week 4: Women and Gender in 19<sup>th</sup> Century Higher Education

### Class 1: Architectures of Control

- Helen Lefkowitz Horowitz, *Alma Mater: Design and Education in the Women's Colleges from Their Nineteenth-Century Beginnings to the 1930s* (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1984). Chapters 1, 2, 3, 6.

### Class 2: Campus Life

- Helen Lefkowitz Horowitz, *Alma Mater: Design and Education in the Women's Colleges from Their Nineteenth-Century Beginnings to the 1930s*, Chapters 5, 11, 12.

## Week 5: Gender and Social Movements at the Turn of the Century

### Class 1: From 19<sup>th</sup> Century Reformers to 20<sup>th</sup> Century Professionals

- Lynn D. Gordon, *Gender and Higher Education in Progressive Era* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990). Introduction, Chapter 4 "Vassar College, 1865-1920: Women with Missions," Conclusion. Pg. 1-11, 121-164, 189-200.

### Class 2:

- Browse the online exhibits concerning suffrage campaigns at Bryn Mawr College and Mt. Holyoke College. The one at Mt. Holyoke is particularly nice because of the variety of primary sources which display the wide range of student opinions and activities, including the many who were apathetic or opposed to women's suffrage.  
Bryn Mawr: < <http://www.brynmawr.edu/library/exhibits/suffrage/nces1.html> >.  
Mt. Holyoke: < <https://www.mtholyoke.edu/courses/rschwartz/hatlas/suffrage/> >.

## Week 6: Education, Class, and Race

### Class 1: "The Female Talented Tenth"

- Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham, *Righteous Discontent: The Women's Movement in the Black Baptist Church, 1880-1920* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993). Chapter 1 "The Black Church: A Gender Perspective," Chapter 2 "The Female Talented Tenth," and Chapter 7 "The Politics of Respectability." Pg. 1-46, 185-230.

### Class 2: Black Education in the South

- James D. Anderson, *The Education of Blacks in the South, 1860-1935* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1988). Chapter 2 "The Hampton Model of Normal School Industrial Education, 1868-1915," Chapter 3 "Education and the Race Problem in the New South: The Struggle for Ideological Hegemony," Chapter 7 "Training the Apostles of Liberal Culture: Black Higher Education, 1900-1935," Epilogue "Black Education in Southern History." Pg. 33-109, 238-

## Week 7: Education, Race, and Citizenship

### Class 1: Advancement and White Reformers

- Kim Cary Warren, *The Quest for Citizenship: African American and Native American Education in Kansas, 1880-1935* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010). Introduction and Chapters 1-4.

### Class 2: Defining One's Own Identity

- Kim Cary Warren, *The Quest for Citizenship*, Part III "New Leaders in the Twentieth Century" including Chapters 5 and 6 and the Conclusion, pg. 123-179.

## Week 8: The 1960s and 70s Across the US

### Class 1: SDS and Beyond

- Helen Lefkowitz Horowitz, *Campus Life: Undergraduate Cultures from the End of the Eighteenth Century to the Present*, Chapter 10 "The 1960s" and Chapter 11 "The Nerds Take Revenge."
- Students for a Democratic Society, Port Huron Manifesto, 1962. Available online at many websites including: [http://www2.iath.virginia.edu/sixties/HTML\\_docs/Resources/Primary/Manifestos/SDS\\_Port\\_Huron.html](http://www2.iath.virginia.edu/sixties/HTML_docs/Resources/Primary/Manifestos/SDS_Port_Huron.html).

### Class 2: Protest in the North and South

- Blake Slonecker, "The Columbia Coalition: African Americans, New Leftists, and Counterculture at the Columbia University Protest of 1968," *Journal of Social History* 41, no. 4 (Summer 2008): 967-996.
- Christopher Broadhurst, "There Can Be No Business as Usual," *Southern Cultures*, 21, no. 2 (Summer 2015): 84-101.

## Week 9: The 1960s and 70s –Black Campus Movements

### Class 1: Introduction to the Black Campus Movements

- Martha Biondi, *The Black Revolution on Campus* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012). Introduction, Chapter 1 "Moving towards Blackness: The Rise of Black Power on Campus" Pg. 7-37. And one chapter of the student's choice, selecting from chapters 2,3,4 and 5, and dividing evenly among the class.
- Ibram H. H. Rogers, *The Black Campus Movement: Black Students and the Racial Reconstitution of Higher Education, 1965-1972* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012). Introduction, Chapter 3 "Strike While the Iron is Hot": Civil Rights in the Long Black Student Movement," Chapter 4

“‘March That Won’t Turn Around’: Formation and Development of the Black Campus Movement.”  
Pg. 1-7, 49-87.

## **Class 2: Focus on Black Studies**

- Biondi, *Black Revolution on Campus*, Chapter 6 “The Counterrevolution on Campus: Why Was Black Studies So Controversial,” Chapter 7 “The Black Revolution Off-Campus,” and Chapter 8 “What Happened to Black Studies?”

## **Week 10: The 1960s and 70s – Gender and Sexuality**

### **Class 1: Personal to Political**

- Sara Evans, *Personal Politics: The Roots of Women’s Liberation in the Civil Rights Movement and the New Left* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1979). Chapter 1 “Prologue” and Chapter 9 “Personal Politics”
- Carol Hanisch, “The Personal is Political,” 1969 along with 2006 introduction. Available online at: <http://www.carolhanisch.org/CHwritings/PIP.html>.
- Jennifer Stetzer, “From Sympathizers to Organizers,” pp. 271-281, in *Yards and Gates: Gender in Harvard and Radcliffe History*, Laurel Thatcher Ulrich, ed. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004).

### **Class 2: The Sexual Revolution on Campus**

- Beth Bailey, *Sex in the Heartland* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999). Introduction, Chapter 2 “Sex and the Therapeutic Culture,” Chapter 5 “Revolutionary Intent,” Chapter 6 “Sex as a Weapon,” and Chapter 7 “Sex and Liberation.”

## **Week 11: Black Lives Matter and Preliminary Presentations**

### **Class 1: Contemporary Case 1: Black Lives Matter**

- Khadijah White, “Black lives on campuses matter: the rise of the new black student movement,” *Soundings* 63 (2016): 86-97.
- Alondra Nelson, “The Longue Durée of Black Lives Matter,” *American Journal of Public Health* 106, no. 10 (October 2016): 1734-1737.

### **Class 2: Project Presentation**

- For this class students will prepare and give a short presentation on the topic of their final project.

## **Week 12: Contemporary Cases 2&3: Protest on Display**

### **Class 1: Protest by Performance Art - Carry that Weight**

- Roberta Smith, “In a Mattress, a Lever for Art and Political Protest,” *New York Times* (21 September 2014) <<https://www.nytimes.com/2014/09/22/arts/design/in-a-mattress-a-fulcrum-of-art-and-political-protest.html>>

- Emily Bazelon, "Have we learned anything from the Columbia rape case?" *New York Times Magazine* (29 May 2015).
- Ariel Kaminer, "Accusers and the Accused, Crossing Paths at the University," *New York Times* (21 December 2014) <[https://www.nytimes.com/2014/12/22/nyregion/accusers-and-the-accused-crossing-paths-at-columbia.html?\\_r=1](https://www.nytimes.com/2014/12/22/nyregion/accusers-and-the-accused-crossing-paths-at-columbia.html?_r=1)>.
- Erin Gloria Ryan, "How to Make an Accused Rapist Look Good," *Jezebel* (6 February 2015) <<https://jezebel.com/how-to-make-an-accused-rapist-look-good-1682583526>>.
- Emma Bogler, "Frustrated by Columbia's inaction, student reports sexual assault to police," *Columbia Daily Spectator* (28 December 2016) <<http://columbiaspectator.com/news/2014/05/16/frustrated-columbias-inaction-student-reports-sexual-assault-police/>>.

## **Class 2: Protest by Absurdity - Cocks Not Glocks**

- Jason Morris, "Texas figuring out how to handle campus carry law," *CNN* (10 October 2015) <<http://www.cnn.com/2015/10/09/us/texas-campus-carry-law/>>.
- Tom Dart, "Cocks Not Glocks: Texas students carry dildos on campus to protest gun law," *The Guardian* (25 August 2016) <<https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2016/aug/25/cocks-not-glocks-texas-campus-carry-gun-law-protest>>.
- Gail Sheehy, "The Gun-Control Movement Gains a Few Hard Inches at UT-Austin," *Jezebel* (29 August 2016) <<https://jezebel.com/the-gun-control-movement-gains-a-few-hard-inches-at-ut-1785889695>>.