

## ELC 697 SELECTED CRITICAL SOCIAL ISSUES IN AMERICAN EDUCATION

**3 Credits**

1. **For Whom Planned:** Elective course in the Masters of School Administration, the Ed.S. and Ed.D. in Educational Leadership, the Ph.D. in Cultural Foundations, and other departments in the school of education.
2. **Instructor: Dr. Shapiro**  
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Phone: 334-3466  
e-mail: [svishapiro@nc.rr.com](mailto:svishapiro@nc.rr.com)
3. **Course Purpose:** In this course issues in American education will be considered from a sociological viewpoint. Our starting point is the belief that the school reflects the values and beliefs of the wider society. Indeed to understand the school is, in many ways, to understand the culture of American society. Our emphasis will be on the connections between schooling and the phenomena of social, cultural, political and economic change in the United States.
4. **Teachers Academy Conceptual Framework:**
5. **Course Goals:**
  1. Develop capacity to understand education within a social, political and moral framework.
  2. Think critically about the social context of education.
6. **Teaching Strategies:** Lectures, class discussions, group work.
7. **Course Expectations:**

Grades for the class will be awarded according to the following criteria:

  1. Participation in class discussions and evidence of completing assigned readings.
  2. Completion of a final paper.

**8. Texts:**

S. Shapiro and D. Purpel. *Critical social Issues in American Education: Democracy and Meaning in a Globalizing World*. Lawrence Erlbaum, 2005.

**9. Topical Outline:**

- Looking at education from a critical sociological perspective
- Human nature and human possibility; education as socialization
- Ideological transmission; schools and the mass media as transmitters of values, beliefs and moral outlook
- The moral and spiritual crisis in American society; education and the culture wars
- Education, alienation and the search for meaning
- Standardized testing, hierarchy and the culture of positivism
- Education and inequality; competition and possessive-individualism
- The culture of consumption and its discontents
- Knowledge, curriculum and the construction of reality
- Race, ethnicity and multiculturalism; dilemmas of the postmodern world
- Work in America; deskilling, unemployment and the globalized economy
- Education and citizenship; the struggle for a critical democracy
- Gender and schooling; educational practice and the 'masculine' world-view
- The media, popular culture and violence
- Peace education in a time of war
- Alternative discourses; critical pedagogy, civic education, *Tikkun Olam*