

**Schooled to Obey, Learning to Protest:
The Politics of Schooling in Latin America and the Middle East
Fall 2014**

SWARTHMORE COLLEGE
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My hope is with you, the elementary student. My hope is that, God willing, the progress of our country will be in your hands and that you will be its inheritor.

Imam Khomeini, *Second Grade Farsi*, 1979

When a revolution comes under economic pressure, when it comes under political pressure, no one will reproach or blame this revolution...However, if this revolution is unable to teach, train, and nurture (*natavanad tarbiat bekonad*) its children then it will come under question.

The Supreme Leader of the Revolution, Ayatollah Ali Khamanei

“We lived as Muslims for over 50 years. Now they come and teach us what it means to be a ‘real Muslim,’ that all of this time we’ve been doing it wrong?”
Esmat Khanom, widower and pensioner, Tehran, Iran

Why schools? Why study education as political science? This course explores the emancipatory and disciplinary effects of schooling produced by modernizing states as they pursue their developmental dreams and nationalist imaginings. The class tests the premise that the politics of schooling in the late-developing, occasionally post-revolutionary countries of Latin American and the Middle East converge, allowing us to build generalizable and falsifiable theories related to questions of identity formation, culture, and relationships of power.

Throughout the term we will consider the following sets of paired questions:

Are schools an avenue for upward mobility and personal emancipation?
Or is schooling an instrument for legitimizing the power of elites and dominant groups?

Is the purpose of schooling to reward cognitive ability and technical skills, to foster, in other words, an educated and technocratic class capable of serving the developmental state?
Or do schools exist primarily to disseminate and inculcate shared cultural and political values and beliefs, to secure “right thoughts?” Are schools about the heart, or the mind?

Are teachers agents of the state, principally?
Or do instructors serve the needs and interests of the school community, including parents, students, and fellow teachers?

Should we study schools as autonomous institutions set apart from their cultural, political, and economic contexts?
Or do schools reflect and reproduce the societies and polities within which they are embedded?

Why This Course? The Oprah Confessional

Years earlier, in an East Palo Alto, California elementary school classroom and still far removed from graduate school and the PhD, I served as the homeroom teacher of a class of twenty first-graders. Part of my task was to help my students, almost all of them immigrants or the children of recent immigrants from Mexico, to become Americans. But what kind of Americans? Which stories would I tell them, myself the son of immigrants from Iran?

The Columbus and Thanksgiving stories proved to be especially tricky. I was serving in a predominantly Latino and indigenous community (the two, of course, often overlap): Would I tell my students that Columbus “discovered” the New World, the story I had learned growing up? Or would I share with them the more recent, revisionist version that has Columbus ravaging the tribes encountered in Hispaniola?

What of the traditional Thanksgiving narrative? The comity of the Thanksgiving feast serves as an implicit rebuke of the Old World’s sectarian and ethnic strife, the image of settlers and natives, hosts and newcomers, sitting around the same table, celebrating the year’s harvest, a powerful and iconic representation of America’s promise. Yet within a generation, the colonists and Amerindians of New England were engaged in one of the most brutal wars in American history, one that ended in tragedy for the native population.

Against these “new histories” what was I, the teacher, to do? Was the importance of instilling a shared identity in a country as diverse as America more important than the need to tell children the “true” (i.e., the *whole*) story? I wondered if national mythologies, no matter how false or misleading, were sometimes necessary to bind an otherwise fractious society together. My own internal struggle, fraught with anguish and ambivalence, led me to wonder about the sort of daily negotiations teachers might make in more charged contexts, places where the choice of lesson plan or style of delivery might lead not only to the loss of a job or the ostracism of one’s community, but could very result in violent sanction, or worse.

Requirements:

Short Essay, 5-7 pages (20%)

Presentation and Précis of Your Final Project, 5 pages (20%)

Research Paper, 15-20 pages (30%)

Participation and Blog Posts (30%)

The best way to produce good words is to slog through the bad ones, to seek out inspiration through the routine of writing. In addition to the two essays, you will write semi-weekly blog entries (approximately 250 words or one single-spaced page of text) in reaction to the readings and lectures---queries, puzzles, contradictions, in short anything that you find to be striking. **Blog posts will be due at noon on Saturday.**

The blogs are there to improve your analytical writing but also to serve as alternative site of discussion and debate. Once you've finished your blog post, you'll be asked to provide a "response-to-a-response" of no more than 250 words, made in conversation with a classmate's posting (you can pick whomever you want). Response postings are expected to be respectful of the dignity and efforts of other students, and to provide constructive criticism or praise on the structure, style, and content of the essay. **These will be due at noon on Sunday.**

Readings:

The following texts are available for purchase at the bookstore. All other readings are available on Blackboard.

- Mary Kay Vaughan, *Cultural Politics in Revolution: Teachers, Peasants, and Schools in Mexico, 1930-1940*
- Gregory Starrett, *Putting Islam to Work: Education, Politics, and Religious Transformation in Egypt*
- Sam Kaplan, *The Pedagogical State: Education and the Politics of National Culture in Post-1980 Turkey*
- Aurolyn Luykx, *The Citizen Factory: Schooling and Cultural Production in Bolivia*
- Fida Adely, *Gendered Paradoxes: Educating Jordanian Women in Nation, Faith, and Progress*
- Jeffrey Lesser, *Negotiating National Identity: Immigrants, Minorities, and the Struggle for Ethnicity in Brazil*
- Yael Zerubavel, *Recovered Roots: Collective Memory and the Making of Israeli National Tradition*

WEEK ONE

Teaching Columbus

September 3

- Arthur M. Schlesinger, "The Battle of the Schools" and "The Decomposition of America," in *The Disuniting of America: Reflections on a Multicultural Society*
- Shervin Malekzadeh, "What the Jeffersons Taught Me about Being an American"

WEEK TWO

Children of the Revolution: The Negotiation of Identity During the Cardenista Period in Mexico

September 10

- Mary Kay Vaughan, *Cultural Politics in Revolution: Teachers, Peasants, and Schools in Mexico, 1930-1940*
- Elsie Rockwell, "Schools of the Revolution: Enacting and Contesting State Forms in Tlaxcala, 1910-1930," in Gilbert M. Joseph and Daniel Nugent, editors, *Everyday Forms of State Formation: Revolution And the Negotiation of Rule in Modern Mexico*
- Christopher Boyer, Introduction and "Village Revolutionaries," in *Becoming Campesinos: Politics, Identity, and Agrarian Struggle in Postrevolutionary Michoacan, 1920-1935*

WEEK THREE

Critical Education Approaches to Schooling

September 17

- William Roseberry, "Hegemony and the Language of Contention," in *Everyday Forms of State Formation*
- Michael W. Apple, "The State and the Politics of Knowledge," in *The State and the Politics of Knowledge*
- Ting-Hong Wong and Michael W. Apple, "Rethinking the Education/State Formation Connection: Pedagogic Reform in Singapore, 1945-1965"
- Paulo Freire, Chapter Two, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*
- Paul Willis, Introduction, *Learning to Labor: How Working Class Kids Get Working Class Jobs*, ix-59, 119-155

WEEK FOUR

Schools, State Formation, & the Making of Modern Iran

September 25

- David Marashi, Introduction, *Education and the Making of Modern Iran*, pp. 1-45, 91-124, 163-171, 269-281, 300-328
- Monica Ringer, Introduction and "Modernization, Cultural Integrity, and the Battle for Iran, 1860-1906," in *Education, Religion, and the Discourse of Cultural Reform in Qajar Iran*
- Ringer, "Negotiating Modernity: Ulama and the Discourse of Modernity in Nineteenth-Century Iran," in *Iran: Between Tradition and Modernity*
- Afsaneh Najmabadi, "Crafting an Educated Wife and Mother," in *Women with Mustaches and Men Without Beards: Gender and Sexual Anxieties of Iranian Modernity*
- Afshin Marashi, "The Pedagogic State: Education and Nationalism under Reza Shah," in *Nationalizing Iran*
- Jasamin Rostam-Kolayi, "From Evangelizing to Modernizing Iranians: The American Presbyterian Mission and its Iranian Students"

WEEK FIVE

Failing to Work: State Efforts to Control Public Morality and the Fragmentation of Religion in Egypt

October 1

- Gregory Starrett, *Putting Islam to Work: Education, Politics, and Religious Transformation in Egypt*
- Linda Herrera and Carlos Torress, *Cultures of Arab Schooling: Critical Ethnographies from Egypt* (selections)

WEEK SIX**Elite Competition and its Effects on Subjectivity in Turkey****October 8**

- Sam Kaplan, *The Pedagogical State: Education and the Politics of National Culture in Post-1980 Turkey*

Fall Break!**WEEK SEVEN****Negotiated Emancipation from Below in Bolivia****October 22**

- Aurolyn Luykx, *The Citizen Factory: Schooling and Cultural Production in Bolivia*

WEEK EIGHT**The Emancipatory and Disciplinary Effects of Schooling on Women in Jordan****October 29**

- Fida Adely, *Gendered Paradoxes: Educating Jordanian Women in Nation, Faith, and Progress*

WEEK NINE**Reading Bourdieu in Beijing****November 5**

- Joel Andreas, *Rise of the Red Engineers: The Cultural Revolution and the Origins of China's New Class*
- Roy Nash, "Bourdieu on Education and Social and Cultural Reproduction"

WEEK TEN**Textbook Learning: None of the Cool Kids are Doing It****November 12**

- Eleanor A. Doumato and Gregory Starrett, *Teaching Islam: Textbooks and Religion in the Middle East*
- Shervin Malekzadeh, "Children without Childhood, Adults without Adulthood: Changing Conceptions of the Iranian Child in Postrevolutionary Textbooks"
- Malekzadeh, "Everything I Need to Know about Democracy I learned in 3rd Grade"

WEEK ELEVEN

Literacy Movements in Postrevolutionary Cuba, Nicaragua, Iran, and in “Prerevolutionary” Chile and Brazil

November 19

- Ana Serra, “Speaking at Cross Purposes: The Failed Identification between Teachers and Students in the Literacy Campaign,” in *The “New Man” in Cuba: Culture and Identity in the Revolution*
- Rebecca Herman, “An Army of Educators: Gender, Revolution, and the Cuban Literacy Campaign of 1961”
- Robert F. Arnove and Anthony Dewees, “Education and Revolutionary Transformation in Nicaragua, 1979-1990”
- Golnar Mehran, “Social Implications of Literacy in Iran”
- Andrew J. Kirkendall, “Entering History: Paulo Freire and the Politics of the Brazilian Northeast, 1958-1964”
- Kirkendall, “Paulo Freire, Eduardo Frei, Literacy Training and the Politics of Consciousness Raising in Chile, 1964 to 1970”

WEEK THIRTEEN

Crafting a National Identity in Israel

November 26

- Yael Zerubavel, *Recovered Roots: Collective Memory and the Making of Israeli National Tradition*
- Assaf Meshulam and Michael W. Apple, “Israel/Palestine, Unequal Power, and Movements for Democratic Education,” in *Global Crises, Social Justice, and Education*

WEEK FOURTEEN

December 3

- Presentations