This course examines how the methods and content of American schooling relate to broader intellectual, economic, and political trends: particularly, theories of mind and child development, the role of expertise in a democracy, the leverage of political power, and shifting notions of race and class conflict. Readings encompass a range of academic subjects, from mathematics, literature, history, and science to early childhood and vocational/technical education. For reasons of coherence, we will exclude higher education curriculum and most forms of out-of-school learning, although students are welcome to pursue either in their final papers.

While the course is historical in nature, no previous historical training is necessary, and readings intend to impart critical perspectives on curriculum rather than comprehensive knowledge of past eras. By the end, students should recognize foundational assumptions and recurring themes of curricular reform, as well as the myriad ways in which curriculum is embedded in school politics and American culture writ large.

Students should achieve the following objectives by the end of the semester:

- Recognize general theories and debates about the purpose of American curriculum.
- Understand recurring historical themes of curricular development reform.
- Recognize underlying psychological, economic, and political influences on teaching and learning.
- Produce a piece of thoughtful, publication-quality research on a topic of their choosing.

**Grading**

**Bi-Weekly Reading Responses (25% of final grade)**

Students will need to post seven short responses to assigned readings, roughly one every other week, though they may choose which weeks to write. Each response should provide an overview of the author’s argument, at least one direct reference to the reading, and one question that we might take up in discussion. In weeks with multiple readings, students may focus on one reading or combine their analysis of several. Students are encouraged to respond to classmates’ posts, both before and after class discussion. *Responses are due no later than Monday night, providing classmates time to review and respond to them before Wednesday’s meeting.*

*Responses will be graded for accuracy, insight, and clarity of writing.*

**Class Participation (25% of final grade)**

Students are expected to arrive in class each week with a hard or electronic copy of the reading, ready to pose or respond to the discussion questions posted online. Strong participation grades reflect a willingness to engage in sustained discussion on a topic and answer difficult questions,
as well as mastery of the reading. Knowing that our class is a community of shared deliberation, students should demonstrate generosity and respect to their classmates; all should feel equally welcome to engage. If you need to miss class, please send a brief email in advance.

**Final Paper (Draft 5%; Full Paper 45% of final grade)**
Students will need to write a final paper of eighteen to twenty-five pages (inclusive of notes) on a topic relevant both to course content and to their own research interests. The paper should be well written—for an A, publication quality—and should include comprehensive research, either in the form of a literature review and/or original work. Possible topics include critical analyses of a particular form of curriculum, historical or philosophical appraisals of current curricular initiatives, or policy proposals for curriculum reform in the future. Please note that the titles below are merely an introduction into the rich literature of curriculum history, which encompasses political science, economics, history, and many other fields. Students are encouraged to discuss their topic with the professor before getting underway. *A complete draft of the paper is due in class on November 15th. Final papers should be emailed to the professor by 4:00 P.M. on Friday, December 15th. Late work will not be accepted without a prearranged extension.*

**University of Maryland Course Policies**
This course adheres to the University’s course-related policies regarding absences, academic integrity, non-discrimination, and student rights. Please visit the following site for more information, and let me know if you have any questions about your rights or responsibilities. [http://www.ugst.umd.edu/courserelatedpolicies.html](http://www.ugst.umd.edu/courserelatedpolicies.html)

**Course Readings**
Please note that this is a reading-intensive course, with either a book or an equivalent number of articles each week. Most course readings are on electronic reserve [R] and available through the course ELMS site. Students are expected to bring either hard or electronic copies of these readings to class, as well as detailed reference notes. Students are encouraged to purchase the following books, which we will read in their entirety.

Schedule of Meetings

Part One: Theories of Curriculum
While we will encounter other theoretical approaches, these selections provide the basic conceptual framework for all subsequent readings. Our first meeting will establish the terminology of curriculum studies and pose a series of questions about the nature of curriculum.

Week #1 (08/30/17)—Introductions to the Course and Curricular Theory
• Eisner, The Educational Imagination (Chapters 2-4) [R]

Also recommended—
Pinar (ed.), Contemporary Curriculum Discourses: Twenty Years of JCT (New York: Peter Lang, 1999)
Null, Curriculum: From Theory to Practice (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2011)

Part Two: Nineteenth-Century Curriculum (1790-1890)
The eighteenth and nineteenth centuries were periods of massive upheaval: nation-building contended with growing sectionalism and ethnic diversity, multiple market revolutions tested the nation’s social fabric. The era’s curricular debates may seem strangely remote from the present, but they underscore the significant relationship between learning content and the methods of instruction and assessment, economic structures, and national identity.

Week #2 (09/06/17)—“Faculty” Psychology and the Schooling of Citizens
• Carson, The Measure of Merit (pp. 11-74) [R]
• Reese, Testing Wars (pp. 8-37) [R]
• Elson, *Guardians of Tradition* (pp.186-242) [R]
• Cohen, *Calculating People: The Spread of Numeracy in Early America* (pp. 116-149) [R]

Also recommended—

Kett, *The Pursuit of Knowledge Under Difficulties: From Self-Improvement to Adult Education in America, 1750-1990*
Elson, *Guardians of Tradition: American Schoolbooks of the Nineteenth Century* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1964)

Week #3 (09/13/17)—Impact of the Market Revolution
• Koganzon, “‘Producing a Reconciliation of Disinterestedness and Commerce’: The Political Rhetoric of Education in the Early Republic” [R]
• Opal, “Academies in the Rural North” [R]
• Hogan, “The Market Revolution and Disciplinary Power” [R]

Also recommended—

Tolley and Beadie, *Chartered Schools: Two Hundred Years of Independent Academies in the United States* (New York: Routledge, 2002)
Johnson, “‘Chanting Choristers’: Simultaneous Recitation in Baltimore’s Nineteenth-Century Primary Schools,” *History of Education Quarterly* 34, no. 1 (Spring 1994)

**Week #4 (09/20/17)—German Idealism and the Kindergarten Movement**
- Shapiro, *Child’s Garden* [R]
- Allen, “Public and Private” [R]
- Beatty, “Kindergartens” [R]

**Also recommended—**
John L. Thomas, “Romantic Reform in America, 1815-1865,” *American Quarterly* (Winter 1965)

**Part Three: Progressive Curriculum (1890-1958)**
The Progressive Era, a period synonymous with social reform, saw major changes in school demographics, governance, finance, and curriculum. Included under the latter heading were alterations to textbooks, visual aids, facilities, and the grouping of students by grade- or ability-level. Of particular interest to us, changes to family structure put a new emphasis on the childhood as a formative stage, while the complexity of modern social problems raised new questions about the use (and misuse) of expertise, public morals, and the nature and uses of science.

**Week #5 (09/27/17)—Curricular Theory in the Progressive Era**
- Kliebard, *The Struggle for the American Curriculum* (Chapters 1-8)

**Also recommended—**
Counts, *Dare the Schools Build a New Social Order?* (New York: Arno, 1969)
Childs, *American Pragmatism and Education: An Interpretation and Criticism*
Bagley, *Education and the Emergent Man* (New York: Nelson and Sons, 1934)

**Week #6 (10/04/17)—Curricular Realities in the Progressive Era**

- Cuban, *How Teachers Taught: Constancy and Change in American Classrooms, 1890-1990*

**Also recommended—**


Cuban, *Teachers and Machines: Classroom Use of Technology Since 1920*


Johanek and Puckett, *Leonard Covello and the Making of Benjamin Franklin High School*

Mirel, *The Rise and Fall of an Urban School System: Detroit, 1907-1981*


**Week #7 (10/11/17)—Education, Expertise, and Democracy**

- Laats, “Monkeys, Morality, and Modern America,” in *The Other School Reformers* (pp. 25-71) [R]
- Armitage, *The Nature Study Movement* (pp. 1-41) [R]

**Also recommended—**


**Week #8 (10/18/17) Differentiation and Mass Education**

- Tropea, “Order and Special Children” [R]
- Mirel, “Traditional High School” [R]
• Kliebard, *The Struggle for the American Curriculum* (Chapters 9-11)

**Also recommended—**
Wiseman, “High School” (1967)
Engs, *Educating the Disenfranchised and Disinherited* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1999)

**Part Four: Cold War Curriculum**
*Despite criticism from conservatives, radicals, and some racial minorities, the Progressive paradigm dominated curricular discussions until the 1950s, when the Red Scare and the space race put new pressures on educators. Voters increasingly scrutinized the curriculum for subversive or un-American tendencies, demanding a return to academic disciplines even as new psychological theories came to bear on student development.**

**Week #9 (10/25/17)—Culture Wars and the Curriculum**
• Zimmerman, *Whose America?*

**Also recommended—**
Mickenberg, *Learning from the Left: Children's Literature, the Cold War, and Radical Politics in the United States* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005)

**Week #10 (11/01/17)—Social Science and Racial Tolerance**
- Burkholder, *Color in the Classroom*

*Also recommended—*
Connolly, *Slavery in American Children's Literature* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2013)

**Week #11 (11/08/17)—Education, Expertise, and Democracy (again)**
- Rudolph, “Wartime Techniques for Cold War Education,” in *Scientists in the Classroom* (pp. 83-111) [R]
- Ogata, “Building Creativity in Postwar Schools,” in *Designing the Creative Child* (pp. 105-146) [R]

*Also recommended—*
The last part of the course applies historical criticism to topics of present-day significance. We will skirt issues of standardized testing and the Common Core, but devote significant attention to the ways in which curricular knowledge disseminates through public schools and colleges of education, as well as the general language of crisis underlying much curricular reform today.

Week #12 (11/15/17)—How Does Curricular Reform Disseminate?

- Schneider, *From the Ivory Tower to the Schoolhouse*

*A rough draft of your final paper is due at the beginning of class. It should be of sufficient quality to get feedback on both the substance of the argument and the style of writing.*

Week #13 (11/22/17)—No class. Thanksgiving break.

Week #14 (11/29/17)—What is the Role of “Classics” in the Curriculum?

- Pfitzer, *History Repeating Itself* (pp. 15-56) [R]
- Schwebel, *Child-Sized History* (pp. 11-34, 159-177) [R]
- This American Life, “Seeing the Forrest Through the Little Trees”
  [R]
  [R]
  [R]
  [R]

We will spend the second half of class on student research presentations.

Final papers are due by 4:00 on Friday, December 15th.