

ΚΕΠ14 - Sociology of Educational Practices

Tutor: Anna Tsatsaroni

Semester: 6th

ECTS: 4,5

Short Description:

The course focuses on the social character of the selection and organization of educational knowledge, aiming to reveal the social bases and the implicit class assumptions of different forms of educational practice, and to discuss education as the most important institution within the field of symbolic control. In order to explore the nature of educational practices, the course presents, analyses and assesses the theory of educational codes (Basil Bernstein), according to which practices are mechanisms for social and symbolic control, serving to reproduce social order and to construct and regulate pedagogical subjects; i.e., to distribute forms of consciousness, identity and desire.

The course develops in three parts. The first part makes a brief reference to the historical development of the sociological research field which places educational knowledge and educational practices at the centre of its investigations. The second part discusses three basic essays in which Bernstein develops the main conceptual framework of his theory. The third part presents recent empirical studies, which utilize Bernstein's theory in the sociological analysis of changes in knowledge organization and in the practices of its transmission, acquisition and evaluation. Finally, making a brief reference to influences exerted upon sociology by the currents of structuralism and post-structuralism, an effort is made to critically assess the theory of educational codes, in light also of the recent tendencies for continuous educational reforms, emanating from a globalized policy agenda.

Aims:

The main objectives of the course are:

- The understanding of the development and formation of the distinct field of the sociology of educational knowledge, its position within the domain of sociology of education, and the

specific problematic that it constructed in its development and its approach to education and the sociological analysis of knowledge.

- The familiarisation of students with the theory of pedagogic codes and the recognition of its specific contribution to the sociological study of educational knowledge and practices.
- The grasping of the basic concepts and the analytical tools of the theory of pedagogic codes, necessary for identifying the principles of knowledge organisation and for a systematic description of programmes of study, pedagogical practices and forms of evaluation.
- The application of the theory for understanding the possible implications of different forms of organisation, transmission and evaluation of knowledge.

Learning Outcomes

Upon the successful completion of the course students should be able to:

- Know the basic theory, the theoretical concepts and the problematic which in its development gradually helped to delineate the sociology of educational knowledge as a distinct field of theory and research.
- Understand the significance of the sociological perspective in the approach to school knowledge.
- Understand in depth the sociological claim that knowledge is a social construction.
- Recognise the principles of organisation of different forms of educational practice and demonstrate understanding of the consequences concerning both the reproduction of social inequalities and the social regulation of pedagogical subjects.
- Apply appropriate analytical tools for the description and deeper understanding of changes in the programmes of study, pedagogical practices and forms of evaluation, promoted by supranational and national agencies of education policy formation in the current, global context.

The course is designed to enable the students to develop the following competences : analytical skills, abilities for the critical review of research studies, development of arguments, ability to critically assess theories, abilities to apply theories in new contexts and conditions.

Structure:

13 three-hour sessions. The course is taught through a combination of lectures and seminars.

Seminars require students to read systematically the learning materials of the course. They also allow the active participation of students in the learning process, through involvement in the presentation of a selective body of research studies and their discussion in the classroom. The teaching and learning process is supported through the electronic platform e-class

Assessment:

Students' assessment is based on: (a) their contribution and active participation in the teaching and learning process, in particular their performance, orally and in a written form, on an assignment requiring them to review a relevant study (20%); and (b) a written examination (80%).

Bibliography:

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- Gewirtz, Sh. & Cribb, A. (2011) *Understanding education. A sociological perspective*, Athens, Metaichmio (ch. 5).
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