

EE8 Sociological Approaches to Education Policy

Tutor: Anna Tsatsaroni

Semester: 7th

ECTS: 4,5

Short Description:

This course approaches education policy from the perspective of critical sociology ("policy sociology") and aims to introduce students to the systematic and critical study of policies for education. It focuses on the analysis of dominant discourses created by the activity of supranational networks of policy making, which currently define the educational agenda and the limits of legitimate action. It also looks into the enactments of policy, that is to say, the ways in which educational institutions respond to policies and deal with the often conflictual and incompatible demands various policies pose on them. The course shifts between theory and the analysis of concrete policies (e.g., policies on lifelong learning) or value fields (e.g. identity) and aims to familiarise students with the post-structuralist currents of thought, especially Foucault inspired theoretical perspectives and the methodology of discourse analysis.

Aims:

The main objectives of the course are:

- The integration and utilisation of knowledge students have acquired in the courses of sociology and sociology of education that they have learnt during the previous years of their study.
- The familiarisation of students with contemporary perspectives and theories, focusing on the poststructuralist, Foucault-inspired theoretical perspectives.
- The familiarisation of students with the methodology of discourse analysis and the understanding of its special value in the examination of education and education policy as fields of social practice.
- The deeper understanding of education policy and practice as complex and dynamic arenas of social regulation and as spaces within which contemporary/legitimate identities are

projected/shaped.

- Raising and exploring crucial issues concerning contemporary forms of governance of the field of education and their relationships with legitimate forms of knowledge.

Learning Outcomes:

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

- Utilise the specialised knowledge they have acquired in the courses of sociology and sociology of education during the previous years of their study in order to approach crucial issues of educational policy and practice.
- Know the basic theoretical concepts and understand the specific problematic that poststructuralist approaches introduce in the study of educational processes and practices.
- Have research tools of discourse analysis and utilise them to examine systematically various educational policies, in their making and their enactments in concrete, local contexts.
- Pose critical questions concerning the content and the processes of policy formation, in the current globalised conditions.
- Discern the critical issues in educational policy and the developments in a rapidly changing environments.
- Apply specialised knowledge and skills and develop arguments around controversial issues of educational policy and practice.

The course is designed to enable students to develop the following competences: Search different sources, critical reading of policy texts, development of arguments, well-founded formulations of views/positions.

Structure:

13 three-hour sessions. Students are called to engage in individual study, week by week, of relevant texts and bibliographical sources and to participate actively in the educational process. Seminars are the main method of teaching and learning and are based on the discussion of the texts students have studied as part of their homework. An effort is made to utilize knowledge students have acquired during their studies of preceding courses in sociology, sociology of

education and sociology of educational practices; as well as to develop new knowledge and skills that will allow them to get deeper insights into the dynamic environments of education policy making, to analyse and describe policies that are crucial for education, and to explore the enactments of policies in specific, local contexts.

Assessment:

Students' assessment is based on their actual and regular contribution to the seminar, and an oral examination.

Bibliography:

- Ball, S., Maguire, M. & Braun, A. (2012) How schools do policy. Policy enactments in secondary schools, London, Routledge.
- Foucault, M. (1978) The history of sexuality, Volume one, The will to knowledge, Athens, Rappa (pp. 115-127).
- Gewirtz, S. & Cribb, A. (2011) Understanding education A sociological perspective, Athens, Metaichmio (chrs. 3 & 6)
- Howarth, D. (2008) Discourse, Athens, Polytropon.
- Phillips, L. & Jorgensen, M. (2009) Discourse analysis as theory and method, Athens, Papazisi
- Tsoukalas, K. (2010) The invention of otherness. Identities and differences in the era of globalization, Athens, Kastanioti.