

Education 100
Will This Be On The Test? Standardized Testing and American Education
Fall 2019
M, W: 950-1100AM; F: 940-1040AM
Willis 114

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Office Hours: M: 2-3PM; T: 930-1130AM; and by appointment

Course Description

If education is a journey, standardized tests guide our paths every step of the way. Preschools look at test results to identify “gifted and talented” children as young as three years old, just as colleges and universities rely on test scores to make admissions decisions. We now use standardized tests to measure and rank the academic performance of students, schools and states—even nations. How and why have standardized tests become so central to American education? What role does testing play in today’s educational reform agenda? How has testing reflected and shaped core American ideas such as opportunity, equality and merit?

This seminar will explore the following topics, among others—the invention of standardized tests and the growth of the testing industry; the “high stakes” tests required by the federal government; and the controversies surrounding the use of standardized tests, including cheating scandals, charges that they are biased along the lines of race and class and critiques that they narrow the curriculum and stifle student creativity. Our analyses will be informed by a close examination of authentic testing materials, ranging from intelligence tests to the Common Core.

Course Readings

Koretz, Daniel. *The Testing Charade: Pretending to Make Schools Better*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2017.

* All additional readings will be available on Moodle *

Course Requirements

<i>Assignment</i>	<i>Due Date</i>
Participation (15%)	Every class
Analytical Essay 1 (20%)	Sunday, October 20 by 1159PM
Group Presentation (20%)	October 23; November 1; November 11; November 18
Analytical Essay 2 (20%)	Sunday, November 3 by 1159PM
Final Paper (25%)	1-page Proposal due Friday, November 8 by 1159PM Paper due Monday, November 25 by 5PM

Education 100 is a Writing-Rich course and you will have the opportunity to focus on your fundamental writing skills, with an emphasis on drafting and revision. Please note that the Writing Center (located on the 4th floor Libe) has peer writing consultants who can work with you during any stage of the writing process, from brainstorming to final proofreading. Walk-ins are welcome, although writers with appointments have priority.

Course Outline (subject to minor revision)

INTRODUCTIONS

M, September 16

- bring to class a 250-500 word informal response to the prompt posted on Moodle

W, September 18

- *Testing Charade*, Chs.1-2

Army Beta Test, World War I

INTELLIGENCE TESTING

F, September 20

- Primary Source Packet, Part I

M, September 23

- Primary Source Packet, Part II

W, September 25

- Stephen Jay Gould,
“The Hereditarian Theory of IQ”

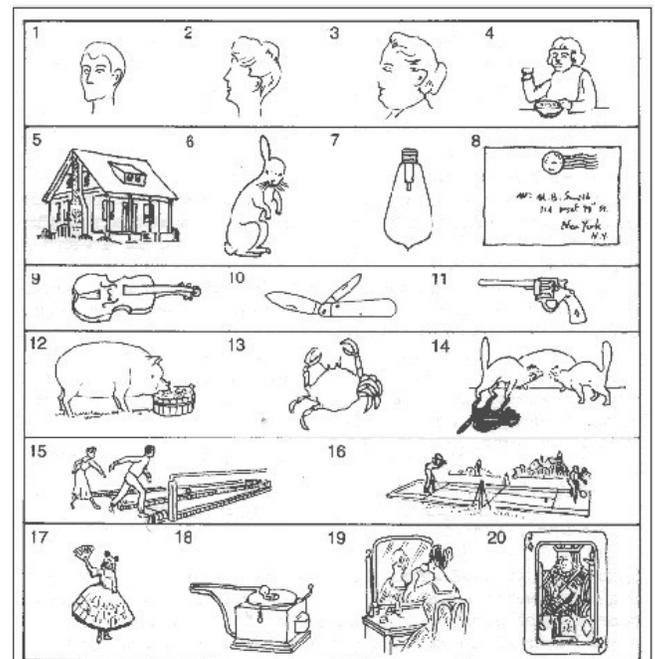
A PAUSE for the LIBERAL ARTS

F, September 27

- No Class but you **MUST** attend the Mary Savina Convocation (“Argument, Inquiry and Cereal Boxes”)

M, September 30

- Bryan Caplan, “Nourishing Mother”
- Nannerl O. Keohane, “Self-Fashioning in Society and Solitude”
- Carleton College Mission Statement



HISTORY OF THE SAT

W, October 2

- Nicholas Lemann, *The Big Test*, Chs.1-3

F, October 4

- *Big Test*, Chs.4-6
- Herbert Yahraes, “They Know All the Answers”

M, October 7

- *Big Test*, Chs.7-10



WHAT’S IN A NUMBER?

W, October 9

- *Testing Charade*, Ch.8
- Koretz, “Validity”

F, October 11

- Koretz, “What Influences Test Scores?”; “Error and Reliability” (concentrate on pp.145-52 and pp. 171-77)
- Michael Blastland and Andrew Dilnot, “Causation: Think Twice”



HIGH STAKES TESTING

M, October 14

- *Testing Charade*, Ch.3 & Ch.11
- Frederick M. Hess and Max Eden (eds.), *Every Student Succeeds Act*, selected chapters

W, October 16

- New York Common Core Sample Tests, Grade 4 Math and English Language Arts
- Bill Tucker, “The Truth about Testing Costs”
- Additional reading(s) TBD

F, October 18

- Alfie Kohn, “Standardized Testing and Its Victims”
- Jonathan Kozol, “The Road to Rome”
- Abigail and Stephen Thernstrom, skim “Introduction,” read “Tests Matter”
- Herbert J. Walberg, “Why Tests Are Necessary”

Sunday, October 20: Analytical Essay 1 due by 1159PM

M, October 21: No Class (Midterm Break)

TEST PREP, GAMING & THE QUESTION OF BIAS

W, October 23

- Goldie Blumenstyk, “The Legacy of a Test-Prep Entrepreneur”
- NACAC Discussion Paper, “Preparation for College Admission Exams”
- Listen to “How to Game the SAT” (Reuters Investigates)
- Explore the College Board site as well as the site of at least one test prep company (Kaplan, Princeton Review, Ivy Bound, etc.)

GROUP PRESENTATION

F, October 25

- Koretz, “Adverse Impact and Bias”
- Paul R. Sackett and Nathan R. Kuncel, “Eight Myths about Standardized Admissions Testing”
- Josh Zumbrun, “SAT Scores and Income Inequality”
- Rebecca Zwick, “Is the SAT a Wealth Test?”

M, October 28

- Anemona Hartocollis, “SAT ‘Adversity Score’ Is Abandoned in Wake of Criticism”
- Eric Hoover, “Why Are SAT Takers Getting an ‘Adversity Score?’”
- Jeffrey Aaron Snyder, “What SAT Critics Miss”
- Listen to “Will An SAT ‘Adversity Score’ Actually Address College Admission Disadvantages?”
- Explore the College Board Landscape site



MEASURING UP, INTERNATIONAL COMPARISONS

W, October 30

- Skim *PISA 2015 Results in Focus*
- PISA Sample Questions
- Eric A. Hanushek et al., *Endangering Prosperity*, excerpts
- Joe Heim, “On the World Stage, U.S. Students Fall Behind”
- Watch PISA videos



F, November 1

- Gerald Bracey, “Big Tests: What Ends do they Serve?”
- David Labaree, “The Limits of School Learning”
- Watch *Two Million Minutes* trailer

GROUP PRESENTATION

Sunday, November 3: Analytical Essay 2 due by 1159PM

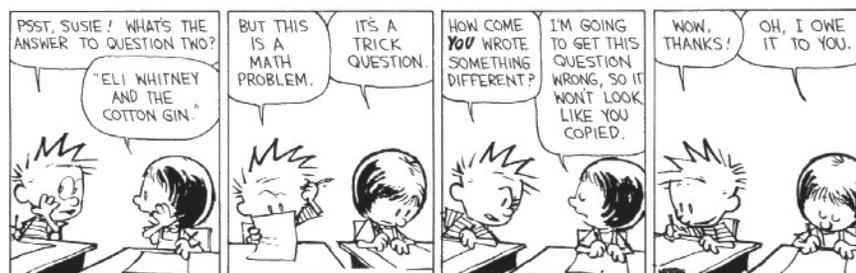
CHEATING

M, November 4

- James M. Lang, “Who Cheats—And How Much?” and “Case Studies in the History of Cheating”

W, November 6

- *Testing Charade*, Ch.6
- Rachel Aviv, “Wrong Answer”



F, November 8: No Class (Professor Attending Conference)

1-page Final Paper Proposal due by 1159PM

M, November 11

- “Varsity Blues” Readings/Materials TBD
- Explore “Academic Integrity at Carleton” site

GROUP PRESENTATION

ALTERNATIVES

W, November 13

- Jack Schneider, “A New Framework for School Quality”
- *Testing Charade*, Chs.12-14

F, November 15

- Linda Darling Hammond, *Next Generation Assessment*, excerpts
- Anya Kamenetz, “In Kentucky, Moving Beyond Dependence on Tests”
- Grant Wiggins, “A True Test”

M, November 18

- Ariel Kaminer, “Didn’t Ace SAT? Just Design Microbe Transplant Research”
- Jerome A. Lucido, “Understanding the Test-Optional Movement”
- Andrew S. Belasco et al., “The Test-Optional Movement at America’s Selective Liberal Arts Colleges: A Boon for Equity or Something Else?”
- Explore Bard College “Entrance Exam” pages
- Explore Goucher College Video Application pages

GROUP PRESENTATION

CONCLUSIONS

W, November 20

- A.S. Neill, *Summerhill*, excerpts

Essay Revisions due by 1159PM

Course Assignments and Grading

Participation, 15%

“Be Prepared.” The Scout motto sums up the crux of participation. Because this course places a premium on classroom and small-group discussions, students are expected to come to every class on time with the assigned readings completed, ready to participate meaningfully in all class activities. Please pay attention to the guiding questions posted on Moodle. Speaking up, while important, is not the only hallmark of participation. Active listening and engaging with others’ ideas respectfully are also key components of participation. *Air-time* is less important than the relevance and sincerity of your contributions.

Please *power-down* your electronic devices—laptops, cell-phones, etc.— before the start of class.



“Before I read about my summer vacation, I’d like to ask that all pagers, beepers, and cell phones be turned off.”

Analytical Essay 1 (750 words), 20%
Sunday, October 20 by 1159PM

The goal of this essay is to examine how authors use evidence to support their arguments. Find a claim that intrigues you from one of our assigned readings. Go to the footnotes and identify one source the author is citing to bolster her claim. Track down a copy of the original source and write an essay that weaves together:

1. a brief summary of the source's most important content (claims; findings; point-of-view; etc.)
- &
2. an assessment of how well our course author uses the source, especially with respect to fairness and accuracy—based on your analysis of the source, are the author's conclusions justified?

Small Group Presentation, 20%
October 23; November 1; November 11; November 18

Lead a single class session with a small group of your peers. Each group will:

1. facilitate a discussion of the day's assigned readings and introduce the class to some of the most recent developments regarding the topic at hand (see the In the News links available on Moodle)
- &
2. prepare a class handout (approx. 250-words) that highlights the key points of your presentation and includes a short bibliography with a minimum of five sources. All groups will meet with me in advance to discuss their ideas and plans. I highly recommend that all groups practice their presentations before class

Analytical Essay 2 (750 words), 20%
Sunday, November 3 by 1159PM

The goal of this essay is to reexamine your initial assumptions about standardized testing. Revisit your informal, reflection paper on standardized testing from the first day of class. How have your ideas changed over the past eight weeks? Write an essay that explains one important shift in your thinking. Refer to at least three different course texts.

*** Essay Revision Option ***

You have the option to revise ONE of your two essays. If you choose to do so, please include a 1-2 paragraph explanation of how you have responded to my feedback at the top of the revised paper. The final grade for the paper will be the average of the original and revised essay grades. Revisions are due on the last day of class by 1159PM. Please note that revising the paper does not guarantee a higher grade.

Final Paper (1,500 words), 25%

1-page proposal that identifies an Editorial or Op-Ed, outlines your initial paper ideas and includes a bibliography due on Friday, November 8 by 1159PM

Final Paper due Monday, November 25 by 5PM

The goal of the final paper is to offer a critical analysis of an Editorial/Op-Ed about standardized testing. Find a suitable Editorial/Op-Ed from a reputable source. Your essay will:

1. provide a brief summary of the author's point-of-view and main arguments
 2. assess the strength of the author's specific claims based on our course readings and at least three additional scholarly sources (articles, book chapters and/or books) that we have NOT read for class
- &
3. explain why you agree or disagree with the author's conclusions/recommendations

The Fine Print

Attendance:

Given the importance that all Educational Studies classes place on learning with peers through classroom discussions, students are expected to come to every class session. After two unexcused absences from class, each subsequent absence will result in the lowering of your course grade by a third (from an A to an A-, for example).

Guidelines for Written Assignments:

- All written assignments should be double-spaced and written in 12-point Times font
- Include a word-count at the top of each assignment
- Use a standard format (APA, Chicago, etc.) for all citations
- Submit all of your assignments using the dropboxes on Moodle
- No late assignments will be accepted without prior approval from the instructor

Guidelines for Critical Reading:

As a critical reader of a particular text, you should use the following four questions to guide your reading:

1. What are the author's main claims? This is the analysis issue—what is the author's angle?
2. Who says? This is the validity issue—what is the author's evidence?
3. What's new? This is the value-added issue—what does the author contribute that we don't already know?
4. Who cares? This is the significance issue—is the text worth reading?

Academic Honesty:

Sharing ideas with friends is central to the academic enterprise at Carleton. So too is availing yourself of the ever-expanding universe of print and digital resources available through the Libe. In your written work, of course, it is imperative that the words you present as your own are in fact original to you. When you borrow somebody else's ideas or words, make sure to cite the original author. For more on academic honesty at Carleton, including a helpful overview of citations, see: <http://apps.carleton.edu/campus/doc/honesty/>

Disability Services:

Carleton is committed to providing reasonable accommodations to students with disabilities. Students seeking accommodations should contact the Coordinator of Disability Services, Andy Christensen, at 222-4464 or anchrist@carleton.edu, to begin the process.

Images Credits:

Army Beta Test: Steven Jay Gould, *The Mismeasure of Man* (New York: Norton), 1996, p.241; "You Count S.A.T.s": Mike Twohy, *New Yorker*, 9/9/1991; "The Stat Family": Mick Stevens, *New Yorker*, 3/13/1989; "Our Day": Barbara Smaller, *New Yorker*, 12/21/1998; "Big Deal": Twohy, *New Yorker*, 3/16/1998; Calvin and Hobbes strip: Bill Watterson, *There's Treasure Everywhere* (Kansas City: Andrews and McMeel), 1996, p.21; "Before I read": Danny Shanahan, *New Yorker*, 9/11/2000.