



Class Rules: Exposing Inequality in American High Schools (Multicultural Education Series)

Peter W., Jr Cookson

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Class Rules challenges the popular myth that high schools are the “Great Equalizers.” In his groundbreaking study, Cookson demonstrates that adolescents undergo different class rites of passage depending on the social-class composition of the high school they attend. Drawing on stories of schools and individual students, the author shows that *where* a student goes to high school is a major influence on his or her social class trajectory. *Class Rules* is a penetrating, original examination of the role education plays in blocking upward mobility for many children. It offers a compelling vision of an equitable system of schools based on the full democratic rights of students.

Book Features:

- Provides a fresh, dynamic way of understanding educational inequality and social reproduction.
- Offers a breakthrough social/psychological theory of how adolescents acquire class consciousness.
- Compares the cultures and curricula of five American high schools focusing on the class composition of their students.

“This highly readable and original book illuminates why we don’t have open class warfare in our society, despite huge inequalities. Peter Cookson shows how schools reproduce classes through institutional practices that forge class-based consciousness. He also suggests how education might be changed.”

—**Caroline Hodges Persell**, professor emerita of sociology, New York University

“Cookson does a superb job of analyzing the powerful forces in our schools that reinforce the racial, ethnic, and social-class structures our nation hopes to overcome. Breaking out of one’s social class was always hard but may now be harder than in previous decades. Cookson reminds us of what high schools can be, the great equalizers, institutions for promoting America’s finest values.”

—**David Berliner**, Regents’ professor emeritus, Mary Lou Fulton Teachers College, Arizona State University

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