Stanford



Rebecca Tarlau

Associate Professor in the Graduate School of Education and, by courtesy, of Sociology

Curriculum Vitae available Online

CONTACT INFORMATION

- **Admin. Support**

  Melissa Cromosini

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Bio

BIO

Rebecca Tarlau is Associate Professor of Education at Stanford Graduate School of Education. Dr. Tarlau was formerly Associate Professor of Education and of Labor and Employment Relations at the Pennsylvania State University, where she was the co-founder of the Penn State Consortium for Social Movements and Education Research and Practice. Her ethnographic research agenda has four broad areas of focus: (1) theories of the state and state-society relations; (2) social movements and popular education, labor education, and critical pedagogy; (3) Latin American education and development; and (4) teachers' unions, teacher activism, and teachers' work.

Dr. Tarlau is the author of the award-winning Occupying School, Occupying Land: How the Landless Workers Movement Transformed Brazilian Education (2019, Oxford University Press, published in Portuguese in 2023 by Expressão Popular), which analyzes how a large grassroots social movement has linked education reform to its vision for agrarian reform by developing pedagogical practices for schools that foster activism, direct democracy, and collective forms of work. Contrary to the belief that social movements cannot engage the state without demobilizing, Tarlau shows how educational institutions can help movements recruit new activists, diversify their membership, increase technical knowledge, and garner political power. Dr. Tarlau's forthcoming book Teacher Organizing Across the Americas: Diverse Strategies for Transforming Unions, Schools and Societies (Oxford University Press) explores why teachers' unions in Brazil, Mexico, and the United States have embraced radically different strategies, and the important role of internal oppositional movements in transforming the goals and strategies of labor unions. Currently Dr. Tarlau is involved in a multi-country comparative study analyzing the impact of sustainable agriculture education on agroecological knowledge and landscape change in Latin America.

ACADEMIC APPOINTMENTS

- Associate Professor, Graduate School of Education
- Associate Professor (By courtesy), Sociology

ADMINISTRATIVE APPOINTMENTS

- Associate Professor, Stanford University, (2024- present)
- Associate Professor, Pennsylvania State University, State College, Pennsylvania, (2021-2023)
- Assistant Professor, Pennsylvania State University, State College, Pennsylvania, (2018-2021)
- Postdoctoral Scholar in Education, Stanford University, Graduate School of Education, (2015-2017)

HONORS AND AWARDS

- Sociology of Development Book Award (Occupying Schools, Occupying Land), American Sociology Association (2020)
- Best Book in the Social Sciences Sérgio Buarque de Holanda Prize (Occupying Schools, Occupying Land), Latin American Studies Association (LASA) (2020)
- Globalization & Education Book Award (Occupying Schools, Occupying Land), Comparative and International Education Society (CIES) (2020)
- Michael Harrington Book Award (Occupying Schools, Occupying Land), New Political Science Caucus of the American Political Science Association (2020)
- Finalist, Bourdieu Book Award of Sociology of Education (Occupying Schools, Occupying Land), American Sociology Association (2020)
- Robert Reis Book Award (Occupying Schools, Occupying Land), Brazilian Studies Association (BRASA) (2019)
- National Academy of Education/Spencer Postdoctoral Fellowship, Spencer Foundation (2019)

PROGRAM AFFILIATIONS

- Center for Comparative Studies in Race and Ethnicity (CCSRE)
- Center for Latin American Studies

PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION

- Ph.D., University of California, Berkeley, Graduate School of Education , Social and Cultural Studies in Education (2014)
- M.A., University of California, Berkeley, Graduate School of Education (2008)
- B.A., University of Michigan , Anthropology and Latin American Studies (2006)

Research & Scholarship

RESEARCH INTERESTS

- Collaborative Education Research
- Critical Pedagogy
- Education Policy
- Education in the Global South
- Ethnography
- Global and Comparative Education
- Globalization
- Labor Markets
- Learning Outside of Schools
- Politics of Education
- Qualitative Methods
- Social Movements & Collective Action
- Sociology of Education
- Teachers' Unions

Teaching

COURSES

2026-27

- Global Education Policy & Organization: EDUC 306B, PUBLPOL 316 (Win)

- Introduction to Global and Comparative Education: EDUC 202 (Aut)
- Methods in Latin American Studies: LATINAM 397A (Aut)
- Social Movements & Education: CSRE 328, EDUC 327, SOC 327 (Win)
- Social Theory & Education: CSRE 406, EDUC 406, SOC 306 (Aut)

2025-26

- Freirean Pedagogy: Theory, Praxis, and Contemporary Struggles: EDUC 330 (Aut)
- Global Education Policy & Organization: EDUC 306B, PUBLPOL 316 (Win)
- Graduate Writing Seminar for Latin American Studies: LATINAM 397 (Win)
- Introduction to Global and Comparative Education: EDUC 202 (Aut)
- Workshop on Ethnography and Education: EDUC 331 (Aut, Win, Spr)

2024-25

- Global Education Policy & Organization: EDUC 306B, PUBLPOL 316 (Win)
- Introduction to International and Comparative Education: EDUC 202 (Aut)
- Social Movements & Education: CSRE 328, EDUC 327, SOC 327 (Win)

2023-24

- Global Educational Ethnographies: EDUC 477, FEMGEN 477 (Spr)

STANFORD ADVISEES

Doctoral Dissertation Reader (AC)

Nallely Aceves, Sophie D'Souza, Haley Lepp, Geraldine Mukumbi

Doctoral Dissertation Advisor (AC)

Chris Plantinos

Master's Program Advisor

Carol Aguilar, Xinyi Chen, Rebeca Costa, Rie Takemoto

Doctoral Dissertation Co-Advisor (AC)

Nooran Chharan

Doctoral (Program)

Nooran Chharan, Ludmille Lyvert, Rosalilia Mendoza, Chris Plantinos, Jazdil Poupart-Feliciano, Maria Luiza Rocha Bueno, Alma Rodriguez, Kiernan Rok

Publications

PUBLICATIONS

- **This university must be built: the praxis of the Latin American Institute of Agroecology "Paulo Freire"** *AGROECOLOGY AND SUSTAINABLE FOOD SYSTEMS*
  McCune, N., Tarlau, R., Domene, O., Meek, D., Pachon, F., Sanchez, M.
  2026
- **Networked Movements and Bureaucratic Unions: The Structure of the 2018 #RedForEd Teachers' Strikes** *ILR REVIEW*
  Tarlau, R.
  2023; 76 (5): 833-863
- **Education, pedagogy, and social movements in Latin America** *The Oxford Handbook of Latin American Social Movements*

Tarlau, R.
Oxford University Press.2023

- **Occupying Schools, Occupying Land: How the Landless Workers' Movement Transformed Brazilian Education**
  Tarlau, R.
  Oxford University Press.2019
- **Social movements and adult education in the International Review of Education (IRE) and beyond** *INTERNATIONAL REVIEW OF EDUCATION*
  Holst, J. D., Tarlau, R.
  2025
- **From "Sites of Struggle" to "Complicit in Struggle": Social Movements and the University in Brazil** *TEACHERS COLLEGE RECORD*
  Taylor, A. Y., Da Trindade, A., Tarlau, R.
  2025; 127 (3): 67-96
- **'For Once We're Asking for MORE Testing': organisational infrastructure in the safe schools movement during COVID-19** *Globalisation, Societies and Education*
  Stark, L. W., Tarlau, R., Maton, R. M.
  2025; 23 (1)
- **Agricultural work: unfreedom and resistance** *HANDBOOK ON THE SOCIOLOGY OF WORK*
  Sexsmith, K., Tarlau, R.
  edited by Bozkurt, O., Rees, C., Limoncelli, S. A., Preminger, J.
  2025: 210-224
- **Teachers' unions, educator organising, and global struggles for educational justice** *GLOBALISATION SOCIETIES AND EDUCATION*
  Tarlau, R., Campos, J., Visagie, A.
  2025; 23 (1): 1-14
- **Mapping, reflecting, and exploring education for the labour movement: a thematic literature review** *INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF LIFELONG EDUCATION*
  Kim, J., Tarlau, R.
  2024
- **Special issue introduction: social movement struggles, learning and knowledge-making: in memory of Aziz Choudry (1966-2021)** *GLOBALISATION SOCIETIES AND EDUCATION*
  Vally, S., Novelli, M., Tarlau, R., Motala, E.
  2023; 21 (5): 589-594
- **"We bring in each other's wisdom": Liberatory praxis and political education for Black Lives in Philadelphia** *Globalisation, Societies and Education*
  Nafziger, N., Strong, K., Tarlau, R.
  2023; 21 (5): 609-627
- **Ocupar escolas, ocupar terras: como o MST transformou a educação brasileira**
  Tarlau, R.
  Expressão Popular (Translation by Leda Beck).2023
- **Social movements, popular education, and counterhegemonic schooling in Latin America** *Emergent Trends in Comparative Education: The Dialectic of the Global and the Local*
  Tarlau, R.
  Rowman & Littlefield.2023
- **Take or reject state power? The dual dilemma for teachers' unions in Brazil and Mexico** *Studies in Comparative International Development*
  Tarlau, R.
  2022; 57 (3): 361-384
- **Never let a good crisis go to waste: Labor organizing during Covid-19** *Journal of Labor and Society*
  Tarlau, R.
  2022

- **Contentious Co-Governance and Prefiguration: A Framework for Analyzing Social Movement-State Relations in Public Education** *Educational Researcher*
  Tarlau, R.
  2021; 50 (8): 527-536
- **The confluence of popular education and social movement studies into social movement learning: A systematic literature review** *INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF LIFELONG EDUCATION*
  Kuk, H., Tarlau, R.
  2020; 39 (5-6): 591-604
- **'Philanthropizing' consent: how a private foundation pushed through national learning standards in Brazil** *JOURNAL OF EDUCATION POLICY*
  Tarlau, R., Moeller, K.
  2020; 35 (3): 337-366
- **Prefigurative politics with, in, and against the State: MST and Latin American philosophies of education** *Lápiz: Latin American Philosophy of Education*
  Tarlau, R.
  2020; 5: 1-33
- **Food sovereignty education across the Americas: multiple origins, converging movements** *AGRICULTURE AND HUMAN VALUES*
  Meek, D., Bradley, K., Ferguson, B., Hoey, L., Morales, H., Rosset, P., Tarlau, R.
  2019; 36 (3): 611–26
- **Activist Principals: Leading for Social Justice in Ciudad Juarez, Baltimore,and Brazil** *TEACHERS COLLEGE RECORD*
  DeMatthews, D., Tarlau, R.
  2019; 121 (4)
- **Paulo Freire's continued relevance for U.S. education** *Wiley-Blackwell Handbook on Freire*
  Carnoy, M., Tarlau, R.
  John Wiley & Sons.2019: 221-237
- **State Theory, Grassroots Agency, and Global Policy Transfer: The Life and Death of Colombia's Escuela Nueva in Brazil (1997-2012)** *COMPARATIVE EDUCATION REVIEW*
  Tarlau, R.
  2017; 61 (4): 675-700
- **Gramsci as Theory, Pedagogy, and Strategy: Educational Lessons from the Brazilian Landless Workers Movement** *ANTONIO GRAMSCI: A PEDAGOGY TO CHANGE THE WORLD*
  Tarlau, R.
  edited by Pizzolato, N., Holst, J. D.
  2017; 5: 107-126
- **If the past devours the future, why study? Piketty, social movements, and future directions for education** *BRITISH JOURNAL OF SOCIOLOGY OF EDUCATION*
  Tarlau, R.
  2016; 37 (6): 861-872
- **Thomas Piketty's relevance for the study of education: reflections on the political economy of education** *BRITISH JOURNAL OF SOCIOLOGY OF EDUCATION*
  Moeller, K., Tarlau, R.
  2016; 37 (6): 805–9
- **Critical food systems education (CFSE): educating for food sovereignty** *AGROECOLOGY AND SUSTAINABLE FOOD SYSTEMS*
  Meek, D., Tarlau, R.
  2016; 40 (3): 237-260
- **Pedagogies of struggle & collective organization: Educational practices of the Landless Workers Movement** *Interface*
  Mariano, A., Hilário, E., Tarlau, R.
  2016; 8 (2): 211-242

- **Education of the countryside at a crossroads: rural social movements and national policy reform in Brazil** *JOURNAL OF PEASANT STUDIES*
  Tarlau, R.
  2015; 42 (6): 1157-1177
- **Understanding rural resistance: contemporary mobilization in the Brazilian countryside** *JOURNAL OF PEASANT STUDIES*
  Pahnke, A., Tarlau, R., Wolford, W.
  2015; 42 (6): 1069-1085
- **How Do New Critical Pedagogies Develop? Educational Innovation, Social Change, and Landless Workers in Brazil** *TEACHERS COLLEGE RECORD*
  Tarlau, R.
  2015; 117 (11)
- **Critical food systems education and the question of race** *JOURNAL OF AGRICULTURE FOOD SYSTEMS AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT*
  Meek, D., Tarlau, R.
  2015; 5 (4): 131-135
- **NOT-SO-PUBLIC CONTENTION: MOVEMENT STRATEGIES, REGIMES, AND THE TRANSFORMATION OF PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS IN BRAZIL** *MOBILIZATION*
  Tarlau, R.
  2015; 20 (1): 101-121
- **FROM A LANGUAGE TO A THEORY OF RESISTANCE: CRITICAL PEDAGOGY, THE LIMITS OF "FRAMING," AND SOCIAL CHANGE** *EDUCATIONAL THEORY*
  Tarlau, R.
  2014; 64 (4): 369-392
- **Coproducing Rural Public Schools in Brazil: Contestation, Clientelism, and the Landless Workers' Movement** *POLITICS & SOCIETY*
  Tarlau, R.
  2013; 41 (3): 395-424
- **Education and labor in tension: Contemporary debates about education in the US labor movement** *Labor Studies Journal*
  Tarlau, R.
  2011; 36 (3): 363-387