

University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign
Department of Educational Policy, Organization & Leadership
EPS 390: Social and Cultural Foundations of Education
Fridays 5:00 – 8:00pm
Instructor: Erin L. Castro

Course Description

In this seminar we will examine the underlying purposes – and possibilities – of education in the United States. We will focus on the relationship among education, democracy and justice by drawing from perspectives in philosophy, sociology, history, and cultural studies. This is an interactive course where we will learn to both critically assess the institution of education and articulate a vision for what education can provide. This course is grounded in a critical paradigm that emphasizes how and to what extent schools affect the patterning of social stratification. We will ask how schools function within the dynamics of racism, wide-spread poverty, sexism, and other oppressive forces. Together we will examine some of the most fundamental assumptions guiding education policy in the United States:

- What are the purposes of schools?
- What *should* be the purposes of schools in a democratic society?
- Do we need schools?

The objectives of this course are to understand the relationship between education and society and to articulate a vision for what education can be.

Required Books

Delgado, R. & Stefancic, J. (2012). *Critical Race Theory: An Introduction*. New York University Press.

Freire, P. (2000). *Pedagogy of Freedom: Ethics, Democracy, and Civic Courage*. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.

hooks, b. (2003). *Teaching Community: A Pedagogy of Hope*. Routledge.

Expectations

The expectations for the course are rather simple and straightforward: I ask that each of us arrive to class having read the materials for that week and ready to engage.

My commitments to you, as your instructor, are to hold you to high expectations, to assess your work fairly and accurately, to be flexible with our schedule in order accommodate new and emerging interests, to challenge some of our assumptions regarding education, to be respectful, to listen intently, and to provide the necessary space for critical dialogue.

My expectations of you, as students, are that you complete the readings for each week, take notes on those readings, and complete all course assignments. I ask that you take risks in your thinking, push your own understandings, ask questions, and be respectful of others in the class. I expect you to take an active role in the course. I expect you to communicate with me if you have questions and/or concerns.

Assignments

Each week there will be an assignment associated with the readings. These weekly assignments will take the form of short reflections based on prompts or guided responses that you will turn-in to me or handouts that are for your own comprehension and development (I will not collect them). I will assign the weekly responses each Friday.

The final project for this course is a **critically pedagogical project**, inspired by the three basic tenets of critical pedagogy: Name, Reflect, Act (Wink, 2011). You will design and develop a project that intervenes into the educational status quo. These projects can take just about any shape and I encourage you to be creative in thinking about how to insert yourself into educational dialogues. Each project will utilize at least one of the critical frameworks that we discuss in class. A one to two page prospectus of the project will be due after Spring Break. At the end of the semester, students will present their work in class. We will discuss this requirement more fully when we meet for the first time.

Assessment

I am interested in your ideas and your reactions to texts. For the bi-weekly responses I am looking for deep engagement (e.g. did you read? did you make connections with course themes? what questions do you have?). For the final project, I will assess the clarity of purpose, logic of argument, novelty/originality, and the theoretical linkages that you make.

Attendance, participation, and weekly responses account for about a third of your grade in this course. Participation is judged by both the quantity and quality of your class engagement. The other third of your grade is based on the multi-staged final project. There are no exams in this course.

A Note On Reading

"...to read does not obligate one to understand. First it is necessary to read ... avoid understanding too quickly"

~ Jacques Lacan

Some of the readings in this course are a bit dense. Please keep in mind that while we engage most of our reading away from one another, we will come together each week to make meaning of our readings. This is a knowledge-production process that we will do together. In order for our weekly meetings to be most beneficial, it is crucial that we read actively and take notes. Here are a few note-taking suggestions while reading:

- What do you think the main point or theme of the text will be?
- What do you know about the author? What is the author's purpose? What expertise does he or she have in this subject? What biases might he or she have?
- What vocabulary words are new to you? Take note of these words to discuss in class.
- What areas of the text (page/paragraph) particularly caught your attention? Why?

Wink, Joan. (2011). *Critical Pedagogy: Notes from the Real World*, 4th Edition. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education, Inc.

Week 1, January 20th: An Introduction to the “Crisis” Discourse in Education

National Commission on Excellence and Education. (1983). *A Nation At Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform*.

Berliner, B. C. & Biddle, B. J. (1996). Why Now? Chapter Four in *The Manufactured Crisis: Myths, Fraud, and the Attack on Public School*, pp 129-172.

Week 2, January 27th: The Purposes & Politics of Education

Baldwin, J. (1963). A Talk to Teachers. Originally published in *The Saturday Review*, December 21st.

Bigelow, B. (2004). The Hidden Curriculum: Helping Students Reflect Critically on Issues of Schools, Equity, and Justice. Chapter in Kincheloe, J. L. & Weil, D. (Eds). (2004). *Critical Thinking and Learning: An Encyclopedia for Parents and Teachers*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press.

Freire, P. (1970). Chapter 2 in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. New York: Continuum.

Week 3, February 3rd: Education & Liberation

Freire, P. *Pedagogy of Freedom*: Forward, Introduction, Chapters 1 & 2, pp. xi-48.

Recommended Reading:

Martinez, E. & Garcia, A. (2000). *What is “Neoliberalism”? A Brief Definition*. Retrieved online: http://www.csom.umn.edu/labor-education-service/programs-courses/documents/What_is_Neoliberalism.pdf

Week 4, February 10th: Education & Democracy

Freire, P. *Pedagogy of Freedom*: Chapters 3 & 4, pp. 49-129.

Recommended Reading:

Graves, S. (March 9, 2011). What is Democratic Education? Yes Magazine. Retrieved online: <http://www.yesmagazine.org/happiness/what-is-democratic-education>

Week 5, February 17th: Critical Pedagogy

Kincheloe, J. *Critical Pedagogy Primer*, Chapter One, pp. 1-45.

Beane, J. A. & Apple, M. W. (1995). The Case for Democratic Schools. Chapter One in *Democratic Schools*, pp. 1-25. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Week 6, February 24th: Critical Pedagogy

Kincheloe, J. *Critical Pedagogy Primer*, Chapter Two, pp. 46-105.

Excerpts from Cambium Learning, Inc. (2011). *Curriculum Audit on the Mexican American Studies Department, Tucson Unit School District*. Retrieved online:
<http://www.scribd.com/doc/58025928/TUSD-ethnic-studies-audit>

Week 7, March 2nd: The Politics of the Curriculum & Banning Ethnic Studies in Arizona

Arizona State Legislature House Bill 2281. Retrieved online:
<http://www.azleg.gov/legtext/49leg/2r/bills/hb2281p.pdf>

Delgado-Bernal, D. (1999). Chicana/o education from the Civil Rights era to the present, Chapter Three in Moreno, J. F. (Ed.). (1999). *The Elusive Quest for Equality: 150 Years of Chicano/Chicana Education*. Harvard Educational Review.

Loewen, J. (1995). The Truth About the First Thanksgiving, Chapter Three in *Lies My Teacher Told Me: Everything Your American History Textbook Got Wrong*. New York: Touchstone.

Recommended Reading:

Librotráfico (2012). *Press Release*. Retrieved online: <http://librotráfico.com/Press-Release.html>

Tucsonans United for a Sound District (2012). *January 2012 Newsletter*. Retrieved online:
<http://www.tu4sd.com/p/commentary.html>

*FILM: Precious Knowledge [We will work together to schedule a viewing of this film]

Week 8, March 9th: Critical Race Theory & Education*

*Office Hours for Projects

Delgado & Stefancic *Critical Race Theory: An Introduction*, Forward, Chapters 1-5, Glossary, pp. xvii-86.

Ladson-Billings, G. (1998). Just What is Critical Race Theory and What's It Doing In A Nice Field Like Education? *Qualitative Studies in Education*, 11 (1), pp. 7-24.

Week 9, March 16th: Critical Race Theory & Education*

*2-3 page Prospectus Due

Delgado & Stefancic *Critical Race Theory: An Introduction*, Chapters 6-8, pp. 87-137.

Gillborn, D. (2005). Education Policy As An Act of White Supremacy: Whiteness, Critical Race Theory and Education Reform. *Journal of Education Policy*, 20 (4), pp. 485-505.

Du Bois, W. E. B. (1935). Does the Negro Need Separate Schools? *The Journal of Negro Education*, v 4 (3), pp 328-335.

-----**SPRING BREAK**-----

Week 10, March 30th: Race, Law & Educational Equity*

*James Anderson guest lecture

Anderson, J. (2006). A Tale of Two Browns: Constitutional Equality and Unequal Education. *Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education*, 105 (2), 14–35.

Brown v. Board of Education, 347 U.S. 483 (1954). Syllabus.

Parents Involved in Community Schools v. Seattle School District No. 1, 551 U.S. 701 (2007). Retrieved online: <http://www.supremecourt.gov/opinions/06pdf/05-908.pdf>

Bell, D. A. (1980). Brown v. Board of Education and the Interest-Convergence Dilemma. *Harvard Law Review*, 93, pp. 518-533.

Recommended Reading:

Wikipedia. *Parent's Involved in Community Schools v. Seattle School District No. 1*. Retrieved online:

Week 11, April 6th: Education & Deficit Thinking

Valencia, R. (2010). At-Risk Students or At-Risk Schools? Chapter Four in *Dismantling Contemporary Deficit Thinking: Educational Thought and Practice*. Routledge, pp. 101-125.

Kozol, J. (2005). Dishonoring the Dead & Hitting Them Hardest When They're Small, Chapters One and Two in *The Shame of the Nation: The Restoration of Apartheid Schooling in America*. New York: Three Rivers Press, pp. 13-62.

Marks, G. (December 12, 2011). If I Were A Poor Black Kid. *Forbes Magazine*. Blog post retrieved online: <http://www.forbes.com/sites/quickerbetteertech/2011/12/12/if-i-was-a-poor-black-kid/>

Virella, K. (December 13, 2011). If I were The Middle Class White Guy Gene Marks. Dominion of New York. Blog post retrieved online: <http://www.dominionofnewyork.com/2011/12/13/if-i-were-the-middle-class-white-guy-gene-marks/#.Txd709R-Rh0>

Recommended Reading:

Children's Defense Fund (2011). An Overview of the State of America's Children 2011: The need for a Level Playing Field for All Children. Retrieved online: <http://www.childrensdefense.org/child-research-data-publications/data/state-of-americas-2011.pdf>

Week 12, April 6th: Gender & Education

hooks, b. (2000). Introduction, Chapter One, Feminist Politics: Where We Stand and Chapter Two, Consciousness-Raising: A Constant Change of Heart, pp. 1-12 in *Feminism is for Everybody: Passionate Politics*. Cambridge, MA: South End Press.

hooks, b. *Teaching Community: A Pedagogy of Hope*: Preface, Chapters 1-6, pp. 1-66.

Week 13, April 13th: Education and Hope

***4-6pg. Prospectus Due**

hooks, b. *Teaching Community: A Pedagogy of Hope*: Chapter 6-10, pp. 67-126.

Week 13, April 20th: Education and Social Justice

hooks, b. *Teaching Community: A Pedagogy of Hope*: Chapters 11-16, pp. 127-197.

North, C. E. (2008). What Is All This Talk About Social Justice?: Mapping the terrain of education's latest catch phrase. *Teachers College Record*, 110 (6), p 1182-1206.

Week 14, April 27th: Students' Choice

Week 15, May 4th: Final Presentations

Week 16, May 10th: Final Presentations