Northwestern University
School of Education and Social Policy
MS ED 402: Social Contexts of Education
Winter 2019
Annenberg Hall Room 345
Wednesdays, 1/9-3/13, 6:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.

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Course Description
This course focuses on the social and contextual influences of education, from a learning, teaching, research and policy perspective. We will examine the role of race, class, gender, ability, sexuality, and identity in the ways individuals and groups influence and are influenced by our education system. In this class you will be asked to deeply evaluate your own beliefs, thoughts and assumptions about the influence of these socio-cultural factors and consider their implications for your own professional and personal development.

Course Goals
1. To understand the philosophical and historical underpinnings of schooling in America.
2. To understand the dynamic role of social forces (e.g., race, class, gender, sexual orientation, language, ability) on education.
3. To develop skills of teaching-as-researching.
4. To develop practices of self-reflection, systems analysis, and dialogue.
5. To understand the social ecology, culture, and climate of a classroom, school, and community.
6. To develop practices of collegial community within and beyond the school.
7. To explore teacher identity and its impact on students, as well as the impact students have on teacher identity.
8. To develop skills in creating safe, respectful learning environments in classrooms and schools.
9. To understand how the teacher supports the academic, social, emotional, and physical development of individual students.
10. To develop voice and social capacity as a public intellectual.

Northwestern University
Conceptual Framework for Teacher Education

Mission
Our mission is to prepare knowledgeable, reflective, and innovative teachers who will lead and inspire students.

Vision
The Teacher Education Program at Northwestern University is guided by a conceptual framework for teacher education, organized around a vision of learning, learners and teaching. The conceptual framework focuses on

A vision of learning that includes:
1.1. how students come to understand and think about subject matter;
1.2. an emphasis on inquiry and reflection;
1.3. the importance of collaboration and social interaction; and
1.4. experiential activities that are relevant and engaging.

A vision of learners that includes:
2.1. the belief that every person is capable of learning;
2.2. that development is shaped by social contexts; and
2.3 equitable experiences for all.

A vision of teaching that includes:

3.1 connecting theory and practice;
3.2 inquiry, reflection, collaboration, and innovation;
3.3 creating a climate of learning for all students; and
3.4 acting professionally, responsibly, and ethically.

Dispositions

CAEP defines dispositions as “habits of professional action and moral commitment to teaching.” The Northwestern teacher preparation programs will help candidates acquire the following dispositions to the level of proficiency:

1. to reflect on one’s own practice and make changes as appropriate.
2. to support students as individuals.
3. to collaborate with all stakeholders.
4. to engage all students.
5. to incorporate innovations in teaching, including the use of new technologies.
6. to conduct one’s self professionally, responsibly, and ethically.

ILLINOIS PROFESSIONAL TEACHING STANDARDS (2013)

Applications of IPTS standards are listed in the Course Schedule and Topics, with reference to the level at which they are being used (introducing (I), developing (D), mastery (M), or review (R)).

Standard 1 - Teaching Diverse Students – The competent teacher understands the diverse characteristics and abilities of each student and how individuals develop and learn within the context of their social, economic, cultural, linguistic, and academic experiences. The teacher uses these experiences to create instructional opportunities that maximize student learning.

Standard 2 - Content Area and Pedagogical Knowledge – The competent teacher has in-depth understanding of content area knowledge that includes central concepts, methods of inquiry, structures of the disciplines, and content area literacy. The teacher creates meaningful learning experiences for each student based upon interactions among content area and pedagogical knowledge, and evidence-based practice.

Standard 3 - Planning for Differentiated Instruction – The competent teacher plans and designs instruction based on content area knowledge, diverse student characteristics, student performance data, curriculum goals, and the community context. The teacher plans for ongoing student growth and achievement.

Standard 4 - Learning Environment – The competent teacher structures a safe and healthy learning environment that facilitates cultural and linguistic responsiveness, emotional well-being, self-efficacy, positive social interaction, mutual respect, active engagement, academic risk-taking, self-motivation, and personal goal-setting.

Standard 5 - Instructional Delivery – The competent teacher differentiates instruction by using a variety of strategies that support critical and creative thinking, problem-solving, and continuous growth and learning. This teacher understands that the classroom is a dynamic environment requiring ongoing modification of instruction to enhance learning for each student.

Standard 6 - Reading, Writing, and Oral Communication – The competent teacher has foundational knowledge of reading, writing, and oral communication within the content area and recognizes and addresses student reading, writing, and oral communication needs to facilitate the acquisition of content knowledge.

Standard 7 - Assessment – The competent teacher understands and uses appropriate formative and summative assessments for determining student needs, monitoring student progress,
measuring student growth, and evaluating student outcomes. The teacher makes decisions driven by data about curricular and instructional effectiveness and adjusts practices to meet the needs of each student.

Standard 8 - Collaborative Relationships – The competent teacher builds and maintains collaborative relationships to foster cognitive, linguistic, physical, and social and emotional development. This teacher works as a team member with professional colleagues, students, parents or guardians, and community members.

Standard 9 - Professionalism, Leadership, and Advocacy – The competent teacher is an ethical and reflective practitioner who exhibits professionalism; provides leadership in the learning community; and advocates for students, parents or guardians, and the profession.

Academic Integrity
Students in this course are expected to comply with the policies found in the booklet, “Academic Integrity at Northwestern University: A Basic Guide.” All papers submitted for credit in this course must be sent as email attachments as well as delivered in printed form. Your written work may be electronically tested for plagiarized content. For details regarding academic integrity at Northwestern, visit: http://www.northwestern.edu/uacc/. If you need a copy of the brochure visit the SESP Student Affairs Office.

Accommodations for students with disabilities
In compliance with Section 504 of the 1973 Rehabilitation Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act, Northwestern University is committed to providing equal access to all programming. Students with disabilities seeking accommodations are encouraged to contact the office of Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) at 467-5530 or ssd@northwestern.edu. SSD is located in the basement of Scott Hall. SSD also has an excellent website which is viewable at: http://www.stuaff.northwestern.edu/ssd/.

Required Texts
● Coates, T. Between the world and me. New York: Spiegel & Grau, 2015.
  ○ You may use different editions, including Kindle/Nook
● Articles will be posted on Canvas
● Films
  ○ 13th on Netflix
  ○ Precious Knowledge on Kanopy

MS ED 402: Social Contexts of Schooling Assignments and Grading
Additional guidelines for all assignments will be provided

Class Participation (10 points each session)
Your attendance and participation in each class session will be part of your final grade.

Focus Papers (10 points each)
You will organize your responses to your readings in weekly Focus Papers. These are one-page, single-spaced close reflections on the texts in relation to your own experiences.

Canvas Discussion Posts (10 points each)
Each week, you are responsible for posting a short comment or reflection on the Canvas Discussion board. Responses to other posts are also required.

Experiential Education Events Assignment: Deadline: March 13 (20 points each)
Twice over the course of the quarter, you will attend a local experiential education event and blog on it. Event options (such as Chicago or Evanston school board meetings, community education forums, and conferences) will be posted on Canvas. If you come across an event that you would like to list or to attend, please email us the information.

The post should offer a reflection on the event you attended (we will provide a list of event options), responding to the following questions (and offering any other comments you feel are important): What new insight did you gain about schooling, i.e., what it’s like to be a CPS student/teacher/board member; what kind of relationships in schools and in educational decision-making processes foster real learning; how do power structures affect learning? How were race, class, gender differences framed in the event? What connections can you draw with readings, lectures, and discussions we have held in the class? What creative ideas or astute analysis about education did you encounter in the event? How, specifically, does this experience affect your goals as a teacher?

**Racial Autobiography Assignment**  Deadline: March 6 (40 points)
As anti-racist multicultural educators it is important for us to consciously explore how we come to see the world as we do. This paper gives you the chance to examine your experiences, beliefs, and perspectives in relation to the readings and discussions we engage in this class. Please write a 2-3 pp single-spaced paper, in which you consider the major influences that shape your understandings of race, diversity, and difference.

**Home Group Project**  Deadline: March 13 (40 points)
Working together as a group, create a proposal for an equitable school that is connected to the community it serves. Your audience is a town hall meeting to discuss your school proposal. Consider the following questions in your presentation.
1. Where is it? (can’t be Evanston or the school where you’re student teaching.)
2. What’s the history of the community?
3. What’s the history of housing, schools & education in that community?
4. How does your school prepare its students for the world and people different from themselves?
5. How will staff be prepared to teach in this school? What professional development and learning opportunities will staff receive?

**Course Schedule and Topics**

**Ongoing assignments:**
Focus papers (see due dates below)
Post on Canvas and respond to others’ posts (see due dates below)
Home Group project
Racial Autobiography
Experiential Education Events

**Before January 9th**
- please view Precious Knowledge (sign in with your NetIDs and view it at: https://northwestern.kanopy.com/video/precious-knowledge)
- bring an artifact that is significant to you and/or represents who you are.

**Session 1 January 9:** How does my identity affect my learning and my teaching?
- Getting to know each other
- Discussion Norms and Agreements
- Precious Knowledge discussion
- Review Syllabus and Logistics
- IPTS Standards Addressed: 1E, 1K, 2D, 3F, 4B, 4C, 5C, 5K, 5O, 6G, 7E, 7I, 8B, 8G, 9E, 9S
Homework
Read:
- Why the myth of meritocracy hurts kids of color
- Watch 13th by Session #3

Write Focus Paper #1 Due January 16
In the U.S. we learn a story of equal opportunity for all. Why do we believe this story? Lee, Anderson, Alexander, and Coates offer counter-narratives that challenge this story and tell a very different story. What’s a piece of the story each of them tells that you find compelling? How does it help you to discern the story you have been told (implicitly or explicitly) about achievement and opportunity in America? How did you learn this story?

Session 2 January 16: How has American education history played out for different groups?
- History and Issues in American Education discussion
- Equity, Democracy, Neoliberalism
- Discussion of Between the World & Me
- IPTS Standards Addressed: 1C (D), 1F (D), 2B (D), 2D (D), 2J (D), 2M (D), 4P (D), 5L (D), 6B (D), 7C (D), 7L (I), 8E (I), 9G (D), 9Q (D)

Homework
Read:

Write Focus Paper #2 Due January 23
Share a recent experience in your life that connects with what Anzaldua calls border arte, bearing in mind questions like: what borders are important in your life? How does this artistic or aesthetic experience change you? Can you express this shift somehow in your writing?

Write Canvas Post #1 Due January 23
Observations of and responses to Martin Luther King Jr. Day.
- As the day approaches and passes, take notice of how/if people recognize the man and his legacy: what conversations are people having, for what is he best remembered?

Session 3 January 23: Intersectionality: the complexity of my identities & how where I learn(ed) impacts what I learn
- Intersectionality
- Discussion of Readings
- History and Issues in American Education discussion
- Equity, Democracy, Neoliberalism
- IPTS Standards Addressed: 1C (D), 1F (D), 2B (D), 2D (D), 2J (D), 2M (D), 4P (D), 5L (D), 6B (D), 7C (D), 7L (I), 8E (I), 9G (D), 9Q (D):

Homework
Read:
Write Focus Paper #3 Due January 30
We all think of ourselves in a variety of ways: sometimes being a female or male is uppermost; at other times it might be our ethnic background or religion, geographic location, obsessions or hobbies. Maybe the way we fit into our families matters most, or the people we are attracted to or just close to. It could be political or social issues that dominate our sense of self, or our health, physical or mental. As you think of the different pieces of what makes you who you are, which of your identities is most important to you and why? Describe a moment when you felt particularly proud about one of your identities and a time when you felt particular pain about one of them. Have you ever witnessed someone being discriminated against based on a piece of their identity and you said or did something? Has there ever been a time when you noticed someone being mistreated based on a piece of their identity and wished you had said or done something, but did not? Looking back, what would you do today?

Session 4 January 30: How can we have an open and courageous conversation about difference: the role of white fragility?

- History and Issues in American Education discussion
- Progressive education, critical pedagogy, politics and education
- White Fragility
- IPTS Standards Addressed: 1L, 2N, 3K, 3L, 4K, 5L, 6J, 6O, 8D, 8L, 9E

Homework
Read:

Write Focus Paper #4 Due February 6
CRT and “the master’s house”
Think back to the article, What is critical race theory and what’s it doing in a nice field like education? that you read. On p. 30, Ladson-Billings refers to the famous Audre Lorde quotation, “the master’s tools will never dismantle the master’s house.” From this reading, what do you gather about what critical race theorists mean by “the master’s house”? What are “the master’s tools”? What does dismantling the master’s house mean? Many educators believe, on the other hand, that, as Ladson-Billings puts it, the master’s house can only be dismantled by the master’s tools – which suggests that when African American students meet the academic standards set by the white people in power, they are empowered to create a more equitable society. Based on your experiences and reflections, what do you think?

Session 5 February 6: How do place, language, and culture intersect with learning?

- Dominant culture and power
- Watch: *Black Lives Matter: How a hashtag defined a movement*
- Discussion of *When They Call You a Terrorist*
- Due: First Experiential Education Assignment Completed
Homework

Read:


Write Focus Paper #5 Due February 13

Lipman and Stovall analyze how inequity in education is built into and sustained in Chicago Public Schools through accountability discourse and structures. Elliott and Stovall feature responses that challenge these structures, in schools in Chicago and other cities. Your focus paper will be a reflection on one or two passages that strike you in each chapter, with reference to your own experience. If you find yourself wanting to write about areas that you have already explored, see how you can take your focus closer on specific moments, scenes, and words.

Write Canvas Post #2 Due February 13

Choose an article, opinion piece, blog post, podcast, or video addressing a current story focusing on race, gender, sexual orientation, or class, to share with your classmates. Explain what new perspective this text provides you as you reflect on identity and relationships at national and local levels.

Session 6 February 13: How does power play out in the relationship between schools and social change?

- Critical Pedagogy discussion
- Systems analysis and multicultural education
- Racial identity development theory
- IPTS Standards Addressed: 2A, 2C, 4A, 4B, 5M, 6C, 7L, 8L, 9O, 9P

Homework

Read:

- Elliott, S. *Teaching and learning on the verge: Democratic education in action*. Chapter 5
- Moore, Natalie. *Unreasonable fear blocks our view of black humanity.*
- Wing Sue, Derald *Racial Microaggressions in Everyday Life*

Write Focus Paper #6 Due February 20

What is the responsibility of a teacher to maintain a positive, open climate in a classroom while acknowledging historic and contemporary examples of hatred? How does one balance the need for safety with a consideration of diverse opinions and experiences? When a student says or does something that is harmful to the climate of a classroom, how does one maintain the commitment to safety necessary for learning while also honoring our shared humanity?

Write Canvas Post #3 Due February 20

Choose a sentence from the readings that you find particularly thought-provoking, challenging, maybe that raises new questions for you, and write about it. Do you see any connections between themes that have emerged since our first class or other experiences in your own life that you’d like to further explore? End with questions the reading and/or class discussion has left you interested in pursuing.
Session 7 February 20: When is free speech hate speech? Balancing student freedoms with equity and safety

- Intent vs. Impact
- Context and the history of language
- Microaggressions
- Place-based education, anti-racist education
- IPTS Standards Addressed: 1J, 1L, 2Q, 3C, 3L, 4E, 5A, 5C, 6I, 6J, 8J, 9N
- Cultural Modeling across the disciplines

Homework
Read:
- Freire, P. Pedagogy of the oppressed (Ch. 1 & 2). Bloomsbury Academic, 2000.
- Gangstas, Wankstas, & Ridas Jeff Duncan-Andrade

Focus Paper #7 Due February 27
Pedagogy of the Oppressed, Chapters 1 and 2

This is difficult reading, full of philosophical terms and rigorous social analysis. You have to stretch your mind to register the importance of what Freire is saying. Bear in mind as you read that Freire’s main emphasis is on humanization: the priority of each individual’s fundamental worth. This applies to everyone. At all moments, Freire challenges us to be conscious of the things, large or small, visible or invisible, that threaten a person’s worth. Freire is writing out of the context of the life he lived in Brazil, where poor people participated in their own oppression through “a culture of silence,” unable to pull themselves out of poverty and despair because they lacked critical awareness of their situation. Throughout his life, Freire worked to educate people for this awareness – in a literacy program often compared to Highlander’s (Myles Horton) Citizenship Schools that helped millions of African Americans pass the test that barred them from voting.

The educational goal Freire outlines is to help each person become a Subject, who acts on and transforms his or her world. “This world to which [s/he] relates is not a static and closed order, a given reality which man must accept and to which he must adjust; rather, it is a problem to be worked on and solved.” To the extent that schooling and culture push us all to conform to an “objective” view of the world that we did not participate in creating, we are all oppressed. And most of us resist putting that view aside and struggling to create our own reality, because that is very hard and entails a great deal of responsibility: thus we participate in our own oppression.

But there is a socio-economic dimension to Freire’s terms too, which force us into uncomfortable (and, it can feel like, oversimplified) categories of oppressor and oppressed. We are hoping that your reading, reflection, and writing will help you to experience this discomfort as productive tension.

What words, concepts, or perspectives challenge or unsettle you? Reflect on what experiences, beliefs, and reactions in you might be getting in the way of your understanding of these ideas, and explore them in a written reflection.

Session 8 February 27: How do groups resist dominant narratives?

- Dominant culture and power
- Watch: Andrade-Duncan, Jeffrey. Roses in Concrete Tedx talk
- IPTS Standards Addressed: 1A, 2F, 2H, 3Q, 4B, 4D, 4I, 5C, 6I, 7R, 8N, 9P

Homework
- Finish Racial Autobiography
- Home group project
Session 9 March 6: Racial Autobiography Presentations
- Racial Autobiography presentations
- Home Group Project Meeting (Time permitting)
- Due: Second Experiential Education Event

Homework
- Home group project

Session 10 March 13: What are the possibilities for democratic education today?
- Home Group Presentations
- Anti-racist education practice in schools and in communities
- Experiential Education Events Discussion
- Racial Autobiography due
- Class assessment
- IPTS Standards Addressed: 1L, 2D, 2K, 4B, 4C, 7L, 8A, 8E, 9F