

**Northwestern University**  
**School of Education and Social Policy**  
**MS ED 402: Social Contexts of Education**  
**Fall 2021**  
**Meets Online**  
**Tuesdays, 9/21-11/30, 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**

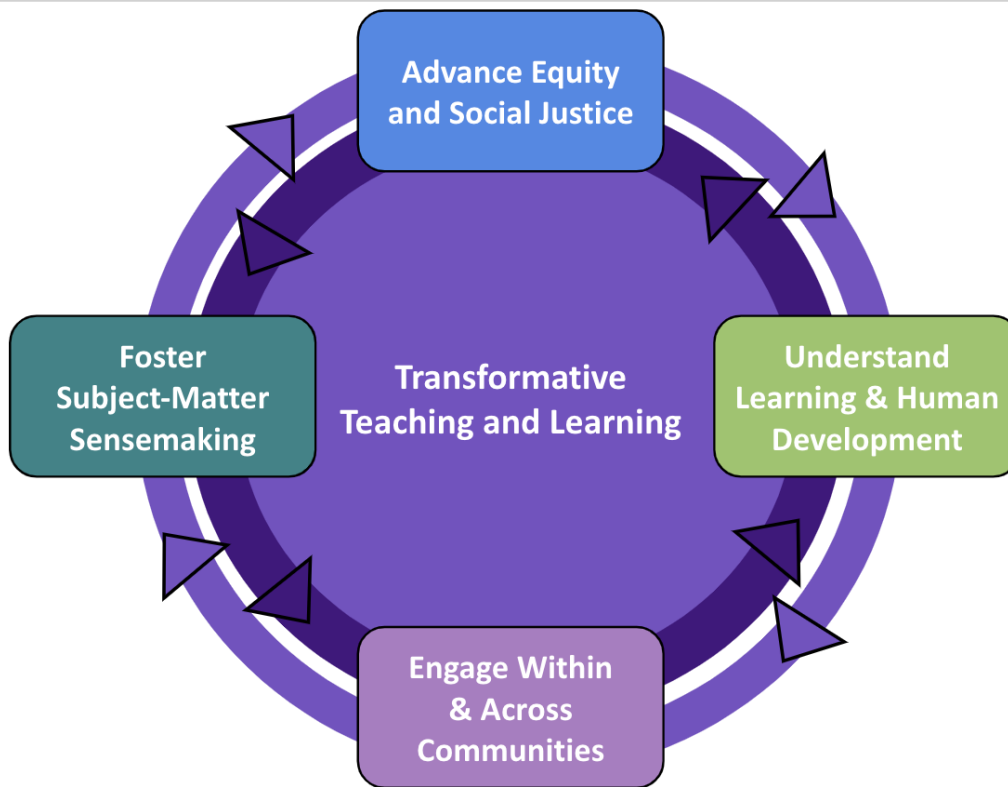
1. To understand the philosophical and historical underpinnings of schooling in America.
2. To understand the dynamic role of social forces (e.g., race, class, gender, sexual orientation, language, ability) on education.
3. To develop skills of teaching-as-researching.
4. To develop practices of self-reflection, 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**

This year, Northwestern University's School of Education and Social Policy has published a new set of Guiding Commitments for Teacher Education. The graphic below highlights the four major areas of focus: Advance Equity and Social Justice, Understand Learning and Human Development, Engage Within and Across Communities, and Foster Subject-Matter Sensemaking. The complete

document detailing the overall philosophy of these commitments and detailed information regarding each area can be found here: [Northwestern University School of Education and Social Policy Teacher Education Guiding Commitments](#)

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### **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**

MSED students are expected to comply with the policies found in the booklet, [\*Academic Integrity at Northwestern University: A Basic Guide\*](#). For details regarding academic integrity at Northwestern, visit: [www.northwestern.edu/provost/students/integrity/](http://www.northwestern.edu/provost/students/integrity/). Students' written work may be electronically tested for plagiarized content using *TurnItIn via Canvas*.

### **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. Any student requesting accommodations related to a disability or other condition is encouraged to register with AccessibleNU ([accessiblenu@northwestern.edu](mailto:accessiblenu@northwestern.edu) ; 847-467-5530) and provide professors with an accommodation notification from AccessibleNU, preferably within the first two weeks of class. All information will remain confidential..

### **Attendance**

Student attendance at every class meeting is expected. Your presence as part of a collaborative learning community is key to your development and the development of your colleagues. If for some reason you must be absent from a class session, you must inform the instructor before your absence. Because of the short number of overall class sessions in the quarter system, missing two class sessions puts your ability to pass the class in jeopardy. Missing three class sessions will result in an automatic grade of "Incomplete" and you will have to re-take the class at another time.

### **Required Texts**

- Bandele, A., Kahn-cullors, P. *When they call you a terrorist: A black lives matter memoir*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 2017.
- Coates, T. *Between the World and Me*. New York: Spiegel & Grau, 2015.
- Freire, P. *Pedagogy of the oppressed*. New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2000.
  - You may use different editions, including Kindle/Nook
- Articles will be posted on Canvas
- Films
  - 13<sup>th</sup> on Netflix
  - *Precious Knowledge* through course reserves on Canvas or through Kanopy if you have a library card

### **MS ED 402: Social Contexts of Schooling Assignments and Grading**

*Additional guidelines for all assignments will be provided*

- Grammar and spelling is important so please be sure to proof all written work before submission.
- Points will be deducted for late submissions & incomplete assignments

### **Class Participation** (10 points each session)

Your attendance and participation in each class session will be part of your final grade. Your class participation is reliant upon your attendance. See the Attendance policy above.

### **Focus Papers** (25 points each)

You will organize your responses to your readings in 4 Focus Papers. These are one-page, single-spaced close reflections on the texts in relation to your own experiences. They're to be turned in by midnight on the due date.

### Canvas Discussion Posts (15 points each)

Each week by Friday at midnight, you are responsible for posting a short comment or reflection on the Canvas Discussion board. **At least two responses to other posts are also required.**

### Experiential Education Event Assignment: Deadline: November 30 (25 points)

Over the course of the quarter, you will attend (virtually or in person in a safe physically distant manner IF possible and in compliance with state guidelines) 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 information on event options as they arise), 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?

Additionally, be prepared to share an overview of your experiential educational event with the class. 5 min max.

### Racial Autobiography Assignment (60 points) including class presentation & paper

**Deadline:** Paper due November 16th & Presentations begin November 9th

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 page single-spaced paper, in which you consider the major influences that shape your understanding of race, diversity, and difference. The written portion will be due on the 2nd to last class. Class presentations would be no more than 15 minutes long.

### Group Project (40 points)

**Deadline:** Presentations November 30th & group grade given

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?
6. Explore and include a resource for unit or lesson planning from one of the following websites:
  - a. [Learning for Justice](#)
  - b. [Facing History and Ourselves](#)
  - c. [Dr. Bettina Love](#) (Abolitionist Teaching Network, Hip Hop Civics)
  - d. [Teaching While White](#)

## Course Schedule and Topics

**Pre work:** Prior to our 1st class please

- **Bring an artifact** that is important to you. It can be anything significant to your identity.
- View *Precious Knowledge* (sign-in with your NetIDs and view it at: <https://northwestern.kanopy.com/video/precious-knowledge>)
- Get textbooks

**Session 1 September 21:** How does my identity affect my learning and my teaching?

- Getting to know each other
- Norms and Agreements
- Review Syllabus and Logistics
- Videos and Discussion
- IPTS Standards Addressed: 1E, 1K, 2D, 3F, 4B, 4C, 5C, 5K, 5O, 6G, 7E, 7I, 8B, 8G, 9E, 9S

## Homework

**Read:**

- Boone, Katrina. [Opinion: Culture-based Education: A Path to Healing for Native Youth](#)
- [Lee, Enid](#). "Taking multicultural, anti-racist education seriously: An interview with Enid Lee." In Lowe, R. et. al., eds. *Rethinking schools: An agenda for change*. The New Press, 1995.
- Anderson, Melinda D. [Why the myth of meritocracy hurts kids of color](#)
- Quinton, Sophie and National Journal. [Why Good Teachers Embrace Culture](#), 2013
- Start Coates, Ta Nehsi. *Between the world and me*. New York: Spiegel & Grau, 2015. Finish by 4th session July 1st

**Watch**

- *13th* (available on Netflix) by 4th session October 12th

- *Precious Knowledge* (sign-in with your NetIDs and view it at: <https://northwestern.kanopy.com/video/precious-knowledge>) by 2nd session June 24th

### **Canvas Post #1 Due September 29**

How does who you are inform your professional practice and spaces? Why does who you are personally matter when it comes to serving your future students and/or the young people in your life?

### **Write Focus Paper #1 October 1**

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 September 28:** Intersectionality: the complexity of my identities & how where I learn(ed) impacts what I learn

- History and Issues in American Education discussion
- Equity, Democracy, Neoliberalism
- [Urgency of Intersectionality](#) Kimberle Crenshaw
- 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:**

- Anzaldúa, G. *Light in the dark/Luz en lo oscuro: Rewriting identity, spirituality, reality*. (Selections) Durham, NC: Duke University Press Books, 2010.
- Moraga, Cherrie. La jornada: Preface, 1981. In *This bridge called my back: Writings by radical women of color*. SUNY Press, 2015.
- Ladson-Billings, Gloria. What is critical race theory and what's it doing in a nice field like education? In Taylor, E., Gillborn, D., & Ladson-Billings, G. *Foundations of critical race theory in education*. Routledge, 2009.
- Alexander, Michelle. *The new Jim Crow* (selections). New York: The New Press, 2010.

### **Canvas Post #2 Due October 6**

Share a recent experience in your life that connects with what Anzaldúa 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?

**Session 3 October 5:** How has American education history played out for different groups?

- Discussion of *Between the World & Me*

- Guest Speaker
- The American Dream
- 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:**

- olsson, joan. ["Detour-spotting for white anti-racists"](#)
- Tatum, Beverly Daniel. "Talking about race, learning about racism: The applications of racial identity development theory in the classroom." *Harvard Educational Review*, vol. 62, no. 1, 1992.
- D'Angelo, Robin. "White fragility." *International Journal of Critical Pedagogy*, vol. 3, no. 3, 2011, pp. 54-70.
- Karklina, Anastasia. [Decades of Black Writing on Whiteness](#), Medium 2020

#### **Watch**

- [Dr. Robin DiAngelo Wants White People to Stop Saying They're Not Racist](#) (6:32) on Tonight Show Jimmy Fallon

**Session 4 October 12:** 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
- [Black Lives Matter: How a hashtag defined a movement](#)
- White Fragility
- IPTS Standards Addressed: 1L, 2N, 3K, 3L, 4K, 5L, 6J, 6O, 8D, 8L, 9E

### Homework

#### **Read:**

- Bandele, A., Kahn-cullors, P. *When they call you a terrorist: A black lives matter memoir*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 2017.

#### **Write Focus Paper #2 Due October 15**

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 5 October 19:** How do place, language, and culture intersect with learning?

- Dominant culture and power
- Guest Speaker
- Discussion of *When They Call You a Terrorist*
- [Last Day of Freedom](#)
- IPTS Standards Addressed: 1A, 2F, 2H, 3Q, 4B, 4D, 4I, 5C, 6J, 7R, 8N, 9P

### Homework

#### **Read:**

- Stereotype Threat (Steele, C. M. & Aronson, J. (1995). "Stereotype threat and the intellectual test performance of African Americans." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*. 69(5). 797-811.)
- Lipman, P. *High stakes education: Inequality, globalization, and urban school reform*. New York: Routledge, 2003. Chapter 4.

**Session 6 October 26:** How does power play out in the relationship between schools and social change?

- Critical Pedagogy discussion
- Guest Speaker
- Systems analysis and multicultural education
- Racial identity development theory
- IPTS Standards Addressed: 2A, 2C, 3C, 4A, 4B, 5M, 6C, 7L, 8L, 9O, 9P

### Homework

#### **Read:**

- Elliott, S. *Teaching and learning on the verge: Democratic education in action*. Chapter 5
- Kutner, Max. [How L.A.'s Brentwood School Became a Battleground in the Culture Wars](#)
- Moore, Natalie. Unreasonable fear blocks our view of black humanity.
- Wing Sue, Derald [Racial Microaggressions in Everyday Life](#)

### **Write Focus Paper #3 Due October 29**

#### **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 7 November 2:** 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
- Cultural Modeling across the disciplines
- IPTS Standards Addressed: 1J, 1L, 2Q, 3C, 3L, 4E, 5A, 5C, 6I, 6J, 8J, 9N

### Homework

#### **Read:**

- Freire, P. *Pedagogy of the oppressed* (Ch. 1 & 2). Bloomsbury Academic, 2000.
- [Gangstas, Wankstas, & Ridas](#) Jeff Duncan-Andrade

#### **Write Canvas Post #3 Due November 3**

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 8 November 9:** How do groups resist dominant narratives?

- Dominant culture and power
- Watch: Andrade-Duncan, Jeffrey. [Roses in Concrete Tedx talk](#)
- Begin Racial Autobiographies
- Guest speakers
- Group Project work time
- IPTS Standards Addressed: 1A, 2F, 2H, 3Q, 4B, 4D, 4I, 5C, 6J, 7R, 8N, 9P

### Homework

- Finish group project

## Session 9 November 16: Anti-racist education practice in schools and in communities

- Racial Autobiography presentations
- Written Racial Autobiographies Due
- Dialogue & Discussion

### Homework

#### **Write Canvas Post #4 Due November 17**

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.

#### **Focus Paper #4 Due November 19**

##### **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 you might be getting in the way of your understanding of these ideas, and explore them in a written reflection.

- Finish group project

**Session 10 November 30:** What are the possibilities for democratic education today?

- Finish Racial Autobiography presentations
- Group Presentations
- Anti-racist education practice in schools and in communities
- IPTS Standards Addressed: 1L, 2D, 2K, 4B, 4C, 7L, 8A, 8E, 9F