

Northwestern University
School of Education and Social Policy
MS ED 402: Social Contexts of Education
Fall 2021

Tuesdays, September 21 - November 23, 6:00pm - 9:00pm
345 Annenberg Hall

Instructors:

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In-person class

REQUIRED TEXTS:

- Freire, P. *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2000.
- Coates, T. *Between the World and Me*. New York: Spiegel & Grau, 2015.
- Moraga, C., Anzaldúa, G. *This Bridge Called My Back*. New York: State University of New York Press, 2015 (4th ed.)
- Articles, etc...will be posted on Canvas.

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. This course also meets the requirements for MS at 409.

IN-PERSON CLASS:

Please be prepared to be in person for each class.

CANVAS DISCUSSION FORUM:

Each student is required to post one (1) message or one (1) reply per week to our Canvas Discussion Forum.

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 retake the class at another time.

PARTICIPATION:

Your enthused, mindful participation is crucial to the class, as is your commitment to listen carefully to other students' points of view.

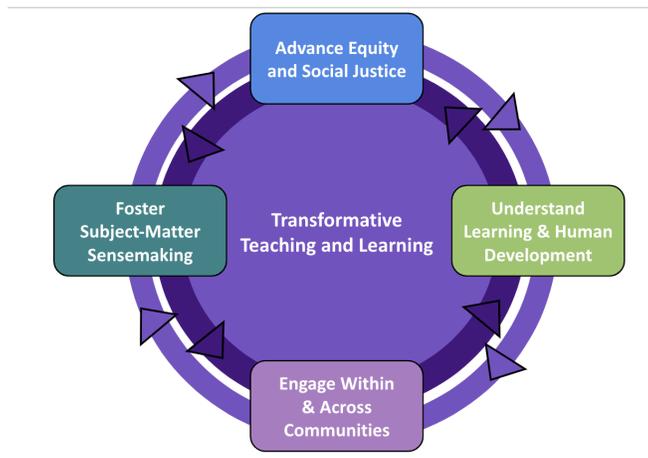
FINAL GRADE:

Your final grade will be based on your racial autobiography and home group projects, which you will write up and share in the last class.

GUIDING COMMITMENTS AND COURSE OBJECTIVES:

VISION: Developing educators to engage in transformative teaching and learning

- A statement of values about education for dignity, theories of learning as a social, cognitive, ethical and cultural process, and belief in the power of practices that create culturally sustaining & anti-racist learning environments
- Tools for strengthening our cultural life living through Course, "Discipline", Program, and Community
- Opportunities to build knowledge, enact practices/ performances, cultivate dispositions



Advance equity and social justice

- To understand the philosophical and historical underpinnings of schooling in America.
- To understand the dynamic role of social forces (e.g., race, class, gender, sexual orientation, language, ability) on education.
- To develop an understanding of the levels of racism and oppression ranging from internalized and individual to structural and systemic

Foster subject matter sensemaking

- To develop skills in creating safe, respectful learning environments in classrooms and schools.
- To understand how the teacher supports the academic, social, emotional, and physical development of individual students.
- To develop skills of teaching-as-researching.

Understanding learning and human development

- To develop practices of self-reflection, systems analysis, and dialogue.
- To understand the social ecology, culture, and climate of a classroom, school, and community.
- To explore teacher identity and its impact on students, as well as the impact students have on teacher identity.

Engage within and across communities

- To develop practices of the collegial community within and beyond the school.
- To develop voice and social capacity as a public intellectual.
- To attend an experiential event and reflect/write about it

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; 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.

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/Links to an external site. Students' written work may be electronically tested for plagiarized content using TurnItIn via Canvas.

COURSE SCHEDULE:

This syllabus is intended to give participants guidance in what may be covered during the semester and will be followed as closely as possible. However, instructors reserve the right in their discretion to modify, supplement, and make changes as course and student needs arise.

Week 1, September 21:

- Introduction to the course
- Getting to know each other; process on “place”
- Introduction to Descriptive Inquiry Processes

Reading due:

- **Before** September 21, please read Toni Cade Bambara’s [“The Lesson.”](#)

Writing due:

- Assignment on [Place Based Learning](#) (these will be shared in class)

Week 2, September 28:

Reading due:

- Moraga, C., Anzaldúa, G. *This Bridge Called My Back*. New York: State University of New York Press, 2015 (4th ed.).
- Narayan, U. “Working together across differences: Some considerations on emotions and political practice.” *Hypatia* V. 3 N. 2 Summer 1988.
- Hooks, *Teaching to Transgress*

Writing due:

- Focus paper #1
- Canvas post #1

Week 3, October 5:

Reading due:

- Anderson, Melinda. “Why the Myth of Meritocracy Hurts Kids of Color.”
- Coates, *Between the World and Me*.
- Selections from Alexander, Michelle. *The New Jim Crow*.

Writing due:

- Focus paper #2
- Canvas post #2

Week 4, October 12:

Reading due:

- Freire, P. *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (Chapters 1 and 2). Bloomsbury Academic, 2000.

Writing due:

- Focus paper #3
- Canvas post #3

Week 5, October 19:

Reading due:

- Baldwin, James. “A Talk to Teachers”
- Coates, [Case for Reparations](#)
- Stereotype Threat (Steele, C. M. & Aronson, J. (1995). “Stereotype threat and the intellectual test

Writing due:

- Focus paper #4
- Canvas post #4

Week 6, October 26:

Reading due:

- Shulman, E. “Reflection Is Action: The Struggle for White Educators to Balance Internal and External Anti-racist Efforts”
- Campbell, M. and Michael Kucera. “From the Inside Out: A Letter to Anti-Racist Leaders”

- Robin DiAngelo. “White Fragility”
- View video of Marcus Campbell and R. DiAngelo -- linked in Canvas

Writing due:

- Canvas post #5

Week 7, November 2:

Reading due:

- Carol Lee, “Cultural Modeling and the Demands of Teacher Knowledge”
- James Baldwin, “A Talk to Teachers”

Writing due:

- Canvas post #6

Week 8, November 9:

Reading due:

- Chezare A. Warren. “The Utility of Empathy for White Female Teachers’ Culturally Responsive Interactions with Black Male Students.”

Writing due:

- Canvas post #7

Week 9, November 16:

Due: Home group presentations

Week 10, November 23:

Due:

- Experiential education assignment
- Racial autobiographies (uploaded in Canvas, also shared during class)

EXPERIENTIAL EDUCATION ASSIGNMENT:

Twice during the quarter, you will attend an experiential education event in Chicago and write about it in a discussion post. Event options such as Chicago or Evanston school board meetings, community education forums, and conferences, lectures, films are acceptable. If you come across an event that you would like to list or to attend and are unsure about it, please email us the information. You can do this online and it is not restricted to the Chicago area.

The post should offer a reflection on the event you attended: 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 or whatever field you are going into? You’ll write about your experience as a post due before the last class.

HOME GROUP PROJECT

In small groups, you will explore how institutions and societal processes impact education, with a particular focus on the relationship between race and power. Your group will use selections from *This Bridge Called My Back* as a foundation, and make connections with course readings, conversations, and current events. Each group will share with the class collective learning on their inquiry. Presentation guidelines will be provided. Your group will lead this the second to last class.

RACIAL AUTOBIOGRAPHY ASSIGNMENT:

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 understanding of race, diversity, and difference. You might consider your earliest experience, your most recent, and anything you would like to include in between. You will have five minutes to share your racial autobiography at the last class.