**EDCI 488L: Embracing Diversity in Classroom Community**  
**Fall 2011**  
**Tuesdays: 3:30 – 6:15 pm (SQH 1117)**

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**Office Hours:** Mondays: 11:00 – 1:00 pm (1201 Benjamin)  
  or by appointment

**Course Overview**  
This course is a foundations course intended to expose UMD students to the richness and complexity of K-12 students’ diversity that they will encounter in the American public school classrooms. To begin, UMD students will learn about the history of public schooling in the United States wherein educators have been charged with serving a larger and larger cross-section of the American public. Today, public school teachers across the country work with students from increasingly diverse racial, ethnic, religious, linguistic, and learning backgrounds. This diversity demands that teachers continuously strive to “see” their students fully. This course is designed to help teacher candidates learn about how the interplay of their own cultural, linguistic, and cognitive identities and students’ cultural, linguistic, and cognitive diversity shapes the dynamics of their classroom interactions.

Reflection and inquiry are a vital part of learning and good teaching. This course will help UMD teacher candidates learn ways of inquiring into the construction of their own identities and the academic identities of their students. Moreover, this course will help UMD students foster an increased level of self-awareness about what can thwart their ability to “see” their students fully. It is our hope that by acquiring a deepened level of self-awareness, our pre-service teachers will be better disposed and prepared to create classroom conditions that are welcoming, engaging, and demanding for all students.

Collaboration is also an important part of the life of a teacher, and this course is also designed to help foster collaborative learning both in and outside of class and to model how a group of students can come together with their teacher to team as a learning community. While it may be traditional within the university setting for learning to be an individualized pursuit, there is much to be learned from the orientation of many
teachers in the K-12 setting who have organized their classrooms into peer learning teams as well as engaged with their own collegial learning groups. The success of this course is not to be measured strictly through how well each individual student achieves in the course but more so through how actively students’ work to foster their peers’ learning along with their own.

Essential Questions

- What are the purposes of American public schooling in our pluralist democracy? [InTASC 2]
- Who are the students we will encounter in the public schools and with what dimensions of diversity do we need to grapple in order to be equipped to come to know our (k-12) students well? [InTASC 2, InTASC 3, EC1]
- Who am I and what bridges will I have to build in order to embrace my students’ diversity? [InTASC 2, InTASC 9, EC1]

Course Outcomes

- UMD pre-service teachers will understand what role the public schools have played in promoting the equality of opportunity for each rising generation of Americans and what role the schools have played in sustaining societal inequities. [InTASC 2, InTASC 3, EC1]
- UMD pre-service teachers will understand how dimensions of students’ diversity have been treated by educators as deficits to learning rather than as strengths/resources for learning. [InTASC 2, InTASC 3, EC1]
- UMD pre-service teachers will reflect upon how their own cultural, linguistic, and academic identities shape their perceptions and expectations of students. [InTASC 9, EC4]

Required Texts


Additional supplemental readings will be assigned throughout the semester and will be provided by the instructor.

**Course Performance**

1) **Class Preparation and Participation**
As a pre-service teacher candidate at the University of Maryland, you are expected to demonstrate a high-commitment to learning through actively participating in your own learning as well as attending to the learning of others in the class. As an important member of our classroom community you are expected to attend all scheduled classes, come prepared to contribute thoughtfully in class discussion, and to listen closely to the contributions of your peers. Furthermore, it is expected that you will alert me in advance if you are unable to come to a class session (notwithstanding unforeseen circumstances, in which case I would appreciate an email at your earliest convenience explaining your unexpected absence). More than one unexcused absence will result in a point loss in your participation grade; likewise, excessive lateness and/or not coming to class prepared will negatively impact your course grade.

A. **Weekly Response Journals [InTASC 1, InTASC 2, Learners, Social and Cultural Context, EC4]**
Each week you should carefully read, take notes on, and think critically about the assigned readings as well as the ensuing class discussion. After each class, it is expected that you will post a thoughtful blog entry which can be creative in format/audience (write a letter to one of the authors, a former student, or teacher). The goal is for you to engage with the readings and to reflect upon our on-going class dialogue in a meaningful way, a way that situates the readings within the context of your own personal journey as well as the context of schooling in America. You should not use these blog entries to summarize the weekly readings or to tell me what you liked or did not like in the readings/class discussion. Instead, focus on your new learning(s) for the week, something you found interesting and surprising in the readings and why, and most importantly, what questions have surfaced because of your engagement with the course. Drawing explicit and connections between your emerging questions and/or ideas directly back to the texts is important in establishing your credibility as a thinker/writer.

**Weekly Blog Entries are due each Friday by 5pm, starting Sept. 9th**
B. Teaching a Lesson on the Readings to the Whole Class [InTASC 7, InTASC 8]

During the course of the semester, each student is responsible for working in a pair to facilitate a 45-minute lesson on the weekly topic and assigned readings for that day. In order to be credited for this assignment, you must discuss your plans with me at least one week before you plan to teach and to complete a brief reflection on the experience. Please note, this reflection will take the place of your usual weekly blog entry (as described above). You will sign up for your assigned date in class.

2) First Paper and Debate [Social and Cultural Context]
In this era wherein the public schools have come under increasing attack, you will be asked to debate the following question, “How do schools impact the health of a plurastic, American democracy?” In addition to the debate, each student will write a 3-5 page position paper supporting their perspective on the question. A more elaborated description of this paper and rubric will be provided within the course.

3) Group Project [InTASC 4, Technology, Innovation and Creativity]
All students will sign up for a group, and each group will be responsible for generating a well-researched and documented Wiki entry on a policy issue that impacts diversity. It is expected that each group will focus on establishing a clear conceptualization of their diversity dimension and will also examine with how this dimension has posed a dilemma for American educators. A more elaborated description of this assignment and rubric will be provided within the course.

The four issues of diversity groups are as follow:
- Tracking
- Achievement Gap
- Technology and Access to Technology
- Educational Funding

4) Final Paper [InTASC 2, InTASC 3, EC1, EC2, EC4, Social and Cultural Contexts]
Sadowski writes, “[M]uch of a student’s success or failure in school . . . centers not on external factors but on the question of identity: ‘Who am I?’ ‘What kind of student do I want to be?’ ‘What things are important to me?’ ‘What do others expect of me?’ ‘How do other people perceive me?’”
To prepare for the writing of this final paper, you will need to schedule a conversation/interview with a secondary school student who has a different life experience from you. You can choose a student from a current or previous field placement, or we can arrange an interview with a high school student in another setting. The focus of the interview is the development of their academic identity and their sense of how their racial, cultural, gender, linguistic, cognitive status have impacted their sense of self in and out of school.

When you write the final paper, you will examine who you are, who you are in relationship to your (future) diverse students, and how this relationship can influence yours and your students’ sense of belonging in the classroom. You will grapple with the same questions as are the adolescents that you will be teaching and you will write about the development of your academic identity. The goal is to address the constructs that are most salient to your present self-identity, such as race, culture, language, gender, learning style, etc., and then to identify some of the specific experiences that influenced the formation of your sense of who you are in school, e.g. your academic identity. In addition, you will reflect upon how the construction of your own self and academic identity has influenced your perceptions of what is “normal,” and consequently, what bridges you will have to build as an educator in order to embrace your students’ diversity and to be able to fully “see” your students’ as unique individuals who have tremendous capacity to grow and learn. A more elaborated description of this assignment and rubric will be provided within the course.

Course Evaluation
I will work throughout the course to set clear performance standards for you to meet, and I will also work to help you reach those standards by commenting and providing feedback on your work and/or meeting with you individually. I will accept late assignments only if/when you have made prior arrangements with me. I will evaluate your work based on the criteria outlined in each assignment’s rubric. Generally speaking, I will looking for students’ work to be prompt, thoughtful, careful, and complete. Make sure that all of your work is proofread carefully. Please avail yourself of the campus’ Writing Center if you feel your writing needs to be improved.

Your final grade will be based on the following elements:
- Class preparation and participation 25 points
- First paper/debate 20 points
- Group Project/Wiki entry 25 points
- Final identity paper 30 points
Grading Scale:
100-90 = A; 89-80=B; 79-70=C; 69-60=D; <60=F (+/- may be used)

As a member of the UMD academic community, you as a student an important responsibility to submit your course evaluations each term though CourseEvalUM in order to help faculty and administrators improve teaching and learning at Maryland. The link through which you can access the evaluation system is: www.coursseevalum.umd.edu. Once you submit your electronic evaluations, you can access all posted results via Testudo under CourseEvalUM Reporting. More information on the electronic evaluation system is available at: https://www.irpa.umd.edu/Assessment/CourseEval/stdt_faq.shtml.

Student Rights and Responsibilities
*Students will not be penalized because of observances of their religious beliefs. Whenever possible, students will be given reasonable time to make up any academic assignment that is missed due to participation in a religious observance. Please advise me as soon as possible of any absences for religious observances.*

Students at the University of Maryland are held to the highest level of academic integrity. The Honor Code prohibits students from submitting the same paper for credit in two courses without authorization, buying papers, submitting fraudulent documents, plagiarizing papers or materials from the internet and other sources without proper documentation and cheating on exams. The full code is posted at www.studentconduct.umd.edu, students are responsible for its content.

Students with any type of disability that may interfere with learning in this class should negotiate a reasonable accommodation with the instructor early in the semester and be registered with the Student Disabilities Resource Center.
# CLASS SCHEDULE (Subject to Change by Instructor)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic(s)</th>
<th>Readings</th>
<th>Assignments</th>
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| Sep. 6   | -A Snapshot of contemporary American Public Schools: Who are the Students I will be Encountering?  
           -Howard, G. (2007). “As Diversity Grows, so Must We.” | First weekly blog entry due by 5pm, Friday, Sept. 10th |
| Sept. 13 | What are the purposes of public schooling in an American pluralist democracy?  
| Sept. 20 | What are the purposes of public schooling in an American pluralist democracy?  
           1900 – 1950                                               | -Graham, Chpts. 1 & 2 “Assimilation” and “Adjustment” |                                                   |
| Sept. 27 | What are the purposes of public schooling in an American pluralist democracy?  
           1950 – 1980                                               | -Graham, Chpt. 3 “Access” |                                                   |
| Oct. 4   | What are the purposes of public schooling in an American pluralist democracy?  
           1980 - Present                                               | -Graham, Chpt. 4 “Achievement” |                                                   |
| Oct. 11  | -How do students’ Adolescent Identities get constructed? | -Sadowski, Chpt. 1 “Identity and Possibility”  
           -Sadowski, Chpt. 11 | Debate |


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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Reading Material</th>
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<tr>
<td>Oct. 18</td>
<td>Examining Dimensions of Diversity &amp; Identity: Culture and Class</td>
<td>“Beyond Categories”</td>
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<td>- Sadowski, Chpt. 8 “Who Wins and Who Loses?” Howard, Chapter 1</td>
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<td>Oct. 25</td>
<td>Examining Dimensions of Diversity &amp; Identity: Race and White Privilege</td>
<td>“Joaquin’s Dilema” Howard Chapter 2 and 3</td>
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<td>Nov. 1</td>
<td>Examining Dimensions of Diversity &amp; Identity: Immigration and Language</td>
<td>“Adolescents from Immigrant Families” Model Minorities and Perpetual Foreigners</td>
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<td>Nov. 8</td>
<td>Examining Dimensions of Diversity &amp; Identity: Cognition and Learning Styles</td>
<td>“Who am I as a Learner?”</td>
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<td>Nov. 15</td>
<td>Examining Dimensions of Diversity &amp; Identity: Cognition and Gender</td>
<td>“The Impact of Disability on Adolescent Identity”</td>
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<td>Group projects due (Wiki postings) by 11pm on Sunday, Nov. 21st</td>
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<td>Nov. 22</td>
<td>Examining Dimensions of Diversity &amp; Identity: Ability and Disability</td>
<td>Milner, Chapter 1</td>
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<td>Nov. 29</td>
<td>Teaching in Today’s Classrooms: The Nexus of Diversity, Opportunity, and</td>
<td>Milner Chapter 2-3</td>
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<td>Teaching</td>
<td>Milner, Howard, Chapter</td>
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<td>Dec. 6</td>
<td>Building Bridges w/my students: Addressing inequities in our schools</td>
<td>Chapter 4</td>
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<td>Dec. 13</td>
<td>Building Bridges w/my students: The complex negotiation of School Identity and Belonging – A Review and Synthesis</td>
<td>Chapter 7, Chapter 5</td>
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<td>FINAL EXAM</td>
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<td>Final Identity Papers due</td>
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