Course Description: Background, Goals, Vision, and Objectives

Though our society has always been diverse, that diversity has not been acknowledged in a positive light until very recently. In the last 100 years, that acknowledgement has come to the fore—the result of tireless democratic action on the part of social justice advocates and activists. As our societal diversity continues to grow (and, with it, concomitant social action to engender positive acknowledgement of it), schools become not only microcosms of this demographic diversity, but also reflect the multitude of belief systems and ways of knowing that children from increasingly diverse backgrounds bring to the classroom. As a result, teachers are being called upon to develop deep understandings about equity and diversity. The overall goal of the course is to support teacher candidates' engagement in critical reflection around these key issues. While the discussion of teaching strategies for diversity may come up in a tangential fashion, the course will not focus on the development of such teaching strategies. Rather, the course will focus on the development of teacher candidates’ habits of mind for the equity and diversity challenges and opportunities they have and will continue to face.

Students in this course will examine a variety of theoretical frameworks that will serve as artifacts for class conversations about equity and diversity. Central to the work of the class is our ability to think deeply about our own experiences, values and understandings in light of the readings. There will be emphasis on analyzing our own teaching in light of such reflections. This course seeks to connect the concept of diversity in the classroom with the goal of creating more equitable classroom practices that support student learning.

The ambitious learning outcomes for this course are that students will:

1) Gain an expanded concept of “diversity” and understand the connections between diversity and equity.
2) Gain a greater understanding and/or ability to articulate their personal beliefs, values, attitudes and ideologies and explore how these influence the way teachers support and limit equity in their classrooms.
3) Gain the ability to create greater equity within their specific teaching contexts.

Essential Question Guiding this Course:
How can knowledge of self, schooling, and society influence pedagogical decision-making?

Required Text (need to be purchased)


A Word about Perspective

This course, like all courses, has a point of entry into debate, something it wants to show you, a position, a perspective; it, like all courses, is not neutral or objective. Given this, it is important that you understand that you need not embrace the course perspective in order to be successful in it. You are strongly encouraged to be a critical thinker about everything in this course, including its perspective. You will be assessed based on the quality of your scholarship in this course. If you articulate perspectives contrary to the course’s and support those perspectives with scholarship in accordance to the course learning expectations you will be academically successful in the course. If you articulate perspectives in concert with the course’s but do not support your perspectives with scholarship in accordance with course learning expectations, you will not be academically successful in the course. You will be challenged to produce good scholarship. Your perspectives will be interrogated and supported as is appropriate to the course perspective, but assessment is predicated upon good scholarship regardless of your individual and/or the course’s perspectives.

Course Requirements

Given the nature of this course, both the themes and purposes, success depends upon your engagement in inquiry, analysis, synthesis, reflection and respect of others. General expectations for graduate study are that students spend two hours each week preparing for every credit. On average you should spend a minimum of six hours outside of class each week engaged in the following requirements for this course:

I. Attendance, Readings and Participation (20 points)

You will be expected to attend all scheduled classes and to arrive on time. If you are unable to attend class for some documented emergency, you must contact one of us immediately. You will be expected to make-up the missed class with an activity/ written assignment to be determined by us.

You are expected to come to class prepared, having read the assigned readings and taken notes. Your notes must go beyond the basic level of comprehension and instead capture how the readings added to your knowledge or changed your thinking. No matter how much you may agree with the author’s perspective, force yourself to consider alternative perspectives, criticisms, or weaknesses. These notes should serve as a basis for your written assignments and will assist you in participating in class discussions thoughtfully, responsibly, and constructively.

You are expected to actively participate in class discussions. Be prepared to share insights with the class each week that are shaped by the readings. Your participation is important not only for your own growth and learning but also for the learning of others. Our discussions serve as a forum in which you can sharpen your thinking, test your ideas, exchange insights and perceptions with the instructor and with each other, and contribute towards others thinking. As a result, we must all try to work hard at providing opportunities for all perspectives to be voiced and listened to in order to maximize the learning potential of this course. We will all strive to be tolerant, patient, and respectful of diverse viewpoints.

October 13th and October 20th - ONLINE PARTICIPATION

Class will not meet F2F on these two dates. Instead, you are expected to participate in an online discussion with your assigned online discussion group. There will be a prompt posted to start the discussion on the Discussion Board in your group room. The expectation for participation is that the group will engage in an online discussion during the regularly scheduled class time those days (5:30-8:30 pm).
The expectations for online participation both days are:

- You must respond to the initial question or prompt with a thoughtful and original post, supporting your ideas with evidence.
- You must respond to at least three other learners in a way that makes connections to the discussion topic and builds on other student’s ideas.
  - Posts should extend the discussion; periodically posing questions to this end.
- Your ideas should be communicated clearly.
- All posts/ responses must demonstrate knowledge and understanding (application and/or connections) about the assigned readings/ discussion topic.
- All posts/ responses must follow the online discussion norms;
  - Be sure to proofread all posts before sending; pay particular attention to tone.
  - Agree/ disagree with ideas, not people; these discussions should remain collegial, thought-provoking, and draw on topics relevant to the course.
  - Be critical and analytical, but not cynical.
  - Respond in a timely manner. Online discussions are expected to take place during the time class is scheduled. All group members should be online and participating during that three hour window.

**II. School Biography** (10 points)

As you begin your careers as teachers within your current schools, it becomes important to understand the context about your school and how you might contribute towards supporting student learning in this context. Prepare a 4-5 page overview about your school. This school biography should include:

- A brief history of the school (ie: when it was founded and why it was founded)
- Information about the surrounding community of the school
  - Family/community/cultural assets (e.g., cultural norms, student interests, relevant experiences and resources)
- Identify any specialized features of your school or classroom setting (e.g., themed magnet, classroom aide, bilingual, team taught with a special education teacher)
- Description of the student population. Address the following areas:
  - Academic development (e.g., prior knowledge, key skills, ways of thinking in the subject areas, developmental levels, and other special educational needs)
  - Academic Language Development (students’ abilities to understand and produce the oral or written texts in English that are part of the lessons/activities)
  - Social and emotional development (e.g., relationships with each other, expressing themselves in constructive ways, engaging in collaborative learning, contributions to a productive learning environment)
- Descriptions of the teaching population
- Portrayal of the school culture
- Mission (concrete ways that the school seeks to accomplish the vision) and vision (general goals of the school)

Within this sketch of your school, be sure to highlight aspects of the school that are in need of improvement as well as strengths within the school. Further, be sure to explore what strengths you bring to the school and how you feel that you will contribute and enhance the school culture and mission. **Due September 8th.**
III. Response Papers (10 points each)
Each student is required to respond to three readings throughout the semester. These response papers should be 2-3 pages in length and you are encouraged to;
   a) summarize the main issues/ content of the reading,
   b) offer a well-reasoned critique of the readings and discuss how your reading and reflecting expanded, changed or confirmed your thinking about the issue/ topic, and
   c) pose questions that still remain for you based on your critical reflection of the reading.

You are encouraged to connect the readings to your personal experiences, but not at the cost of losing the main content of the article. These papers should be embedded in the readings. You are encouraged to submit these short papers via email/ MS Word attachment. They are due before class on the following dates and late papers will be penalized by one letter grade.

Response Paper #1: September 22nd
Response Paper #2: October 13th
Response Paper #3: November 17th

IV. Leading Class Discussion of Readings (10 points)
During the course of the semester you will work with one or two partners and take responsibility for facilitating one class discussion. You and your partner(s) will be responsible for creating a lesson plan for the discussion you sign-up to facilitate. Your lesson plan is due the Friday before you are scheduled to facilitate.

Guidelines- 90 minutes

Lesson Plan
   o 1-2 pages (not including handouts)
   o Includes learning and academic language objectives, detailed description of activities, and identification of informal assessments that will be used (what will you be listening/ looking for to gauge student understanding)
   o Use of problem posing questions

Lesson
   o Well Organized/Articulated
   o Interesting/Encourages Student Participation/Involvement
   o Effective Use of Hand-Outs/Visual Aids
     ▪ Agenda
     ▪ Outline of Key Points
     ▪ Creative Illustrations of Key Points
     ▪ Use of Educational Technology
   o Encouraged a wide range of perspectives about the reading to emerge
   o Left the class with unresolved dichotomies, unanswered questions, and engaged in continuing critical thought about the reading
   o All group members are actively involved!
V. **Equity Inquiry Paper** (30 points)

Your final project is to complete a paper analyzing a dilemma that you face in your teaching practice. The dilemma should represent a challenge you face in creating an equitable classroom. Since dilemmas cannot be solved, the purpose of this paper is NOT to find an “answer” to your dilemma. Instead, the purpose of the paper is for you to analyze the dilemma from new perspectives. Those new perspectives should reflect the concepts and theories from the syllabus, as well as discussions we’ve had in class. You do not need to cite all of the literature from the course, but you should cite literature relevant to your new understanding of your classroom dilemma. You will complete two assignments over the course of the semester that will help you develop/ write your final equity inquiry paper.

**Equity Dilemma Sketch** (5 points) **Due September 15th**
You will write a short sketch describing an “equity dilemma” you are facing in your classroom placement. In this short sketch (no longer than two pages) you will describe your teaching context (both the school and your specific classroom), and the exact nature of the dilemma or challenge you are facing.

**Equity Update** (5 points) **October 27th**
In this assignment you will share with us your understandings of your classroom dilemma as they have been influenced by class readings and discussions. This “equity update” (2-3 pages in length) may be a reanalysis of the initial dilemma, or an analysis of the dilemma itself. You should be sure to incorporate key ideas and concepts from readings that were critical to your analysis of the dilemma.

**Final Equity Paper** (20 points) **December 16th**

The paper should be organized in three major sections:

A. **Introduction**
   - (2-3 pages) you should introduce your teaching context and the dilemma you face, describing it thoroughly (similar to your initial Dilemma Sketch you submitted).

B. **Analysis**
   - (5-6 pages) use the readings and concepts from class to reexamine your original understanding of the dilemma, as well as submit alternative understandings of the dilemma given what you have learned in the course.

C. **Next Steps**
   - (2-3 pages) highlight what new actions you will be taking given your new understandings of the dilemma. Again, this isn’t about “solving” the dilemma; rather, it’s about trying something new and understanding the potential positive outcomes, as well as considering the unintended potential negative consequences.

The final paper should be approximately 10-12 pages in length, double-spaced, Times New Roman with one inch margins. It should also use the conventions of APA style. The paper will be assessed according to the following criteria:

- Clarity of equity dilemma description
- Depth of equity dilemma analysis
- Accuracy of application of concepts from readings
- Appropriateness of next steps
- Writing conventions including application of APA style
Plan to email a copy of the complete draft to your peer review partner no later than Friday, December 2\textsuperscript{nd}. Each person will either email feedback to their partner or bring in hard copies of the draft copy with comments/ feedback. In either case, everyone should have their edited hard copies in hand for class on Thursday, December 8\textsuperscript{th} for peer review workshop.

The final project is then due no later than December 16\textsuperscript{th} at 5:00 pm. You may submit your final project electronically. Be sure you receive an email from me acknowledging receipt of your paper.

Grades

Your final grade will be based on the following assignments and point system:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Points</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attendance &amp; Participation</td>
<td>20 pts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Biography</td>
<td>10 pts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Response Papers (3)</td>
<td>30 pts. (10/ paper)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leading the Class Discussion of Readings</td>
<td>10 pts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equity Sketch</td>
<td>5 pts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equity Update</td>
<td>5 pts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equity Inquiry Paper</td>
<td>20 pts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td>100 points</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Please be advised that you must complete every assignment to pass the course; that is, you cannot simply choose to not do something and take the corresponding point reduction.

Grading Scale:

- **A+** 100+
- **A** 96-100
- **A-** 90-95
- **B+** 87-89
- **B** 83-86
- **B-** 80-82
- **C+** 77-79
- **C** 73-76
- **C-** 70-72

(A+ will be given if a student has 100 points, has made substantive contributions in each class based on readings, and has demonstrated extraordinary insight and grasp of the literature in writing work and presentations. Full credit for class participation will be given only for weekly, on-time attendance and contributions based on readings. Students can receive partial credit for make-up work on unavoidable absences.)

Statement on Academic Integrity

The university has approved a Code of Academic Integrity available on the web at [www.inform.umd.edu/CampusInfo/Depatments/jpo/code_acinteg.html](http://www.inform.umd.edu/CampusInfo/Depatments/jpo/code_acinteg.html). The code prohibits you from cheating on exams, plagiarizing papers, submitting the same paper for credit in two courses without authorization, buying papers, submitting fraudulent documents, and forging signatures. The code strives to promote a “community of trust” on our campus.

Equal Educational Opportunity Policy Statement

In accordance with federal, state, local, university, and the college of education laws, access to equal educational opportunity based on race; ethnicity; geographic origin; language; socioeconomic class; sex and gender; gender identity and expression; sexual orientation; physical, developmental, and psychological ability; religious, spiritual, faith-based, or secular affiliation; age and generation; and physical appearance, among other categories of social identity, is paramount. Every effort will be made to arrange for reasonable accommodations to ensure that such opportunity exists and is measurable in terms of equality of outcome.
# Course Outline

### Week 1/ September 1<sup>st</sup>
**Setting the context: How have we historically constructed differences in the US educational system?**


### Week 2/ September 8<sup>th</sup>
**Setting the context (continued): Meritocracy in America- who deserves success and why? How do we ensure those who “deserve” success achieve it?**


- School Biography due

### Week 3/ September 15<sup>th</sup>
**Different “differences” have different consequences.**


- Equity Sketch

### Week 4/ September 22<sup>nd</sup>
**Can a cultural analytic frame help?**


- Response Paper #1 due

### Week 5/ September 29<sup>th</sup>
**What’s in our hidden curriculum? How do our values and beliefs shape our students’ experiences?**


### Week 6/ October 6th
Culturally Responsive Teaching: Is it the answer?


### Week 7/ October 13th [ONLINE]
What are the results of our assumptions about students? How do we work toward getting to know students without developing their biographies for them?


- Response Paper #2 due

### Week 8/ October 20th [ONLINE]
Who are our students? What are they saying about their own experiences? How do we “know” them without stereotyping them?


### Week 9/ October 27th
Who are our students? What are they saying about their own experiences? How do we “know” them without stereotyping them?


- Equity Update due

### Week 10/ November 3rd
Who are our students? What are they saying about their own experiences? How do we “know” them without stereotyping them?

### Week 11/ November 10th

**How do learning a language and learning content intersect and influence the ways we think of equity? What are students “capable” of doing?**


### Week 12/ November 17th

**Ability: What is “smart”? How do we identify who is smart and who is not? What are the consequences of doing so?**


> Response Paper #3 due

### Week 13/ December 8th

**Moving forward…now what?**


Peer Editing/ Review Workshop

### Finals Week: December 12th - 16th

**Final Equity Inquiry Paper due no later than 5:00 pm Friday, December 16th**

* Indicates reading may be facilitated by a group of 3 students.

** Indicates reading may be facilitated by a group of 4 students.