

**TE891: Developing Effective Urban Educators: Examining Challenges and Possibilities  
Spring 2008, Section 736 ONLINE**

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**NOTE: This syllabus is a draft and is subject to changes.**

**Course Description:**

In this seminar, students will explore major challenges that classroom teachers face in urban settings. We will examine theoretical frameworks for understanding cultural difference as it impacts teaching and learning in the urban classroom. Students will be introduced to historical perspectives and current research that highlights academic achievement patterns based on race, class, and other cultural identities. Finally, students will examine educational cultures of excellence and examples of teaching for social justice as a way to provide equity in education for all students.

Course goals include:

- ✚ Through reading, writing and discussing *teacher narratives*, we will reflect on our own and others' learning to teach to explore the questions: Why is critical self reflection important to becoming an effective urban educator? How does my social identity (e.g., race, class, gender, etc.) inform my pedagogy and practice?
- ✚ Understanding problems of practice that I have educating culturally diverse students and how I might address those in the classroom.
- ✚ We will practice the skills of *critical analysis* as we read, discuss and reflect on a variety of readings during the seminar. In doing so, we will ask ourselves: Who am I becoming as a teacher? What are my feelings about working with culturally diverse students? What is effective pedagogy and practice?

**Required Texts:**

There is no required text for the course. All readings (required and recommended) will be posted on ANGEL.

**Course Evaluation**

Grades will be determined as follows:

Attendance and Participation	30%
Briefs (3)	35%
Teaching Autobiography	35%

### **Course Norms, Expectations and Procedures**

Based on a seminar format, we will use a combination of large and small group discussion and/or presentation to explore the big ideas of the course. All communication in this course will be asynchronous, therefore you have a lot of flexibility in when you access the course. All new content will be posted on Mondays. Weekly instructions will be carefully spelled out in an email sent to the group each Monday.

### **Active Participation**

I understand most of you are full-time teachers, but this is a graduate course and I have an obligation to push your thinking in powerful ways. Thus, I have designed this to be an intellectually demanding experience. Be sure to set aside time for the reading, writing and discussion that are asked of you. ***I also ask that you log on to ANGEL at least 2x/weekly in order to stay apprised of course announcements and participate actively in our discussions.***

### **Timely Participation**

***New content will be posted under the Lessons tab by 3:00pm each Monday.*** I will also send a group email each Monday with a summary of where we've been and where we're going as a group. Most due dates will fall on Sundays. It is important that you don't fall behind. Although our communication will be asynchronous in this course, we will rely heavily on collaborative work. Active and timely participation is expected.

### **Respectful Discourse**

An online environment is different from face-to-face. We make comments to one another, but we don't always know how they are being interpreted. Keep this in mind as you participate in our discussion forums. ***Be thoughtful and respectful at all times.*** Choose your words carefully and kindly. This is a graduate course and I want to provide you with a safe place to critique and assess ideas, not people.

### **Questions for the Professor**

When you have specific questions for the professor (e.g. using ANGEL, an assignment or your grade) **send an email directly to me** using "TE 891" in the subject line. My goal will be to respond to you within 24 hours during the week.

COURSE ACCESS: [www.angel.msu.edu](http://www.angel.msu.edu)

We use ANGEL to organize our work as an on-line learning community. If you are new to ANGEL, go to the homepage and link to "ANGEL Help" for students. **You will need to activate your MSU email account to do this.**

## COURSE ASSIGNMENTS



### **Briefs:**

Students are expected to write three single-spaced, one-page briefs during the course. In each brief, students should make reflective and analytical responses to the readings. This means developing defensible interpretations, negotiating meanings, and drawing connections to other works, concepts, or phenomena. You are also encouraged to make connections between theory, research, and practice by drawing on your life experiences as a student, professional, and learner. Briefs **SHOULD NOT** summarize the readings. The following questions might help guide students' thinking when preparing briefs.

1. In what ways, if at all, have the readings for this week challenged your beliefs about and attitudes toward urban schools, communities, and students?
2. In what ways, if at all, have the readings for this week enhanced your thinking about what is necessary and sufficient for you to be an effective educator of culturally diverse students?
3. How do you see issues of power and privilege -- and their impact on urban schools and achievement -- illuminated in the readings?

Your briefs will help the professor prepare for classroom discussions. **Briefs should be uploaded to the weekly ANGEL discussion forum no later than 12:00noon on Wednesday of the week the readings are assigned.** I will not assign weeks for you to write your brief. You have the option of choosing which three weeks you will submit briefs.



### **Teaching Autobiography**

More details to come.

### **Late Assignments:**

Students are expected to meet writing deadlines. Any work submitted after its due date will be considered late. Late papers will be reduced by one-half letter grade for the first day of lateness and a full grade any time later, except in extreme cases. Assignments are due by the designated time period.

### **Writing Guidelines:**

Writing proficiency is a minimum requirement for satisfactory completion of this course. All written work must reflect adequate writing skills in order to receive a grade.

Please edit your work carefully and check for spelling/typographical errors before turning it in. Many of you will be teachers and you will need to be able to clearly communicate ideas to parents, other teachers, administrators, community news sources, etc. In light of this, it is our

policy to support you in the development of your writing. If you feel you need outside support with writing, the Writing Center in 300 Bessey Hall (tel: 432-3610; website: <http://writing.msu.edu/default.html>) can be of assistance). I may refer you there if I feel they may be of service to you. If you already know that you have weaknesses in your writing, please see me as soon as possible, so we arrange assistance. Please do not feel embarrassed about coming to me for help – assisting you is my job as your instructor.

**Academic Honesty:**

Article 2.3.3 of the *Academic Freedom Report* states that “the student shares with the faculty the responsibility for maintaining the integrity of scholarship, grades, and professional standards.” In addition, the College of Education adheres to the policies on academic honesty as specified in General Student Regulations 1.0, Protection of Scholarship and Grades, and in the all-University Policy on Integrity of Scholarship and Grades, which are included in *Spartan Life: Student Handbook and Resource Guide*. Students who commit an act of academic dishonesty may receive a zero on the assignment or in the course.

**Special Accommodations:**

Students with disabilities should contact the Professor to discuss any accommodations needed to fulfill the course requirements and achieve learning objectives. In order to receive reasonable accommodations from the Professor, students must have certified eligibility through the Resource Center for Persons with Disabilities (RCPD) located at 120 Bessey Hall (tel: 353-9642; TTY: 355-1293; Email: [rcpd@msu.edu](mailto:rcpd@msu.edu); web: <http://www.rcpd.msu.edu>).

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\*\*The course schedule found below is a guide and is subject to change depending on the needs of the class.\*\*

**TEACHING AND LEARNING IN URBAN SCHOOLS: RACE, CLASS, GENDER, AND CULTURE**

**Week 1 – March 10th: Unpacking the “Urban” – Part 1**

- Course Introduction

Required:

- Kincheloe, J. (2004). Why teach in urban settings? In Steinberg, S., & Kincheloe, J. (Eds). *19 Urban Questions: Teaching in the city*. New York, NY: Peter Lang.

**Week 2 – March 17th: Unpacking the “Urban” Confronting Stereotypes, Biases, & Our Personal Stories**

Required:

- Garcia, K. (2002). “Swimming against the mainstream: Examining cultural

assumptions in the classroom,” (pp. 22-29). In L. Darling-Hammond, J. French, & S. Garcia-Lopez (Eds.). *Learning to teach for social justice*. New York: Teachers College Press.

- Nieto, S. (2005). Public Schools and the Work of Teachers. In S. Nieto (Ed.), *Why We Teach* (pp. 3-11). New York, NY: Teachers College Press.
- Nieto, S. (2003). Teaching as Autobiography. In *What keeps teachers going?* (pp. 22-36). New York, NY: Teachers College Press.
- Steele, J. (2002). “Acknowledging diversity in the classroom,” (pp. 18-21). In L. Darling-Hammond, J. French, & S. Garcia-Lopez (Eds.). *Learning to teach for social justice*. New York: Teachers College Press.

### **Week 3 – March 24th: Pedagogy and Practice for Empowerment**

#### Required:

- Gay, G. (2000). Power Pedagogy through Cultural Responsiveness. In *Culturally responsive teacher: Theory, research & practice* (pp. 21-43). New York, NY: Teachers College Press.
- Haberman, M. (Dec, 1991). The pedagogy of poverty versus good teaching. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 73(4), 290-294.
- hooks, b. (1994). Engaged pedagogy. In *Teaching to transgress: Education as the practice of freedom* (pp. 13-22). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Ladson-Billings, G. (1994). Seeing Color, Seeing Culture (pp. 30-53), Culturally Relevant Teaching (pp. 102-126). *The dreamkeepers: Successful teachers of African American children*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey Bass.
- Sheets, R. H. (2006). What is diversity pedagogy theory? Texas Tech University.

### **Week 4 – March 31st: Race, Class, Capital, and Power**

#### Required:

- Delpit, L. (1988). The silenced dialogue: Power and pedagogy in educating other people’s children. *Harvard Educational Review*, 58(3), 280-298.
- Harding, H. (2005). City Girl: a portrait of a successful white urban teacher. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 11(1), 52-80.
- Lareau, A. (2003). Chapters 9-11. *Unequal childhoods: Class, race, and family life*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

### **Week 5 – April 7th: Social Identity, Behavior, and Academic Achievement**

#### **➤ TEACHING AUTOBIOGRAPHY UPLOAD FOR PEER REVIEW**

#### Required:

- Noguera, P. A. (2003). The trouble with Black boys: The role and influence of

environmental and cultural factors on the academic performance of African American males. *Urban Education*, 38(4), 431-459.

- Perry, T. (2003). Achieving in post-civil rights America: The outline of a theory. In T. Perry, C. Steele, & A. G. Hilliard. *Young, gifted, and Black: Promoting high achievement among African-American students* (pp. 87-108). Boston, MA: Beacon Press.
- Rolon-Dow, R. (2004). Seduced by images: Identity and schooling in the lives of Puerto Rican girls. *Anthropology & Education Quarterly*, 35(1), 8-29.

## **Week 6 – April 14th: Educating Immigrant and ESL Students**

### Required:

- De Cohen, C. C., and Clewell, B. C. (May, 2007). Putting English language learners on the educational map: The No Child Left Behind Act implemented. Education in Focus Urban Institute Policy Brief. The Education Policy Center.
- Hood, L. (2003). Immigrant students, urban high schools: The challenge continues. 2003 Carnegie Challenge. Report published by the Carnegie Corporation of New York.
- Menard-Warwick, J. (2007). Biliteracy and schooling in an extended-family Nicaraguan immigrant household: The sociohistorical construction of parental involvement. *Anthropology & Education Quarterly*, 38(2), 119-137.



**\*\*TEACHING AUTOBIOGRAPHY DUE APRIL 16TH\*\***