

**TE 891/TE 991: Teaching Across Cultural Differences
May 17, 2010 – June 28, 2010 - Section 730 ONLINE**

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Course Rationale and Objectives

In this course students will explore pedagogies and instructional strategies for educating culturally diverse students in various educational settings (e.g., suburban, urban, rural). Topics will include, but are not limited to, culturally relevant pedagogy, equity pedagogy, and culturally responsive teaching. Specific attention will be given to how race, class, and gender (as cultural identities) impact the teaching and learning process. Since the course is designed to inform teacher practice, course material will include teacher and student narratives and focus on teaching for social justice as a way to provide equity in education for all students.

Course goals include:

- ✚ 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 educator? How does my social identity (e.g., race, class, gender, etc.) inform my pedagogy and practice?
- ✚ Understanding problems of practice in educating culturally diverse students and how to address those in the classroom.
- ✚ We will practice the skills of *critical analysis* as we read, discuss and reflect on readings during the seminar. In doing so, we will ask ourselves: What are my feelings about working with culturally diverse students? What is effective pedagogy and practice?

People mean different things by the term *multicultural education*, and they do not always agree. This course focuses on multiple forms of difference that also define unequal positions of power in the U.S. These include, race, class, gender, language, disability, and sexual orientation. I have chosen the Sleeter and Grant text as a way for us to explore various approaches to multicultural education. As practitioners or future practitioners, you will need to come to your own conclusions about what instructional strategies are most effective for meeting the needs of culturally diverse youth. In this course, we will explore five approaches to what multicultural education come mean. Like the authors of the text, I believe that educators need to be very clear about what multicultural education means to them. What goals do they actually have in mind? What are their target student populations? What is their vision of society? What ideas do they have about how to achieve a better society? What assumptions do they make about learning? (Sleeter & Grant, iv, 2009). Each week, we will explore a different pedagogical and instructional approach to multicultural education offered by the authors.

Required Texts:

Sleeter, C. E., & Grant, C. A. (eds). (2009). *Making choices for multicultural education: Five approaches to race, class, and gender, sixth edition*. John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

Course Evaluation

Grades will be determined as follows:

Participation	25%
Briefs (4)	50%
Educational Autobiography	5%
Final Project	20%

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.

Active and Timely Participation

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.*** 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/TE991" in the subject line. My goal will be to respond to you within 24 hours during the week.

A note on using the MSU Library electronically: As distance learning students, you may not have the opportunity to visit the MSU Library personally. To gain access electronically to the MSU Library, go to its homepage and follow the directions for re-setting your browser (click on the "Computers" tab at the top of the page and then on "Off Campus Access"). Many graduate and undergraduate students often find that browsing in the library journals is a good way to enrich their knowledge of a subject. Using the MSU Library, and the other online resources in TE 891, will demonstrate how learning via the Internet can be an endlessly interactive activity

limited only by your interests (as well, of course, as your time!). Again: Remember to reset your browser if you want access to the MSU Library from an off campus computer. The final project will require you to look to the MSU library for resources.

Assignments

Educational Autobiography (5% of course grade)

This short assignment is designed for me to get to know each of you better, and for you to have practice downloading and uploading assignments. This is not officially due until 11:59pm on Monday, May 17th – the day the course begins. However, I am strongly encouraging you to turn it in earlier, by Sunday, May 16th, since one purpose is to familiarize you with ANGEL before the course begins.

Briefs (50% of course grade)

There are four briefs, one due per week beginning the second week of class. These essays should be a **maximum** of 500 words each, minimum of 325 words. Use the word count function on your word processing program. The maximum word limit on the essays requires you to be concise since it is often more challenging to write shorter pieces than longer ones. The four briefs make up 50% of the course grade (each at 12.5%). Students post these essays in the appropriate drop box, and the Instructor returns them with grades and comments.

In each brief, students should make analytical and reflective 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. How have the week's readings informed your thinking about multicultural education goals for your own classroom?
2. In what ways, if at all, have the week's readings challenged your beliefs about and attitudes toward teaching culturally diverse students?
3. How do your own values and life (school included) experiences shape your response to the pedagogical approach that you read about?
4. How might the authors' work help improve education, particularly for underserved and underachieving youth?

Briefs should be uploaded to the appropriate ANGEL dropbox in each weekly folder no later than 12:00noon on Monday of the week the readings are assigned. So, the first brief is due by 12noon on Monday, May 24th on the readings assigned for Week 2. All assignments should be typed, double spaced, with one-inch margins and a standard 12 point font. Include your name and course section number. References to course readings or outside texts should be cited using APA style, the citation protocol for the social sciences (which includes the field of Education). A reference list should be included and is not part of your word limit count.

Assessment:

The essays will be evaluated according to the following criteria:

- a) The essay has a clearly stated thesis in its introduction.
- b) The essay shows the author has thought carefully about the issues raised in the readings and lecture.
- c) The author supports the essay's argument/opinion with relevant, detailed evidence, examples and sound logic.
- d) The essay is based on the readings/viewings/lecture (short quotations, properly cited, are recommended).
- e) The author considers alternative viewpoints to his or her own.
- f) The essay is well organized (uses multiple paragraphs to make distinct points; stays focused; includes an introduction and conclusion).
- g) The writing is focused and clear; the author does not rely on educational jargon or terms; the essay has no grammatical or spelling errors.

Participation/Discussion Board Postings and Responses (25% of course grade)

Participation is evaluated by your discussion board postings. You will post reflections to the readings that are viewable by your peers each week in a Team discussion board. These postings (a maximum of 300 words, minimum of 250 words) should focus on students' responses to the readings. They are more "open-ended" than the briefs and are intended to provide a way for you to hear your classmates' thinking on the issues and instructional approaches. The postings must draw upon the readings, but they can also have application to issues and dilemmas that you have faced in your own teaching or that you are aware of in the broader field of education. (Students can use other course materials, but are not required to do so). You are assigned to Discussion Forum Teams: Team 1, Team 2, Team 3, Team 4, or Team 5. Team designations are on the last page of the syllabus. **You must post your reflection to the weekly readings by Tuesday of each week at 12pm, beginning Tuesday, May 18th.**

Each student is also required to post **two follow-up** responses in the discussion forum. One will be in response to a team member's questions, comments, and ideas. The other one will be in response to a peer from the other team(s) in your discussion forum. For example, in Week 2 Teams 2 and 5 might be in a discussion forum together. If you are on Team 2, you would post your reflection in the discussion forum and respond to another member of your team and one member of Team 5. You can be critical, although you must do so civilly, and you must back up your argument with evidence. Tone can be very difficult to decipher in this medium, so re-read your posting to be sure it's not only clear and easy to follow, but also respectful. **Your follow-up postings should be made by noon on the Thursday following the Tuesday postings (i.e. 48hrs).**

Assessment:

The discussion board postings will be evaluated along the following criteria:

- a) The posting demonstrates a thorough reading of the assignments
- b) The posting is not merely a summary of the reading but reveals the author's own viewpoints on the issue(s) to spark discussion

- c) The writing is focused and clear; the author does not rely on educational jargon or terms; the essay has no grammatical or spelling errors.

Note that these discussion boards are for student use, so I as the instructor will not add to the discussion. I will read each entry and will contact you if I have questions or if I do not think your postings are meeting course expectations.

Final Project (20% of course grade)

For the final project, students will **collaborate with their team members** to develop a 3-day professional development seminar for practicing teachers that educates and trains them in effective instructional techniques for underserved and underachieving students. Through the seminar development, students will convey their preference for which multicultural education approach(es) they believe is most effective for culturally diverse students. Detailed requirements for the assignment will be posted on ANGEL.

Ordinarily, no make up assignments are permitted. Late submissions are allowed only in the case of formally documented situations that are serious enough to prevent a student from completing the work and are outside the student's control, such as documented medical emergencies. Extracurricular activities do not fall into this category. In the absence of a verifiable emergency, prompt notification to the Instructor is required well before the assignment due date.

Communication

Students should check their e-mail and their ANGEL accounts frequently for messages from the Instructor or from classmates. I welcome communication from each of you via email or phone. A word of caution, however, when using email: please re-read your messages for clarity and tone. If your questions are unclear, or if your questions and/or my responses are complicated, I may suggest a phone conversation in place of an email conversation. Also, do not email attachments of assignments requesting review. I may suggest you send me an excerpt from an assignment if I think your question can be best answered by a quick look at your work. However, as a principle, I do not review entire drafts of assignments.

Incomplete Grades

University policy: When special or unusual circumstances occur, the Instructor may postpone assignment of the student's final grade in a course by use of an I-Incomplete. *The I-Incomplete may be given in the following circumstances:* The student (a) has completed at least 12 weeks of the semester (in this case, three weeks), but is unable to complete the class work and/or take the final examination because of illness or other compelling reasons; (b) has completed satisfactory work in the course; and (c) in the Instructor's judgment can complete the required work without repeating the course.

Academic Honesty and Citations

I assume that the student is honest and that all course work and examinations represent the student's own work. Violations of the academic integrity policy such as cheating, plagiarism, selling course assignments or academic fraud are grounds for academic action and/or disciplinary sanction as described in the University's student conduct code.

The principles of truth and honesty are recognized as fundamental to the community of teachers and scholars. This means that all academic work is prepared by the student to whom it is assigned, without unauthorized aid of any kind.

Incidents of plagiarism are taken very seriously and will be pursued and punishment can result in automatic failure of the course. Students are warned not to use any text verbatim on any class assignments without quotation marks and source citations. Warning: do not go to a site like Wikipedia (generally not a reliable or effective source anyway), copy and paste, and then "rearrange" words or sentences or replace a few words here and there – that constitutes plagiarism! If you have any questions, please ask!

Directions for APA style for references and citations are available at <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/13/> and many other places on the web. Students may also wish to purchase the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (6th ed. American Psychological Association: New York, 2009).

For University regulations on academic dishonesty and plagiarism, refer to

<http://www.vps.msu.edu/SpLife/rule32.htm>

<http://www.msu.edu/unit/ombud/plagiarism.html>

Additional Course Readings

- Garcia, K. (2002). "Swimming against the mainstream: Examining cultural assumptions in the classroom." In L. Darling-Hammond, J. French, & S. Garcia-Lopez (eds.). *Learning to teach for social justice* (pp. 22-29). New York: Teachers College Press.
- Gay, G. (2000). Power pedagogy through cultural responsiveness. In *Culturally responsive teacher: Theory, research & practice* (pp. 21-43). New York: Teachers College Press.
- hooks, b. (1994). Engaged pedagogy. In *Teaching to transgress: Education as the practice of freedom* (pp. 13-22). New York: Routledge.
- Ladson-Billings, G. (1994). Culturally relevant teaching. *The dreamkeepers: Successful teachers of African American children* (pp. 102-126). San Francisco: Jossey Bass.
- Nieto, S. (2004). Multicultural education and school reform. In *Affirming diversity: the sociopolitical context of multicultural education* (pp. 344-365).
- Steele, J. (2002). Acknowledging diversity in the classroom. In L. Darling-Hammond, J. French, & S. Garcia-Lopez (eds.). *Learning to teach for social justice* (pp. 18-21). New York: Teachers College Press.

General Grading Rubric

Points	4 Point Scale	Description
95-100	4.0	This represents outstanding and exemplary work. The student uses and integrates readings, classroom discussions, and field experiences (where appropriate) to inform his/her writing. The student meets all the requirements of the assignment, is deeply thoughtful, and provides many details and examples to support writing. The writing contains no errors in grammar, punctuation, and spelling.
90-94	3.5	This represents high quality work. The student uses many readings, classroom discussions, and field experiences (where appropriate) to inform the writing. The student meets all the requirements of the assignment, is thoughtful and provides some details and examples to support ideas. The writing contains very few errors in grammar, punctuation, and spelling.
85-89	3.0	This represents good quality work, performed at the expected level for graduate study. The student uses some readings, classroom discussions, and field experiences to inform writing. The student meets all requirements of assignment, attempts to engage with the purposes of the assignments, and provides details and examples to support ideas. The writing contains few errors in grammar, punctuation, and spelling.
80-84	2.5	This represents work below the expected level of quality for the TE program. The student does not include appropriate references to relevant readings, class discussions, and field experiences to inform writing. The student does not meet all requirements of assignment. The student's writing represents a limited attempt to engage with the purposes of the assignment, few details and examples to support writing. The writing includes many errors in grammar, punctuation, and spelling.
75-79	2.0	This represents work significantly below the expected level of quality. The student's writing includes many errors in grammar, punctuation, and spelling. The work shows little evidence of having read course readings, or of use of classroom discussions. The writing meets few of the assignment's requirements. The student demonstrates a minimal attempt to engage with the purposes of the assignment, with no details or examples to support the ideas.

Course Schedule

Week and Dates	Session Topic	Reading	Assignment Due
Week 1 (5/17 through 5/23)	Course Introduction and The Teaching the Culturally Different Approach	Read: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sleeter & Grant, Chs 1 and 2 (to be read by May 18th) 	Educational Autobiography: 5/17 Discussion Board Posts: 5/18 Discussion Board Responses: 5/20
Week 2 (5/24 through 5/30)	A Human Relations Approach	Read: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sleeter & Grant, Ch. 3 • Steele • Garcia 	Brief: 5/24 Discussion Board Posts: 5/25 Discussion Board Responses: 5/27
Week 3 (5/31 through 6/6)	A Single-Group Studies Approach	Read: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sleeter & Grant, Ch. 4 • Gay, Chapter 2 	Brief: 5/31 Discussion Board Posts: 6/1 Discussion Board Responses: 6/3
Week 4 (6/7 through 6/13)	A Multicultural Education Approach	Read: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sleeter & Grant, Ch. 5 • Nieto, Chapter 9 	Brief: 6/7 Discussion Board Posts: 6/8 Discussion Board Responses: 6/10
Week 5 (6/14 through 6/20)	A Social Justice Approach	Read: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sleeter & Grant, Ch. 6 • Ladson-Billings, Culturally Relevant Teaching • Hooks, Engaged Pedagogy 	Brief: 6/14 Discussion Board Posts: 6/15 Discussion Board Responses: 6/17

Week and Dates	Session Topic	Reading	Assignment Due
Week 6 (6/21 through 6/27)	A Social Justice Approach	Read:	Discussion Board Posts: 6/22 Discussion Board Responses: 6/24 Final Project Due Monday, June 28th, by midnight. No extensions granted