

Spring 2009  
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## **Language and Learning in Diverse Communities-- EDUC 215**

**Course description:** This course explores social issues such as discrimination, diversity, equity, racism, sexism, and ethnic and socioeconomic pluralism and their impact on American schools and education. Students will become familiar with various social elements that contribute to the makeup of the classroom, therefore affecting the education process. Students in this course will be encouraged to consider meeting children where they are and where they come from in order both to help them succeed in school in traditional ways and to recognize their communicative competence in the language of the classroom.

### **Overall Course Objectives**

There are three interrelated overall objectives for the course.

- To become *sensitive* to the multicultural issues of importance today
- To become *informed* as to how multiculturalism works within and outside schools
- To develop *competence* meeting the needs of diverse populations.

This course is not a methods course designed to help you develop strategies for working in multicultural settings. This course does not focus primarily on developing skills, but is designed to help you obtain understandings needed to move in the direction of developing the competencies you need to work with diverse populations in changing societies. The course is also intended to introduce the role that language plays in the creation of diverse learning experiences.

### **Specific Course Objectives**

- To link personal and professional experiences to the content of the course and to directions for practice if applicable.
- To develop awareness of how we are embedded in personal, social, cultural, historical contexts that influence our beliefs about others and our interactions.
- To learn more of the ways diverse populations experience the world.
- To increase knowledge of the important multicultural issues to individuals (e. g. language, gender, class, sexual orientation), and to begin to think of these issues in a dynamic and constructive manner.
- To develop the *narrative imagination* (our ability to actively empathize with others), and to begin to appreciate the cosmopolitan aspects of our world.
- To understand the historical development of ethnic relations and race in the U.S.A.
- To develop a sound philosophical, theoretical, and personal rationale for adopting a multicultural perspective and practice in your teaching.

## Readings

- Notable Selections in Multicultural Education by Jana Noel
- White Teacher by Vivian Paley
- My Trouble is My English by Danling Fu
- Selections from:
  - The Language Police by Diane Ravitch
  - JB Reader on Gender in Education
  - Education for Extinction by David Wallace Adams
  - The Education of Blacks in the South 1860-1935 by James D. Anderson
- Choose one of the following autobiographies to read, write and present
  - Ellison, R. (1952) Invisible Man. New York: Vintage
  - Chamoiseau, P. (1994). School days. Lincoln, NB: University of Nebraska Press
  - Crow, Dog Mary. (1991). Lakota Woman. New York: Perennial
  - Patel, Eboo. (2007). Acts of faith: The story of an American Muslim, the struggle for the soul of a generation. NY: Beacon Press
  - Rodriguez, R. Hunger for Memory (2004) NY: Dial Press
  - Kingston, Maxine Hong, (1989) Woman Warrior. New York: Vintage
  - Goldman, E. (2006) Living My Life. London: Penguin Classics

## Course Requirements

(Detailed guidance on preparation of assignments will be provided. There are **NO** rubrics used.)

- **Participation (20%):** This grade is not based on simple attendance (necessary but not sufficient); it is based on active participation each week.
  - There will be **discussions**, both small group and full class, that focus on course texts, articles, and presentations.
  - The expectation is that participants will be **thoroughly prepared for class**; this means you will read all material, will thoughtfully participate in class, and will assume periodic responsibility for leadership of discussions.
  - Discussions will be concerned with a recovery of meaning (author intent) of readings, with a reconstruction of meaning (reader understanding) in the light of interpretations based on personal and professional experiences, and with links to the broader field of multicultural education.
  - Participants will primarily discuss readings in small groups; we will also form a large group to discuss issues raised in small groups. There will be opportunities to discuss detailed, practical matters related to participants' work. Full credit given **ONLY** for active participation. If class participants are concerned about their participation grade, they are encouraged to contact the professors.
- **Reflective responses to readings (10%)** Participants are required to hand in responses to *selected readings* three times in the semester..

- The responses **include all of the following**:
  - recovery of meaning (what do the authors mean, what are the key arguments),
  - reconstruction of meaning in the light of interpretations based on personal/professional experiences (what does the work contribute to your understanding of multicultural education in the light of your experiences),
  - and links to the broader field of multicultural education (how does the work fit with your developing understanding of the field of multiculturalism or multicultural education).
  - It is expected that reflective responses to readings will be long enough to adequately address the topic—in the past this has been **approximately five typed pages**. The due dates for these papers will be announced in class.
- **Autobiographical paper (15%) (Focus on concept of self-examination.)** Participants will write an **autobiographical account** reflecting on their place in society and examining their cultural roots.
  - The *key question* to explore is "How have I come to be who I am?"
  - Consider the influence of broad factors such as race, ethnicity, social class, gender, sexual orientation, religion, geographic location, as well as personal factors.
  - An *additional question* to consider is "How have my experiences of diversity influenced my identity?". The paper should be 5 to 7 pages. (Alternative modes of doing this project are possible based on prior discussion with the instructors.) This paper is due **week 4**
- **Narrative imagination paper (15%) (Focus on concepts of narrative imagination and world citizenship)** Participants will read a cultural autobiography from a choice of five.
  - These papers are *not* "book reports" or "summaries", but are explorations of how literature enables us to understand others and how we are connected to others in the world.
  - The paper should be 5 to 7 pages.
  - These will be shared in groups as well as evaluated by the instructors. This paper is due **week 9**.
- **Collaborative project (40%)** Participants will engage in a **collaborative multicultural research project**.
  - This may be a field-based mini-research project,
  - a curriculum development project,
  - or a project that utilizes course readings and other readings to discuss an issue in multiculturalism of interest to a particular group.
  - This project will be worked on throughout the term. Some class time will be devoted to on-going preparation of this assignment; outside class time will also be required.
  - **One paper of about 15 pages**, discussing the topic selected, method of investigation, understandings, and group process is to be submitted by the

group **by finals week**, unless alternative dates are negotiated with the instructors.

- In addition to referencing a **minimum** of 6 course readings, each paper will have a **minimum** of an **additional** 5 articles or book chapters cited using appropriate bibliographic style and format.

### Summary of Requirements

- **WEEKLY:** Readings completed, participation/leadership in discussions (We reserve the right to add or change readings if we feel it is in the best interest of the class to do so).
- **THREE TIMES IN SEMESTER:** Reflective reading responses
- Autobiographical paper
- Narrative imagination paper
- Collaborative project presentations
- Group paper based on collaborative project due during finals week

#### Week 1

Introductions

Review of course syllabus

What is multiculturalism? What is multicultural education? Personal Identity Worksheet

**Reading:** NS Chapters 1.1 and 1.2

#### Week 2 Human rights and multiculturalism

Overview of major perspectives in multiculturalism

Place course within emerging perspective

**Reading:** Nussbaum: Chapter 2; NS Chapters 3.1 and 3.2

#### Week 3

Key concepts of multicultural identity and context; Key concept of self examination, the hidden curriculum, the 4 pillars of multicultural education

**Reading:** NS Chapters 9.1 and 9.2 Anyon Chapter in *Hidden Curriculum and Moral Education*

#### Week 4 AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL PAPER DUE

The role of social class in multiculturalism

**Reading:** NS Chapters 4.1, 4.2,

#### Week 5 Critical Pedagogy

**Reading:**; Paley *White Teacher* NS Chapters 11.1 and 11.2

#### Week 6 Race and Education

**Reading:** NS Chapters 13.1, 13.2, 13.3; *Dreamkeepers* (excerpt) Michie *Holler if You Hear Me* (excerpt) Kohl *I Won't Learn From You*

**Week 7** Language and Learning

**Reading:** Fu *My Trouble is My English* NS Chapters 14.1 and 14.2

**Week 8** Immigrants, Culture and Education

**Reading:** Tinkering Towards Utopia—pp.1-39; NS Chapters 6.1 and 6.2, finish Fu

**Week 9** Racism

**NARRATIVE IMAGINATION PAPER DUE**

**Reading:** NS Chapters 8.1, 8.2, 8.3

**Week 10** Gender and GLBT Issues

Film: *Iron Jawed Angels*

JB Reader on Gender in Education—TBA

**Week 11** Education For Extinction

Film: *In Whose Honor?* NYTimes article *Its Native Tongue Facing Extinction...*

Adams (excerpts)

**Week 12** Education of Blacks

Film: *Ethnic Notions*

**Reading:** NS Chapters 2.1 and 2.2

**Week 13** Global Education and Citizenship

**Reading:** NS Chapters 11.1 and 11.2; Matriano *The challenge of globalization to multicultural education*; Banks, *Citizenship education and diversity*

**Week 14** Other Issues in Multicultural Education

**Reading:** NS Chapters 10.1 and 10.2; Ravitch, *Language Police* (excerpts)

**Week 15** Sociological Perspectives

**Reading:** NS Chapters 4.1 and 4.2; 17.1 and 17.2

**Week 16**

Presentations

Course wrap-up