

# **BEF 362 – School, Culture, and Society**

Course Time: T & R, 11:00-12:15  
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## **I. Course Catalog Description**

An examination of the social, philosophical, and historical foundations of education in a modern democratic society. Critical attention is paid to developing in preservice teachers the understandings and proficiencies needed for working with students from diverse backgrounds to ensure that all students have the opportunity to learn.

## **II. Conceptual Framework**

The College of Education prepares practitioners who understand the purposes of education and have the ability to engage in the ongoing processes of reflection and dialogue that lie at the heart of socially-responsible, theoretically-informed, and research-based effective practice.

The complete conceptual framework for the College of Education can be read at <http://education.ua.edu/ncate/cf.html>.

## **III. Course Overview/Rationale for the Course**

Teaching in the public schools is not just about you and a group of children/students engaging in enjoyable activities. Schools are social institutions that have been created in certain ways, not always because people actually intended them to be that way but because certain choices were made about money, organization, and control which then resulted in the schools we have today. Schools reflect the society in which they exist, and it is important for you to understand that relationship and how it came about so that you can begin to think about how you might work for change when you are one of the actors within a school setting. Thus, in this course we will examine the role that philosophical, historical, and sociological inquiries play in educational theory and, subsequently, our beliefs about the purposes of schooling and our approaches to achieving those ends. We will also begin to imagine ways in which schools can be transformed to meet the changing social, political, and cultural context of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Teachers need to be able to evaluate critically the multitude of suggestions for how schools should be run, reformed, and restructured. To do this, you need to be clear about your own

philosophies of teaching and learning and your own beliefs about how race, class, ethnicity, gender and sexual orientation, among other characteristics, impact the ways students experience schooling in today's society. We will spend considerable time in this course reading about and discussing such issues.

Finally, you should be aware that this is not a "methods" course. It is not designed to prepare you to teach in the direct ways that other courses in your preparation will. While we will often discuss pedagogy, this course is designed to introduce you to your chosen profession broadly. As a teacher, you will need to have certain skills, attitudes, and dispositions to be successful. You will need to have a sense of the great responsibility a teacher takes on, concern with the quality of your work and a habit of reflecting on it, a desire to learn and improve yourself, curiosity about new ideas, an interest in developing collegiality and working cooperatively with others, punctuality, organization, dependability, and respect for those involved in the hard work of providing formal education. You need to be politically informed to be a leader for progressive educational reform in a diverse society. You need to be philosophically informed to provide children educational opportunities worth wanting. These are the primary goals of this course.

#### **IV. Knowledge Base**

Central to this course will be an analysis of schooling through sociological, political, historical, cultural, and philosophical inquiries. A primary focus of these inquiries will be toward the development of the proficiencies needed to meet the educational needs of diverse students. The course also helps student gain the knowledge, skills, and dispositions needed to "teach from multicultural and global perspectives that draw on the histories, experiences, and representations of students from diverse cultural backgrounds" (NCATE, Standard I, p. 31). Through these various inquiries, we will reflect upon our own distinctive location in history and interrogate the possibilities education holds for realizing each individual's potential and promoting a more democratic, socially just society. Further, this course is designed to equip students with certain types of knowledge mandated by NCATE, the College of Education (as reflected in the conceptual framework referred to above), and the Alabama State Department of Education.

First, with its focus on the social context of schooling, diversity, and culture, the knowledge base for this course ensures that teacher candidates will obtain the knowledge that NCATE (Standard I) deems as imperative for preservice teachers:

Candidates preparing to work in schools as teachers or other school personnel need a sound professional knowledge base to understand learning and the context of schools, families, and communities. They understand and are able to apply knowledge related to the social, historical, and philosophical foundations of education, professional ethics, law, and policy...They understand language acquisition; cultural influences on learning; exceptionalities; diversity of student populations, families, and communities; and inclusion and equity in classrooms and schools...They understand the importance of using research in teaching and other professional roles and know the roles and responsibilities of the education profession" (p. 19).

Second, with its emphasis on developing reflective practitioners who possess a philosophical basis for ethical decision making, the course aids students in respecting diversity, honoring

difference, and promoting social justice, key goals of the College of Education as iterated in its Conceptual Framework.

Third, the knowledge base of this course will ensure that preservice teachers have had opportunities to accomplish the following goals related to diversity and professionalism as explicated in the Alabama State Department of Education:

Alabama Standard/Rule 290-3-3-.04	ALABAMA QUALITY TEACHING STANDARDS
(1)(c)1.(i)	Knowledge of the structure of the academic disciplines related to the subject-matter content areas of instruction and of the important facts and central concepts, principles, theories, and tools of inquiry associated with these disciplines.
(2)(c)4.(iv)	Knowledge of the importance of parents and/or families as active partners in planning and supporting student learning.
(3)(c)1.(i)	Knowledge of standard oral and written communications.
(3)(c)1.(ii)	Knowledge of the impact of native language and linguistic background on language acquisition.
(4)(c)1.(i)	Knowledge of the ways in which student learning is influenced by individual experiences and out-of- school learning, including language and family/community values and conditions.
(4)(c)1.(ii)	Knowledge of cultural, ethnic, gender, linguistic, and socio-economic differences and how these may affect individual learner needs, preferences, and styles.
(4)(c)1.(iii)	Knowledge of the characteristics of one's own culture and use of language and of how they differ from
(4)(c)5.(i)	Knowledge of how personal/cultural biases can affect teaching and learning.
(5)(c)4.(i)	Knowledge of research relating collective responsibility for student learning to increased achievement for all students.
(5)(c)4.(ii)	Knowledge of the principles of individual and organizational change and a commitment to assume personal responsibility for leading and supporting others in results-oriented changes.
(5)(c)5.(i)	Knowledge of appropriate professional behavior and dispositions expected of professionals as outlined in the Alabama Educator Code of Ethics.

## V. Course Text and Readings

Canestrari, A. S. and Marlowe, B. A. (2010). Educational Foundations (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Other readings are available online by clicking on the author's name on the electronic syllabus. *(Please note that I do not always have control over broken links or the availability of the server. Therefore, you should attempt to access articles for a given class period at least a week in advance so that problems can be resolved in a timely manner. Also remember that you have a daily limit on the number of pages you can print out on university printers.)*

## VI. Assignments, Course Requirements, Grading, and Policies

- Exam 1- 20 points
- Exam 2- 20 points
- Oral Presentation - 20 points
- Written presentation\* - 20 points
- Written assignment - 10 points
- Participation - 10 points

\*The write-up of your class presentation should include at least two scholarly (ie, not Wikipedia, Ladies Home Journal, or GQ) references in addition to the class reading. For this assignment you must also read chapters 19 & 21 in Canestrari and offer some discussion as to what those readings mean to you and your teaching around the issue you have presented on.

**Final Grading.** The final grading will be as follows: 100+=A+, 93-100=A, 90-92=A-, 87-89=B+, 83-86=B, 80-82=B-, 75-79=C+, 70-74=C, 65-69=C-, 60-64=D+, 55-59=D, 50-54=D-.

**Attendance.** Class attendance is mandatory. Each absence beyond the third will result in 2 points being deducted from your grade. Doctor's excuses or family emergencies will be taken into consideration.

**Exams.** Exams will consist of a variety of question types including multiple choice, fill in the blank, and essay (among other possibilities). You may help, if you choose, to write the exam (excluding essays) and, depending on the number of acceptable items you submit to me, anywhere from 0-50% of the exam items (excluding essay questions) will be known to you prior to sitting the exam. Each exam will consist of 20-40 items AND 3 or 4 essay questions of which you will choose 2 or 3 to answer.

**Statement of Equal Treatment and Disabilities.** The instructor and students in this course will act with integrity and strive to engage in equitable verbal and non-verbal behavior with respect to differences arising from age, gender, race, physical ability, religious preferences, sexual orientation, and national origin. If you are registered with the Office of Disability Services, please make an appointment with the instructor as soon as possible to discuss any course accommodations that may be necessary. If you have a disability but have not contacted the Office of Disability Services, please call 354-5175 or visit Osband Hall to register for services.

**Academic Honesty.** Please familiarize yourself with UA policies in the student handbook as regards academic honesty. If you are suspected of cheating on an exam or of plagiarism, you will be referred to the Associate Dean for further action. To avoid plagiarism, follow standard referencing rules: quotation marks should be used if the material is copied directly from the readings and text citations should be used. Quotations are followed by the author, year, and page number in parenthesis of the source of the quote (Petrovic, 1998, p. 15). If you paraphrase something, put just the author and year after the paraphrased material (Petrovic, 1998). Submitting work done for another class, submitting someone else's work as your own, copying and pasting from the internet, are all violations. (Internet sources may be used, but you must follow standard referencing rules.) Please see the College of Education statement on [plagiarism](#) for more information.

## VII. Schedule of Course Topics and Readings

<u>Date</u>	<u>Reading/Class Discussion Questions</u>	<u>Reading</u>	<u>Assignment</u>
<i>Introducing the Foundations of Education and the Purposes of Teaching</i>			
<b>Aug 19</b>	Course Introduction and lecture: The purposes of education	none	Write an essay that addresses, from your own, perspective, the question “Why (not) teach?”
<b>Aug 24</b>	What “Foundations of Education” is and is not about	Canestrari, chs. 10 & 23	
<b>Aug 26</b>	Why (not) teach?	Canestrari, chs. 1, 2, & 4	How do the readings inform your essay from Aug 19? Add 2-3 pages to your essay.
<i>Unit 1: The Purposes of Education in a Democratic Society: Philosophical and Historical Foundations</i>			
<b>Aug 31</b>	Work day...Essays due in my box by noon.		
<b>Sept 2</b>	How does the early history of education illustrate model(s) of schooling discussed by Spring? What were the early purposes of schools as featured in the video? Which model do you think held in your own schooling experience? Why?	Spring, ch. 1	Watch the video and prepare a one page response to the reading questions.
<b>Sept 7</b>	What is Plato’s epistemology? What are the implications for educational policy and practice?	Plato, ch. 9	
<b>Sept 9</b>	Describe Plato’s curriculum and pedagogy. How do they reflect his epistemology?	Plato, ch. 4	
<b>Sept 14</b>	How does Freire’s pedagogy compare/contrast to Plato’s? How do you think their purposes of education differ?	Canestrari, ch. 9	
<b>Sept 16</b>	How does Martin’s epistemology differ from Plato’s? What are the implications for educational policy and practice?	Martin	
<b>Sept</b>	State Neill’s philosophy of education.	Canestrari, ch. 13	

<b>21</b>	State his epistemology. How do both differ from Plato's?		
<b>Sept 23</b>	What is Dewey's epistemology? Is it more similar to Plato's or Martin's or Neill's? In what ways? What are the implications for educational policy and practice?	None, in-class video	
<b>Sept 28</b>	Exam #1		
<b><i>Unit 2: The economic purposes of schooling in a "democratic" society: Education toward work, caste, and consumption</i></b>			
<b>Sept 30</b>	What do you think Winfield's idea of democracy is and how does this differ from Plato's? What do you think she sees as the purpose(s) of education?	Canestrari, ch. 25 Plato, chs. 3 & 6	
<b>Oct 5</b>	What are the purposes of schooling capitalist society?	Bowles and Gintis Canestrari, ch. 18	
<b>Oct 7</b>	In what ways have capitalism and marketing infiltrated schools? To what extent do you see this as problematic?	None, in-class video	
<b>Oct 12</b>	Why does Hewitt see capitalism and corporate infiltration in school as problematic?	Hewitt	
<b>Oct 14</b>	What are some primary models of schooling? What was the express purpose of each? What was the hidden effect? What is equal educational opportunity? To what extent does eeo exist? Are our schools democratic?	Spring, ch. 2	
<b>Oct 19</b>	What is classism? What are the effects of class on equal educational opportunity?	Persell	
<b>Oct 21</b>	Exam #2		
<b><i>Unit 3: Marginalizing Educational Opportunity: Race, Gender, and Ethnicity—the 'isms'</i></b>			
<b>Oct 26</b>	What is racism? What is the relationship between class and race?	Canestrari, chs. 3 & 6	
<b>Oct 28</b>	No class, please catch up on reading or read ahead. Note that the reading for next class period is slightly heavier.		

<b>Nov 2</b>	What does it mean to be “color blind?” What is deficit thinking? Is color blindness a solution to deficit thinking?	Orfield Schofield Canestrari, chs. 7 & 16	
<b>Nov 4</b>	What is sexism? How does it affect the educational experiences of both girls and boys? What is hegemonic masculinity?	Taylor Martino	
<b>Nov 9</b>	What does it mean to be masculine and how are improper masculinities constructed?	None, in-class video	
<b>Nov 11</b>	What is heterosexism? How is it related to sexism? How does it affect everyone’s educational experience?	Gordon Elze O’Conor	
<b>Nov 16</b>	What is linguisticism? How should we teach language minority students in schools? Is “Ebonics” a language or a dialect?	Krashen Canestrari, ch. 5	
<b>Nov 18</b>	<b>NO CLASS-mid sem break</b>		
<b>Nov 23</b>	What is ableism?	Canestrari, ch. 8	
<b>Nov 30</b>	In class “ism” presentations		
<b>Dec 2</b>			
<b>Dec 6-10</b>	Write-up of your presentation is due on the date of the final exam.		