

TE962: Teachers and Teaching in Urban Contexts
Wednesdays: 4:10pm-7:00pm
304 Ernst Bessey Hall
Fall 2012

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Course Description:

This doctoral seminar is designed to explore how individuals participating in the profession of teaching in “urban” communities have responded over time to ever-changing definitions of school “success” and “failure” in the United States. The term urban, within the context of this seminar, is meant to represent low-income and/or communities of color in the U.S. who will comprise the vast majority of students least likely to receive the types of educational resources enjoyed by peers who belong to dominant groups. Given this context, teachers in these spaces play immensely important roles in both the perpetuation of highly problematic frameworks of teaching and learning in urban communities, in addition to the dissemination of potentially liberating pedagogies among communities most affected by systemic discrimination. Some questions that will be considered in this course include the following:

- ❖ What have been some of the historical antecedents that have impacted the way teachers approach their jobs in these contexts?
- ❖ What are some of the prevailing values that either improve or hinder the act of teaching students from urban communities?
- ❖ What have both alternative and university-based teacher preparation programs done to respond to the unique needs of urban school districts and the communities there within?
- ❖ What are some of promising frameworks and practices that effective teachers in these contexts employ to combat systemic inequity?

Emphasizing the socio-historical and political-economic dimensions of schooling, we will explore the role of teachers in shaping the academic “success” and “failure” of students in urban contexts through thorough analysis of theories and studies in multiple areas.

Working Assumptions for the Course:

1. We will respect one another. Our beliefs, values, and ideas often differ from one another because we draw from different life experiences. In this class, we will discuss, question, and challenge ideas, but we need to be careful not to attack individuals or to create an unsafe, unproductive space.
2. We will challenge our own beliefs, values, and ideas. We need to be open to challenging our own prejudices, assumptions, and interpretations. We also need to expect to discuss things we often do not discuss in public, but still feel strongly about. It is alright to feel uncomfortable when we do so.
3. We are here for a positive educational experience. Please ask questions, share your thoughts, and make this class meaningful for yourself.

Course Assignments:

Students in this course are its co-constructors, meaning that the thoughts, insights, concerns, experiences, and expertise of the students are viewed as a central part of the dialogue and learning that occur. The following course assignments will serve as the basis for your formal evaluation.

Attendance/Class Participation (10%): Participation in this course is taken very seriously, especially in light of the complicated issues and debates addressed by the readings. Students are expected to be present and prepared to participate in class each week. A good part of one's ability to meaningfully participate during class is related to how thoughtfully and carefully one has engaged the assigned readings prior to class. It is crucial that each student comes ready to discuss the material, raise questions, examine arguments, listen to peers, and so forth. If for any reason, an extenuating circumstance prevents you from attending class, you should notify me by phone or e-mail and communicate with myself and another student about what happened in the class you missed. ***Note: The 10% is not automatic. If you come to class and do not participate on a regular basis, do not expect to receive the full 10%.*

Class Facilitation (10%): Each student is expected to lead the class in an examination of one (1) course reading. This will consist of the following: introducing key topic(s) and issue(s) to the class and leading a discussion centered on questions intended to highlight themes from the reading. Each facilitator is responsible for turning in a typed outline (from their respective reading) that indicates themes, probing questions, and methods designed to engage colleagues the evening before their facilitation date. Facilitators should prepare forty (40) minutes worth of discussion questions/activities. You are encouraged to use creative classroom activities to highlight themes and ideas about the assigned reading. However, your creativity should not overshadow the essence of the reading. Additionally, you are expected to draw connections to the other readings from that week or previous weeks. Creative thinking about discussion facilitation and activities is strongly encouraged.

Critical Response Papers (40%): Each student is expected to turn in four (4) two and a half to three-page critical response papers during the semester. Critical response papers should make reflective and analytical responses to the assigned readings for the week. This means developing defensible interpretations, negotiating meanings, and drawing connections to other works, concepts, or phenomena. You are also encouraged to make connections among theory, research, and practice by drawing on your life experiences as a student, professional, and learner. Critical response papers **SHOULD NOT** merely summarize the readings. The following questions might help your thinking when composing critical response papers:

1. What questions, problems, or issues does the author(s) attempt to address or bring together? What is the main argument or organizing idea and what is its relation to teachers and teaching in urban contexts?
2. What questions does the reading raise regarding the nature and purpose of teaching in urban contexts? What practical implications, if any, does the reading have for urban schools?
3. What serious omissions are left out of the reading? How do these omissions distort or undermine the author's position(s)?
4. In what ways do the readings reinforce, extend, challenge, or oppose your own views?

Critical response papers should be typed, double-spaced, free of errors, and **uploaded to ANGEL no later than 9:00pm on Tuesday evening prior to Wednesday's class**. You have the option of choosing which weeks you will submit critical response papers EXCEPT for the first paper which is **DUE September 18th**. Please avoid doing the remaining three papers consecutively at the end of the semester. ***Note: Students are not expected to turn in critical response papers on days that they are facilitating class.*

Special Topic Presentation (15%): A core principal of this course is that students have as much (if not more) to offer to the learning that takes place in class as the instructor. Additionally, I do not presume that this course will address all of the important and nuanced issues that pertain to teachers and teaching in urban contexts. It is for this reason that students are expected to develop a 15 to 20 minute presentation on any topic that relates to content covered throughout the semester. **Students will be allowed to work in pairs for special topic presentations which will take place during Final Exam Week.**

Final Paper/Mini Project (25%): Students will have the option of composing either a final paper or a write-up of a mini project for the course. Students are encouraged to think critically about their personal research interests and possible intersections with topics related to teachers and teaching in urban contexts. Manuscripts should be approximately twenty (20) double-spaced pages in length and should adhere to APA format guidelines. Students are required to turn in a 300 word abstract early in the semester that describes the nature of the manuscript that will be turned in at the end of the term. Course time will be allotted to discuss specifics of the assignment.

Evaluation:

Rubrics will be used to assess written assignments according to the following criteria: consistency with the assignment; development and organization of the argument; clarity of written expression; and use of sources/resources. You will receive the rubrics in class well before the assignments are due.

Class participation will be evaluated on the following criteria: thoughtfulness of contributions (including questions), respectful consideration of and response to others' comments/questions, and demonstrated mastery of the reading.

Special topic presentations and your class facilitation will be based on the comprehensiveness of your presentation, its clarity, and your efforts to invoke peer participation when you lead the class discussion and activities.

Grades are based on the following:

Attendance/Class Participation	10%
Class Facilitation (one reading)	10%
Critical Response Papers	40%
Special Topic Presentation	15%
Final Paper/Mini Project	25%

Grade Distribution:

93-100 = 4.0	77-84 = 3.0
85-92 = 3.5	69-76 = 2.5

I wish to fully include persons with disabilities in this course. Please let us know if you need any accommodations in the curriculum, instruction, or assessments to enable you to fully participate.

Course Readings:

Hill, M. (2009). *Beats, Rhymes, and Classroom Life: Hip-hop pedagogy and the politics of identity*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

- Kinloch, V. (2010). *Harlem on our minds: Place, race, and the literacies of urban youth*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.
- Ladson-Billings, G. (2009). *The Dreamkeepers: Successful teachers of African American children*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Podair, J.E. (2002). *The strike that changed New York: Blacks, Whites, and the Ocean Hill-Brownsville Crisis*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

***Additional readings for the course will be available on ANGEL*

Course Schedule:

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

9/5 – Course Introduction

- Introductions and discussion of students' interests
- Review syllabus and objectives of the course
- Discussion of why educators should study teachers and teaching in urban contexts

9/12 – Historical Perspectives I: Eugenics, Racism, and American Education

Required Readings:

- Selden, S. (1999). *Inheriting Shame: The Story of Eugenics and Racism in America*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press. (pp. xiii-83, 106-126).

Video: Race: The Power of an Illusion (2003)

9/19 – Historical Perspectives II: Construction of “Urban” America

Required Readings:

- Massey, D. S., & Denton, N. A. (1993). The construction of the ghetto.
- Wilson, W. J. (1996). Ghetto-Related Behavior and the Structure of Opportunity.
- San Miguel Jr., G. (2003). Contested learning: Latino education in the United States from the 1500s to the present.

Video: Race: The Power of an Illusion (2003)

Web Resource: <http://www.socialexplorer.com/pub/maps/home.aspx>

9/26 – Historical Perspectives III: Multiculturalism in the 1960s—Race, Resistance and Reaction

Required Readings:

- Podair, J.E. (2002). *The Strike That Changed New York: Blacks, Whites, and the Ocean Hill-Brownsville Crisis*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Video: Eyes on the Prize: America at the Crossroads – Power! 1966-1968 (1987)

10/3 – Modern Urban Schools: Are they doing what they are supposed to do?

Required Readings:

- Anyon, J. (1980). Social Class and the Hidden Curriculum of Work.
- Orfield, G. (1996). The Growth of Segregation: African Americans, Latinos, and unequal education.
- Brown, T. M. & Rodríguez, L. F. (2009). School and the co-construction of dropout.

Video: A National Disgrace (2011)

10/10 – Diversity and Teacher Preparation/Certification I: A historical perspective and the case for teacher education

Required Readings:

- Grant, C., & Gibson, M. (2011). Diversity and Teacher Education: A historical perspective on research and policy.
Darling-Hammond, L. (2000). How Teacher Education Matters.
Hansen, D. (2008). Values and purpose in teacher education.

10/17 – Diversity and Teacher Preparation/Certification II: Does difference make a difference?

Required Readings:

- Kohli, R. (2009). Critical Race Reflections: Valuing the Experiences of Teachers of Color in Teacher Education.
Sleeter, C. (2008). Preparing White Teachers for Diverse Students.
Villegas, A. & Davis, D. (2008). Preparing Teacher of Color to Confront Racial/Ethnic Disparities in Educational Outcomes.
Lucas, T. & Grinberg, J. (2008). Responding to the Linguistic Reality of Mainstream Classrooms: Preparing all teachers to teach English language learners.

Guest Speaker: Dr. Rita Kohli

10/24 – Diversity and Teacher Preparation/Certification III: Examining TFA and future directions for teacher education

Required Readings:

- Decker, P., Mayer, D., & Glazerman, S. (2004). The Effects of Teach For America on Students: Findings from a national evaluation.
Darling-Hammond, L., Holtzman, D., Gatlin, S., & Heilig, J. (2005). Does teacher preparation matter? Evidence about teacher certification, Teach for America, and teacher effectiveness.
Nieto, S. & McDonough, K. (2011). “Placing Equity Front and Center” Revisited.
Duncan-Andrade, J. (2011). The Principal Facts: New directions for teacher education.

Videos: The Real World of Teach for America & Joining Teach for America

10/31 – Critical Theory and Practice

Required Readings:

- Freire, P. (2000). *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. New York, NY: Continuum. – Chapters 1 & 2
Michie, G. (2005). Nancy Serrano.
Michie, G. (2005). Liz Kirby.

11/7 – Confronting Challenges in Urban Classrooms

Required Readings:

- Darling-Hammond, L. (2004). What Happens to a Dream Deferred? The continuing quest for equal educational opportunity.
Duncan-Andrade, J. (2009). Note To Educators: Hope required when growing roses in concrete.
North, C. (2012). Owning the butts: High school students confront history and heterosexism.

11/14 – Culturally Relevant Pedagogy

Required Readings:

Ladson-Billings, G. (2009). *The Dreamkeepers: Successful teachers of African American children*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Howard, T. (2001). *Telling Their Side of the Story: African-American Students' Perceptions of Culturally Relevant Teaching*.

Guest Speaker: *Dr. Tyrone Howard*

11/21 – Reimagining Teachers and Teaching in Urban Contexts I: Literacy

Required Readings:

Camangian, P. (2010). *Starting with Self: Teaching autoethnography to foster critically caring literacies*.

Kinloch, V. (2010). *Harlem on our minds: Place, race, and the literacies of urban youth*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

Guest Speaker: *Dr. Patrick Camangian*

11/28 – Reimagining Teachers and Teaching in Urban Contexts II: Mathematics

Required Readings:

Martin, D. (2009). *Liberating the Production of Knowledge About African American Children and Mathematics*.

Tate, W. (1995). *Returning to the Root: A culturally relevant approach to mathematics pedagogy*.

Terry, C. (2010). *Prisons, Pipelines, and the President: Developing Critical Math Literacy through Participatory Action Research*.

Video: *Expectations of the System (2009)*

Guest Speaker: *Dr. Clarence L. Terry*

12/5 – Reimagining Teachers and Teaching in Urban Contexts III: Hip-Hop Pedagogy

Required Readings:

Hill, M. (2009). *Beats, Rhymes, and Classroom Life: Hip-hop pedagogy and the politics of identity*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

Final Exam Week – Thursday, 12/13: Special Topic Presentations 5:45pm-7:45pm