
PROSEMINAR IN EDUCATIONAL THEORY AND PRACTICE

Fall 2021

Mondays 5:00-7:30pm

[Virtual Classroom](#)

Instructor: Dr. Karishma Desai (pronouns: she/her)

Email: [REDACTED]@gse.rutgers.edu

Office Hours: [REDACTED]

Office Hours zoom link:

[REDACTED] [4?pwd=TUtdHRpYzU0WGOwOC9LUWpITXFGUT09](#)

Preamble.

Our time together and your journey as doctoral students begins virtually, in the midst of a pandemic. While we have moved in and out of settling and unsettling into routines, the uncertainty of life during this time remains. I ask that we work from a position of generosity and patience.

We will navigate technology issues, fatigue, questions, and changes. But we will also generate dialogue, learning, and community. Navigating this moment and everything it demands of us will require **care** (for ourselves and each other) and **communication**. As you read the syllabus, please do so carefully, keeping in mind that it is a living document that will continue to change according to evolving circumstances and assessment of our learning. I also ask that you maintain communication about any personal challenges to meeting the expectations, so we can address them together. Since this document will be frequently updated, I recommend bookmarking the Google doc as opposed to printing.

Overview.

This course is the first of two required courses for incoming Phd in Education students. It offers an introduction to theoretical concepts and concerns that are central in understanding the complex relationships between education and society. In doing so, it offers students tools to partake in social and cultural critique of education as it intersects with various facets of social life. As it is a course on critical social theory, we will be attentive to power. This will be instructive in our efforts to understand and confront the everyday violences of inequality and the consolidation and maintenance of hierarchies. Through engagement with critical theory, we will open up dialogue around the reproductive and transformative potential of schooling. We will consider education more broadly, in society. This course asks some of the following questions: What are the purposes of education? What is the relationship between social structure and individual subjectivity? How is education always interwoven with the production of identities? What are the epistemic and ontological logics that structure what is taught and learned within educational sites? Finally, as a foundational course for your doctoral studies, this course will work to build a scholarly community among the cohort and we will partake in discussions related to graduate school life. As a foundation to your graduate studies, this course is reading intensive. **Expect to read between 150-300 pages each week.** I realize this remains a challenging time, so please reach out to me if you have concerns about the requirements for the course or graduate studies in general.

Required books.

Most course texts will be available online.

Freire, P. (1996). *Pedagogy of the oppressed (revised)* New York: Continuum.

Recommended:

Levinson, B. A., Gross, J. P., Hanks, C., Dadds, J. H., Kumasi, K., & Link, J. (2015). *Beyond critique: Exploring critical social theories and education*. New York: Routledge. (we will not have many readings from this text directly, but it is a good resource for understanding critical social theory as related to education)

Learning Goals.

This seminar has the following primary goals:

- Contend with the importance of sociocultural power and political economy to make sense of relationships between education and society.
- Develop an understanding of the social, cultural, and/or historical contexts of educational policies and practices through the lens of critical social theory.
- Draw on critical social theory to understand how education is shaped by and constructs differences based on race, class, gender, citizenship, language, religion, dis/ability etc and their intersections.
- Engage critical theory to unsettle commonsense educational ideas such as merit and achievement.

Notes on Virtual Academic Life.

- *Zoom:* We'll be using Zoom for class discussions and office hours. If you haven't already done so, you can set up your Rutgers Zoom account by following instructions here: <https://it.rutgers.edu/zoom/>. If you have any technical issues with it, let me know and/or get in touch directly with Rutgers OIT (Office of Information Technology) at help@oit.rutgers.edu or 833-OIT-HELP.
- *Zoom Classroom Guidelines:* To the extent possible, please keep your camera on. Please turn your microphone off when you are not talking. To the extent possible, try to avoid distractions that are unavoidable. However, as a feminist classroom, your caretaking responsibilities are understood and welcome in the virtual classroom space (children, elders and pets are welcome on camera). Your Zoom name should be your preferred name. Please add preferred pronouns. See information on pronouns [here](#) and [here](#).

COURSE CURRICULUM

This class schedule is tentative and is subject to change depending on the evolving needs of the learning community.

Note on Course Readings. It is important to note that this reading list serves as an initial guide for our work together. However, this is only a general guideline as it is my attempt to plan the uncertain. As a result, readings may shift based on our collective work together as I learn more about your investments and curiosities. This course draws from an interdisciplinary terrain, as do the readings.

The intention is to engage necessary intellectual tools that will enrich our discussions about the assumptions that structure and organize schooling and education broadly.

Course Pre-Reading:

1. Buroway, M. (2001). “How to read theory” (Sociology 101A, UC Berkeley)
2. Callahan, M (2013). “Reading critically.” Center for Convivial Research and Autonomy

	Topic/Focus	Assignments
Session 1 9/7	<p>Introduction to Critical Social Theory</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Leonardo, Z. (2009). Critical social theory: An introduction. In <i>Race, whiteness, and education</i> (pp. 13-26). New York: Routledge. ● hooks, b. (1994). Theory as liberatory practice. In <i>Teaching to transgress: Education as the practice of freedom</i> New York. Routledge. 	
Session 2 9/14	<p>Introduction to Critical Social Theory: Tools to Unravel Commonsense (continued)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Winner, L. (1980). Do artifacts have politics?. <i>Daedalus</i>, 121-136. ● Cherryholmes (1993). Reading research. <i>Journal of Curriculum Studies</i>, 25, 1-31. ● Durkheim, E. “On Education and Society” in Karabel, J. & Halsey (1977) [1904]. Power and Ideology in Education. Text excerpted from <i>L’evolution pedagogique en France</i> (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1969): 92-104. ● Levinson, B.A., Gross, J.P.K., Hanks, C., Dadds, J.H., Kumasi, K. & Link, J. (2012). <i>Beyond critique: Exploring critical social theories and education</i>. New York, NY: Routledge. Intro and Ch 1 	
Session 3 9/21	<p>Hegemony and Ideology</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Marx, K. and Engels, F. (1846), “Theses on Feuerbach” from Karl Marx: 4. Selected Writings. ● Gramsci, A. (1971). Selections from Prison Notebooks. Edited by Q. Hoare and G.N.Smith. London: Lawrence and Wishart. (Chapter 2: On Education, Hegemony, Commons) ● Althusser, L. [1970] (1984). “Ideology and Ideological State Apparatus” in <i>Essays on Ideology</i>. London: Verso, 1-60. ● Bowles, S. (1977). Unequal education and the reproduction of the social division of labor. In J. 	

	<p>Karabel, & A.H. Halsey (Eds.), <i>Power and ideology in education</i> (pp. 137-153). Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.</p>	
<p>Session 4 9/28</p>	<p>Social and Cultural Reproduction/Production</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Bourdieu, P. (1986). The forms of capital. In A.H. Halsey, H. Lauder, P. Brown & A.S. Wells (Eds.), <i>Education: Culture, economy and society</i> (pp. 46-58). Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press. ● Bourdieu, P. (1993). Structures, habitus, practices. In C. Lemert (Ed.), <i>Social theory: the multicultural and classic readings</i>, pp. 479-485. Boulder: Westview Press. ● Willis, P. (1981). Cultural production is different from cultural reproduction is different from social reproduction is different from reproduction. <i>Interchange</i>, 12(2-3), 48-67. ● Willis, P. (1977). <i>Learning to Labour: How Working Class Kids Get Working Class Jobs</i>. Hampshire: Gower Publication Company. (Preface and Introduction) 	
<p>Session 5 10/5</p>	<p>Race, Racial Capitalism and Racial Formation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Dubois, W.E.B. (1903) <i>The souls of Black folks</i>. Chapter 6: The Training of Black Men ● Robinson, C. J. (2000). <i>Black Marxism: The making of the Black radical tradition</i>. Univ of North Carolina Press. (Introduction & Chapter 1: Racial Capitalism) (available online via Rutgers University Library) ● Hall, S. (1997). Race, the floating signifier. Northampton, MA: Media Education Foundation. [This is a transcript of Hall's lecture; the lecture is available at http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bRk9MZvOd (part 1/7)] ● Omi, M. & Winant, H. (2014). <i>Racial formation in the United States: From the 1960's to the 1990's</i> (3rd ed.). New York: Routledge. (Part I & Part II) ● Ladson-Billings, G. & Tate, W. F. (1995). Toward a critical race theory of education. <i>Teachers College Record</i>, 97(1). 47-68. ● Leonardo, Z. (2004). The color of supremacy: Beyond the discourse of 'white privilege'. <i>Educational Philosophy and Theory</i>, 36(2), 137-152. 	
<p>Session 6</p>	<p>Governing Life: Power/Knowledge, Biopower, Discipline</p>	

10/12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Foucault, M., Rabinow, P., Rose, N. (2003). <i>Essential Foucault</i>. New York: New Press. (Introduction) ● Foucault, Michel. (1990). <i>The history of sexuality: An introduction</i>. Vintage. (pgs. 17-35) ● Foucault, Michel (1979). <i>Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison</i>. New York: Vintage. (Part III). ● Popkewitz, T. S., & Brennan, M. T. (1997). <i>Foucault's challenge: Discourse, knowledge, and power in education</i>. Teachers College Press. (Ch. 1) 	
Session 7 10/19	<p>Imperialism and Representation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Hall, S. [1992] (1996). "The West and the Rest: Discourse and Power" in Stuart Hall et al (eds) <i>Modernity</i>. Oxford: Blackwell, pp. 185-227 ● Fanon, F. <i>Black Skins, White Masks</i> (Grove Press, 1967), chapter 5 (The Fact of Blackness), 109-140. ● Mohanty, C. (1988). Under Western eyes: Feminist scholarship and colonial discourses. <i>Feminist review</i>, 30(1), 61-88. ● Willinsky, J. (1998). <i>Learning to divide the world: Education at empire's end</i>. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press. (Introduction & Chapter 1) 	Topic Summary for Final Paper
Session 8 10/26	<p>Colonial Violence and Resistance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Manjapra, K. (2020). <i>Colonialism in Global Perspective</i>. Cambridge University Press. (Introduction & School) ● Fanon, F. (2008). <i>The wretched of the earth</i> New York: Grove Street Press. Chapter 1: On violence ● Freire, P. (1970). <i>Pedagogy of the Oppressed</i>. 1968. New York: Herder <p><i>Further Study</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Quijano, A. (2000). Coloniality of power and Eurocentrism in Latin America. <i>International Sociology</i> 15, (2), 215-232. 	
Session 9 11/2	<p>Afro-pessimism & Abolition</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2020/07/20/the-argument-of-afropessimism ● Mbembé, J. A., & Meintjes, L. (2003). Necropolitics. <i>Public culture</i>, 15(1), 11-40. ● Pierce, C. (2017). WEB Du Bois and caste education: Racial capitalist schooling from reconstruction to Jim Crow. <i>American Educational Research Journal</i>, 54, 23-47. 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Ruth Wilson Gilmore Makes the Case for Abolition. The Intercept Podcast. (Part 1: 54 min, Part 2: 31 min.) Transcript also available from link. ● Sojoyner, D. M. (2017). Another life is possible: Black fugitivity and enclosed places. <i>Cultural Anthropology</i>, 32(4), 514-536. <p><i>Further Study</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Shange, S. (2019). <i>Progressive dystopia: Abolition, antiblackness and schooling in San Francisco</i>. Durham: Duke University Press. ● Sharpe, C. (2016). <i>In the Wake: On Blackness and Being</i>. Durham: Duke University Press. (Selections) 	
<p>Session 10 11/9</p>	<p>Towards Decoloniality</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Coulthard, G. (2014). <i>Red Skin, White Masks: Rejecting the Colonial Politics of Recognition</i> Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2014, Introduction, 1-24. ● Lomawaima, K. T., & McCarty, T. L. (2002). When tribal sovereignty challenges democracy: American Indian education and the democratic ideal. <i>American Educational Research Journal</i>, 39(2), 279-305. <p><i>Further Study</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Brayboy, B. M. J. (2006). Toward a tribal Critical Race Theory in education. <i>The Urban Review</i>, 37(5), 425–446. ● Lomawaima, K. Tsianina (1995). <i>They Called It Prairie Light: The Story of Chilocco Indian School</i>. University of Nebraska Press. (Preface and Ch. 1: “They Called It Prairie Light.”) 	<p>Annotated Bibliography Due</p>
<p>Session 11 11/16</p>	<p>Feminist Knoweldges & Intersectionality</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Haraway, D. (1988). Situated knowledges: The science question in feminism and the privilege of partial perspective. <i>Feminist studies</i>, 14(3), 575-599. ● Davis, A.Y. (1981). “The Legacy of Slavery: Standards for a New Womanhood,” “The Meaning of Emancipation According to Black Women,” and “Education and Liberation: Black Women’s Perspective,” <i>Women, Race, & Class</i>. Vintage. (CHAPTER 5) ● Delgado-Bernal, D. (1998). Using a Chicana feminist epistemology in educational research. <i>Harvard Educational Review</i>, 25, 555-582. 	

	<p><i>Recommended:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cho, S., Crenshaw, K.W., & McCall, L. (2013). Toward a field of intersectionality studies: Theory, applications, and praxis. <i>Signs</i>, 38(4). 785-810. • Crenshaw, K. (1990). "Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence against Women of Color," <i>Stanford Law Review</i>, 43, 1241–1299. 	
Session 12 11/23	<p>Queer and Affect Theories</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Butler, J. (1993). Critically queer. <i>GLQ: A journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies</i>, 1(1), 17-32. • Eng, D. L., Halberstam, J., & Muñoz, J. E. (2005). Introduction: What's queer about queer studies now? <i>Social Text</i>, 23 (3-4 (84-85)), 1-17. • Brockenbrough, E. (2015). Queer of color agency in educational contexts: Analytic frameworks from a queer of color critique. <i>Educational Studies</i>, 51(1), 28-44. • Gregg, M., Seigworth, G. J., & Ahmed, S. (Eds.). (2010). Introduction to <i>The affect theory reader</i>. Durham: Duke University Press. • Affect Theory & Education 	
Session 13 11/30	<p>(Dis)ability Studies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Erevelles, N. (2000). Educating unruly bodies: Critical pedagogy, disability studies, and the politics of schooling. <i>Educational Theory</i>, 50(1), 25-47. • Annamma, S. A., & Handy, T. (2019). DisCrit solidarity as curriculum studies and transformative praxis. <i>Curriculum Inquiry</i>, 49(4), 442–63 • Leonardo, Z., & Broderick, A. (2011). Smartness as property: A critical exploration of intersections between whiteness and disability studies. <i>Teachers College Record</i>, 113(10), 2206-2232. 	Draft of Final Paper for Peer Workshop
Session 14 12/7	<p>Radical Education & Thinking Otherwise</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yahmatta-Taylor, K. (2017). <i>How we get free: Black feminism and the Combahee River Collective</i>. New York: Haymarket Books. • Selections from: McKittrick, K. (2015). <i>Sylvia Wynter: On being human as praxis</i>. Durham: Duke University Press. 	
12/15	-----	Final Paper Due

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS

Course Assessments	Due Date	Percentage
Class and Study Group Participation	Ongoing in	25%
Weekly Responses & Annotations	Ongoing (Tuesday by 12pm)	35%
Final Paper 1. Paragraph Summary of Topic 2. Annotated Bibliography 3. Draft for Peer Workshop 4. Presentations 5. Final Paper Due	Session 7: 10/20 Session 9: 11/10 Session 13: 12/1 Session 14: 12/8 Dec. 15th	40%

Rutgers Grading Scale	
93 - 100%	A
88 - 92%	B+
83 - 87%	B
78 - 82%	C+
73 - 77%	C
68 - 72%	D+
60 - 67%	D
Below 60%	F

PARTICIPATION & STUDY GROUP ENGAGEMENT

Reading & Participation. Critical, careful reading and active discussion are the essential components that drive the structure and dialogic intellectual process that frame this course. In this course, we study texts (written and non-written) together. Moreover, this course serves as an opportunity for us to co-generate dialogue as we grapple with enduring questions that have unique relevance in our time. I expect us to read actively and diligently, take notes, ask questions, look up what is unknown, mark up the text, and support each other. As you read, clarify your understanding of the author's key arguments, refine your analysis, and synthesize individually and collectively as you build upon your knowledge.

Study Groups. Study groups offer a chance to dive into the readings and process together before class. Please meet once before our weekly session for about thirty minutes, but of course details can be decided amongst group members. You may draw on your study group engagements for your weekly responses. We will form study groups based on schedule preference in week two.

A NOTE ON CRITICAL READING, CLASS PREPARATION & PARTICIPATION

Critical, careful reading and active discussion are the essential components that drive the structure and dialogic intellectual process that frame this course. In this course, we study texts (written and non-written) together. Moreover, this course serves as an opportunity for us to co-generate dialogue as we grapple with enduring questions that have unique relevance in our time. I expect us to read actively and diligently, take notes, ask questions, look up what is unknown, mark up the text, and support each other. As you read, clarify your understanding of the author's key arguments, refine your analysis, and synthesize individually and collectively as you build upon your knowledge.

Consider the following as you read and prepare for each class.

A. Summarize:

1. What is/are the author's key argument(s)?
2. How is/are the argument(s) developed?
 - a. What claims and warrants are used to develop the argument?
 - b. What evidence is used?
3. How does the reading connect with, depart from, and challenge what you know?

B. Attend to passages: Note selections from the text that highlight significant arguments, compelled you, confused you, that you think we just need to read together slowly and unpack.

C. Note questions: Be sure to jot down clarifying, provocative, and synthesis questions while you read. I anticipate you will have many.

Attendance and online class participation are central parts of the learning experience in this course. Quality contributions to class discussions should illustrate substantive preparation. Expected contributions will include insight into the topic under discussion, references to the course readings, the judicious sharing of personal experiences to illuminate conceptual or theoretical points, and connections to other ideas, discussions or assignments.

Disagreement and controversy are hallmarks and are central to our work as engaged scholars and practitioners. Consider thoughtfully how to speak, when to speak, when to remain silent, and when to support someone else's participation, when and how to challenge a peer or professor, when to speak up even when you're nervous, how to moderate your anger or disappointment. This class serves as an opportunity for us to build a space of critical feminist dialogue. We will also reflect on this space of dialogue, and refine it individually and collectively.

WEEKLY RESPONSES & ANNOTATIONS

Over the course of the semester, you will write ten responses (approx 500-750 words). The task is to 1) briefly summarize the key argument(s) of the readings, including the key concept(s) that the texts explore; 2) situate the texts, and discuss their relationship to one another; 3) provide a brief discussion of the relationship and/or relevance of the concept(s) to education; 4) offer any questions or comments you may have and draw these texts into conversation with your personal and professional educational experiences. As you develop these written responses over time, through discussion with the class and in your study group, work to compare and contrast key concepts from various theoretical perspectives. At times, guiding questions will be provided.

Twice, over the course of the semester, you will revisit your response papers and annotate them to reflect your growing understanding of the texts and the theoretical concepts we have been grappling with. These annotations create the opportunity to demonstrate the depth and development of your thinking about the specific theoretical concepts and educational issues. You will consider these theories in relation to your own research interests. Be sure to reference particular ideas and how your understanding of these changed as a consequence of further readings and discussion in class and with your peers. Your annotated papers are due twice over the course of the semester: after you have completed the first five responses, and at the end of the semester. I will give you feedback on your first set of annotations.

Writing is not just a means to communicate fully formed ideas; it can be used to make sense of ideas, get underneath key arguments, raise questions and ponder new ideas and connections. The weekly responses and annotations are intended in this way. Please read your cohort members' responses prior to attending class. Responses are due at 12pm on Mondays. Depth of engagement and completion of all parts are used for assessment of completion.

FINAL PAPER

For this final paper, you will take a key theoretical concept/framework, investigate the theoretical literature surrounding this framework; and use it to (re)frame an educational research topic in your area of interest. For example, you might consider how hegemony; racial capitalism; or biopolitics might offer new ways of thinking about a central question or concern in your field of study. The goals of this assignment are to: develop a deeper understanding of one theoretical concept/framework, and to learn to frame a clear argument and rationale for new research. (5000-6000 words)

COURSE/UNIVERSITY POLICIES/INFORMATION

Attendance Policy

Please be in communication with me as you navigate this course during this challenging time. While we are predominantly conducting this seminar synchronously, I do understand that this may not always be feasible depending on your circumstances, and I will do my best to provide alternative options.

Submission of Assignments

- All assignments must be submitted on or before the specified due date. No late work will be accepted unless delay is unavoidable and the student has discussed the situation with the instructor **PRIOR** to the due date.
- All assignments must be typed, in 12-point font, and double-spaced unless otherwise directed. Use APA formatting for a reference list and citations. Please proofread all work carefully.
- Label your assignments: LastName_Date_AssignmentName

Accessibility, Accommodations, and Resources

It is my goal and responsibility to make this course and our virtual classroom as accessible to and inclusive of every student as possible. I understand that students have different ways and paces of learning and accessing information, and that each student comes with their own, and sometimes difficult, experiences with learning. I aim to make the classroom environment comfortable and respectful without undermining the importance of discussing conflicting ideas and opinions. I encourage all students to see me to discuss their learning process and needs. I incorporate a variety of assignments, materials, and lesson forms to appeal to students' diverse learning strengths.

To assist me in taking this approach in our course, please notify me privately at the start of the course if you require specific instructional, curricular, or test accommodations or support. This information will remain confidential.

Disability Services

In order to receive consideration for reasonable accommodations, a student with a disability must contact the appropriate disability services office at the campus where you are officially enrolled, participate in an intake interview, and provide documentations: <https://ods.rutgers.edu/students/documentation-guidelines>. If the documentation supports your request for reasonable accommodations, the disability services office will provide you with a Letter of Accommodations. Please share this letter and discuss the accommodations with them as early in your courses as possible. To begin this process, please complete the registration form on the ODS web site at: <https://ods.rutgers.edu/students/registration-form>.

Academic Integrity

Please familiarize yourself with the university policy academic integrity which can be found online at <http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/>. Breaches of academic integrity are serious and I will take action in the case of a violation.

COVID 19 Rutgers Policies and Resources

As we navigate learning together during this time, please access: <https://coronavirus.rutgers.edu/>