

INVESTIGATING CRITICAL AND CONTEMPORARY ISSUES IN EDUCATION

EDUC 2110:03

CRN 50759

Semester Hours: 3

Semester/Year: Summer 2012

Time/Location 12:30 – 2:50—Room 2 Ed Center

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Online Support CourseDen Home Page

<https://westga.view.usg.edu/>

CourseDen Help & Troubleshooting

<http://www.westga.edu/~distance/webct1/help> 1-866-588-5293 or
678-839-6248

UWG On-Line Orientation

<http://www.westga.edu/~online/>

Distance Learning Library Services

<http://westga.edu/~library/depts/offcampus/>

UWG On-Line Connection

<http://www.westga.edu/~online/>

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course engages students in observations, interactions, and analyses of critical and contemporary educational issues. Students will investigate issues influencing the social and political contexts of educational settings in Georgia and the United States. Students will actively examine the teaching profession from multiple vantage points both within and outside the school. Against this backdrop, students will reflect on and interpret the meaning of education and schooling in a diverse culture and examine the moral and ethical responsibilities of teaching in a democracy. **A field component (totaling 10 hours) is required.**

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The conceptual framework of the College of Education at UWG forms the basis on which programs, courses, experiences, and outcomes are created. By incorporating the theme "Developing Educators for School Improvement," the College assumes responsibility for preparing educators who can positively influence school improvement through altering classrooms, schools, and school systems (transformational systemic change). Ten descriptors (decision makers, leaders, lifelong learners, adaptive, collaborative, culturally sensitive, empathetic, knowledgeable, proactive, and reflective) are

integral components of the conceptual framework and provide the basis for developing educators who are prepared to improve schools through strategic change. National principles (INTASC), propositions (NBPTS), and standards (Learned Societies) also are incorporated as criteria against which candidates are measured.

The mission of the College of Education is to provide excellence in the initial and advanced preparation of professionals for a variety of settings, to foster an innovative learning community, and to empower a faculty committed to teaching and the dissemination of knowledge. This course's objectives, activities, and assignments are related directly to the conceptual framework and national standards, as identified below.

APPROACHES TO INSTRUCTION

This interactive course will draw upon various approaches for learning such as, small group discussions, interview, journaling, participating in a SPARK program and more.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

Students will:

1. investigate and describe contemporary schools and the interplay of school and society via selected social, historical, political, economic, philosophical, and cultural issues that influence those schools.
2. discover, explore, and describe current issues and trends in schools (e.g., bullying, curriculum mandates, vouchers, privatization, testing and evaluation, federal and state policy, reform initiatives, standards, and changes in curriculum) using disciplinary and interdisciplinary fields and the lenses of analysis, critique, and interpretation.
3. analyze their legal, ethical, and professional responsibilities as future teachers.
4. explore their core values and reflect on how their values influence their beliefs about "good" teaching and schooling in democratic contexts.
5. develop and refine a philosophy of teaching for contemporary schools by exploring who they are as a potential teacher (e.g., examining their own agendas and prejudices as they relate teaching and learning) and what dispositions they have for teaching diverse students in current Georgia and U.S. school contexts.
6. analyze the implications, benefits, and challenges concerning the use of technology in contemporary Georgia and U.S. classrooms.

TEXT, READINGS, AND INSTRUCTIONAL RESOURCES

Required Texts: Readings will be found at Teacherrenewal.wikispaces.com, with additional readings coming from professional/educational journals/ books.

REFERENCES

- Alexie, S. (2005). *Reservation blues*. New York: Grove Press.
- Davis, S and Jenkins, G. et al. (2003) *The pact*. NY: Riverhead Trade.
- deMarrais, K. (2006). *The way schools work*. Boston: Allyn & Bacon.
- Finn, C. (1993). *We must take charge*. New York: Free Press.
- Freire, P. (2000). *Pedagogy of the oppressed*. New York: Continuum International Publishing Group.
- Gabbard, D. (2003). *Education as enforcement*. New York: RoutledgeFalmer.

- Goodlad, J. (2004). *A place called school*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Greene, M. (1973). *Teacher as stranger*. Belmont, California: Wadsworth.
- Jelloun, T. B. (2006). *Racism explained to my daughter*. New York: New Press.
- King Jr, M. L. (1990). *A testament of hope*. New York: Harper-Collins.
- Kohn, A. (2000). *The case against standardized testing*. Portsmouth, New Hampshire: Heinemann.
- Kozol, J. (1992). *Savage inequalities: Teaching tolerance project, starting small*. New York: Harper Perennial.
- Glazer, S. (1997). *The heart of learning*. New York: Penguin Putnam Inc.
- Newman, J. (2006). *America's teachers*. (5th ed.) Boston: Pearson.
- Martin, D. and Loomis, K. (2006). *Building teachers*. Belmont, California: Wadsworth.
- Meier, D. (1994). *Many children left behind*. Boston: Beacon Press.
- Noddings, N. (1994). *Educating moral people*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Noll, J. W. (2004). *Taking sides: Clashing views on controversial educational issues*. Columbus, Ohio: McGraw-Hill/Dushkin.
- Molnar, A. (1995). *School commercialism*. New York: Routledge.
- Paley, V. (2000). *White teacher*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press.
- Palmer, P. (1998). *The courage to teach*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Payne, R. (2005). *Framework for understanding poverty*. Highlands, TX: Aha Process.
- Ravitch, D. (2001). *Left back*. New York: Simon & Schuster.
- Sadker, Sadker. (2004). *Teachers, schools, and society*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Hooks, B. (1994). *teaching to transgress*. New York: Routledge.
- Spring, J. (2005). *American education*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Spring, J. (2006). *Deculturalization and the struggle for equality*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Stoll, C. (2000). *Hi-Tech heretic*. New York: Anchor.
- Toni, M. (2004). *Remember: The journey to school integration*. New York: Houghton Mifflin.
- Tozer, J. (2004). *School and society: Historical and contemporary perspectives*. New York: McGraw-Hill.

ASSIGNMENTS, EVALUATION PROCEDURES, AND GRADING

Readings

Keep a weekly journal reflecting your journey in this class.

Assignments

1. Ask a teacher about good teaching
2. Plato's allegory visual
3. Philosopher poster
4. Participation in SPARK intervention program is required for this course
5. Write a paper describing your field experience and what have you learned
6. "Who am I as a teacher." Describe those inner elements that are most essential to good teaching

Final paper is to be sent to: Investigating@teacherrenewal.org

Evaluation Procedures

A final grade will be assigned to each student based on the quality of the work submitted. **Your Participation** is an integral dimension for learning and is encouraged. I **invite** you to become involved in every class. **No classes should be missed**. More than **one (1)** absence for any reason may lower your grade by **one letter grade**.

Grading

- A=90-100; B=80-89; C=70-79; D = 60% - 69%; F = Below 60%

CLASS, DEPARTMENT, AND UNIVERSITY POLICIES

Academic Honesty: All work completed in this course must be original work developed this semester. Students are expected to adhere to the highest standards of academic honesty. Plagiarism occurs when a student uses or purchases ghostwritten papers. It also occurs when a student utilizes ideas or information obtained from another person without giving credit to that person. If plagiarism or another act of academic dishonesty occurs, it will be dealt with in accordance with the academic misconduct policy as stated in the latest *Student Handbook* and the *Graduate Catalog*.

Disability: All students are provided with equal access to classes and materials, regardless of special needs, temporary or permanent disability, special needs related to pregnancy, etc. If you have any special learning needs, particularly (but not limited to) needs defined under the Americans with Disabilities Act, and require specific accommodations, please do not hesitate to make those known, either yourself or through the Coordinator of Disability Services. Students with documented special needs may expect accommodation in relation to classroom accessibility, modification of testing, special test administration, etc. For more information, please contact Disability Services at the University of West Georgia: http://www.westga.edu/studentDev/index_8884.php. Any student with a disability documented through Student Services is encouraged to contact the instructor right away so that appropriate accommodations may be arranged. In addition, certain accommodations (which will be discussed in class) are available to all students, within constraints of time and space.

Student Email Policy: University of West Georgia students are provided a MyUWG email account, which is the official means of communication between the University and student. It is the student's responsibility to check this email account for important University related information.

CLASS OUTLINE & readings can be found at www.teacherrenewal.wikispaces.com

Class meets Monday thru Friday Noon to 2:10 to 2:50 in Room 2 Ed Center

PART I The Profession

June 4 Introduction to the course and discussion of teacher education at UWG.

What does it mean to be a teacher? What is a good teacher?" From your own personal experiences describe those elements that are essential to good teaching. Introduction to SPARK program.

PART II Historical background of education and philosophy

June 5 Education and history

How do we teach history? What do you know about great men and women from the past? How have we responded to the great voices of the past?

Read: *Great Men and Women* by Jonathan Kozoll

***June 6 *I and Thou* - by Martin Buber.**

Man's experience in relationship with the world, man, and God. How should teachers relate to students and the subject? Write your reaction to "All living is meeting."

Read: *I and Thou* and *Buber* by Barich. Also print & bring to class *I and Thou* Powerpoint. ***This is a must attend class**

June 7 **SPARK**

June 8 The nature and aims of education and philosophy

Plato's interpretations of shadows/images, light/dark, good/evil, reality/illusions. Illustrate your interpretation of Plato's Allegory.

Read: Plato's – *Allegory of the Cave*

- June 11** **What is philosophy?**
Education as a system for progress
 John Dewey and Progressivism in American Education. What is the purpose or aim of a pragmatic education? Describe the role of a teacher and his/her teaching methods that adopts pragmatism.
 Read: *Pedagogy and Creed* by John Dewey
- June 12** **SPARK**
- June 13** **The teaching profession**
 What is teaching and learning? What does it mean to be a good teacher? For thought: What is the source of good teaching? Interview a teacher and bring your findings to class. Read: *The Heart of Teaching* by Parker Palmer.
- June 14** **SPARK**
- Part III** **Issues in American Education**
June 15 **Education for oppression/liberation**
 Is there a difference between schooling and education?
 Can schools contribute to the process of human liberation?
 Read: *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* by Paulo Freire
- June 18** **Purpose of education - To what/whom are we responding?**
 What is the difference between education and schooling?
 Write a reaction paper describing the difference between education & schooling?
 Read: Education or Schooling? From: *Loosing Heart: The Moral and Spiritual Miseducation of America's Children* by Svi Shapiro
- June 19** **SPARK**
- June 20** **Theme: Rewards and punishment**
While it is a common educational practice, is it a good practice and who benefits most from this practice? Read: *Is it Right to Reward* and *Is it Effective to Reward*, by Alfie Kohn in his book *Punished by Rewards*. (Objective #5; Knowledge, Reflective, Decision Makers)
- June 21** **SPARK and Theme: Radical cruelty/evil**
How do we respond to evil in society/in school? What do we learn in school about ourselves? What do we learn about the society we live in? Read: *The Kingdom of Auschwitz*, by Otto Friedric. *Holocaust survivor Tosia Schneider coming to class*. (Objective #5; Knowledge, Reflective, Empathetic)
- June 22** Theme: Testing. Testing, Testing
 Do conventional tests promote learning? How are students responding to testing being the focus of schooling? What is being sacrificed by our current form of testing?
 Read: *The case against testing* AND *Overboard on testing*. (Objective #5; Knowledge, Reflective, Decision Makers)
- June 25** **Theme: Competition in Education**
How do we understand competition in education? Is it a good motivator for learning? Read *Competition* by Alphe Kohn. (Objective #5; Knowledge, Reflective, Decision Makers)
- June 26** **SPARK**