

CRITICAL ISSUES IN THE FOUNDATIONS OF EDUCATION EDFD 7307.E01
CRN 50776

Semester Hours	3
Semester/Year	Summer 2018
Time/Location	
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COURSE DESCRIPTION

A study of selected issues affecting educational thought and schooling practices emphasizing critical analysis of the cultural and sociological contexts of school-societal problems.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The conceptual framework of the College of Education at UWG forms the basis on which programs, courses, experiences, and outcomes are created. With the goal of *Developing Exemplary Practitioners*, our programs incorporate ten descriptors, clustered into three interrelated and overlapping themes, that demonstrate our commitment to (a) Professional Excellence [knowledgeable, reflective, inquisitive]; (b) Field-Based Inquiry [decisive, adaptive, proactive, leading]; and (c) the Betterment of Society [collaborative, culturally sensitive, empathetic]. These themes and descriptors are integral components of the conceptual framework and provide the basis for developing exemplary practitioners who are prepared to improve schools and communities. National

standards Educational Leadership Constituent Council, ELLC and the College of Education framework descriptors 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

Approaches include: discussion board, podcasts, videos, PowerPoint lessons, interviewing, journaling, Google Hangout.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

The course is designed to encourage graduate students to critically examine and investigate issues they typically encounter in a variety of educational settings. The course is intended as an adventure for refining and extending the skills and art of "critical thinking." (Anyon, 1980, Aronowitz/Giroux, 1985, Freire, 1970, Kozol, 1990, Purpel, 1989)

Students will:

1. read selected resources and develop an ethos for the course. A variety of topics will be studied in relationship to the ethos. (For thought: What serves to guide our ability to recognize and respond to the "critical concerns" of our field). (References: Dewey 1915, 1938, Martin 1992, Nieto 1992, Purpel 1989, Shapiro/Purpel 1993, Shor 1992, Vandenberg 1983); (ELCC 2.1, 5.3, 6.1);
2. examine and analyze the sociological "dimensions" of selected issues, examine pro and con positions, and discuss/respond to their concerns as they impact our profession. (References: Anyon 1980, Aronowitz/Giroux 1985, Berger/Lackmann 1967, Lasch 1979, Martin 1992, Nieto 1992, Shapiro/Purpel 1993); (; ELCC 2.1, 2.3, 5.3, 6.1);
3. students will interview a student and examine specific relationships and the effect they have on learning and living. (References: Coles 1967 & 1990, Shapiro/Purpel 1993, Spring, 1993); (ELCC 5.1, 6.1);
4. be encouraged to study course content phenomenologically. How does experience inform our understanding of what is critical? (References: Dewey 1938, Freire 1970, Kozol 1990, Purpel 1989); (ELCC 2.3, 5.1, 6.1); and
5. examine media and technology as to their effects on knowing. (References Postman 1986) ; (ELCC 2.2);

TEXTS, READINGS, INSTRUCTIONAL RESOURCES, and REFERENCES

Required Texts

All readings may be found at Teacherrenewal.wikispaces.com

References:

- Aronowitz, Stanley, and Giroux, Henry. (1985). *Education under siege*. Westport, CN: Greenwood, Bergin-Gravey.
- Bianculli, David. (1992) *Teleliteracy: Taking television seriously*. NY: Continuum Publishing Co.
- Berger, Peter & Luckmann, Thomas. (1967). *The social construction of reality*. London: Penguin Press.
- Bowers, C.A. (1974). *Cultural literacy for freedom*. Oregon: Elan Publishers, Inc.
- Coles, Robert. (1967). *Children of crisis: a study of courage and fear*. Boston: Atlantic Monthly Press Book.
- Coles, R. (1990). *The spiritual life of children*. Massachusetts: Houghton Mifflin Co.
- Dewey, J. (1915). *Schools of tomorrow*. NY: E.P. Dutton.
- Dewey, J. (1938). *Experience & education*. NY: Collier.
- Kleinfeld, J. S. (1995). *Gender tales: tension in the schools*. NY: St. Martin's Press, Inc.
- Kohn, A. (1992). *No contest: The case against competition*. NY: Houghton Mifflin Company.

- Kozol, J. (1967). *Death at an early age*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.
- Lasch, C. (1979). *The culture of narcissism: American life in an age of diminishing expectations*. NY: Warner Books.
- Lipka, R. & Brinthaupt, T. (1999). *The role of self in teacher development*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.
- Martin, J. R. (1992). *Schoolhome*. (1999). Massachusetts: Harvard University Press.
- Moffett, J. (1994). *The universal schoolhouse: spiritual awakening through education*. SF: Jossey-Bass Publishers.
- Nieto, S. (1992). *Affirming diversity: the sociopolitical context of multicultural education*. NY: Longman.
- Purpel, D. (1989). *The moral & spiritual crisis in education*. MA: Bergin & Gravy.
- Shapiro, S.H. & Purpel, D.E. (1993). *Critical social issues in American education: toward the 21st century*. NY: Longman Publishing Group.
- Shor, I. (1992). *Empowering education: critical teaching for social change*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Spring, J. (1993). *Conflict of interests: the politics of American education*. New York: Longman.

ASSIGNMENTS, EVALUATION PROCEDURES, AND GRADING

Assignments

You will be responsible for reading assignments, reaction papers, watching videos/podcasts, connecting on discussion boards on every *Theme*, and writing one paper covering the following 2 options:

Option 1: Write a paper on your examination/analysis/critique of a contemporary critical issue. You will be looking for patterns in our educational system that link to unnecessary suffering and/or student's alienation from school, home, society, and his/her own heart. You will also be expected to provide a plan/idea that will foster healthier environments for students and teachers.

Option 2: Inter-view a student. This is much more difficult during the summer due to most of you not being in a classroom full of students. This assignments requires you to interview your most challenging students—that student that you may do not understand, or that you find annoying. It may be a student that is very quiet and shy or loud, disrespectful and defiant. The assignment is to *see what the world looks like to your student*, and the way to do it is through interviews. Ideally you want to interview your student over a period of months, but for this summer you would only have about 6 good weeks. You could pick a youth above the age of 8, but not your own child. The interviews must be informal and friendly—no digging for answers. Remember, you want to *see what the world look like through his/her eyes*. Interviews over food or some activity work best at creating a relaxed environment. An outline and questions can be found at Teacherrenewal.wikispaces.com.

Papers are to be submitted to the Assignment Box in Course Den.

Evaluation Procedures

Evaluation of your performance - grades A, B, etc., will be issued on the basis of reaction papers submitted and the quality of your final paper and the final assessment.

Grading Policy Participation is an integral dimension for learning and is encouraged. I invite you to become involved in every *Theme* and interact as best you can with your colleagues. Follow the Theme timelines closely. Grading Policy: A=90-100; B=80-89; C=70-79.

- 1) COSMOS10%
- 2) reaction papers 30%
- 3) Issue paper 30%
- 4) Final assessment..... 30%

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 *Connection and 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.

Should you need assistance from me this semester you should contact me at tpeters@westga.edu.

CLASS OUTLINE

Introduction and developing an ethos for this class. For thought: How does one look critically at education today? What are the influences shaping education today? From your own personal experiences what do you perceive as contemporary critical educational issues? **What makes an issue critical? COSMOS: What are the influences that have shaped my life?** (Objective #1; Reflective) **Watch Ferris Bueller video.**

Theme 1: Critical Pedagogy - 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. Where did education get its roots? What were schools for in Colonial America? How was the purpose of schooling changing? Read: *Thinking Critically about History*, by Joel Spring. (Objective #3; Knowledge, Culturally Sensitive, Lifelong Learners)
VIDEO: In the White Man's Image

Theme 2: What do we mean by Critical Issues? What are schools for? What purpose do they serve?

What is the real crisis?

Read: *Myth of Sisyphus* and *Crisis of Meaning* by Shapiro. (Objective #3; Knowledge, Culturally Sensitive, Lifelong Learners)

VIDEO: Myth of Sisyphus

Theme 3: 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)

Theme 4: 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)

Theme 5: 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)

Theme 6: Critical Pedagogy - Education for OPPRESSION or LIBERATION

How do certain teaching practices distort or impede learning? Can schools contribute to the process of opening the minds of students? Read: *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* by Paulo Freire. Watch this video: **Two Ball Games** (Objective #5; Knowledge, Reflective)

Theme 7: 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. (Objective #5; Knowledge, Reflective, Empathetic)

Theme 8: Radical love -- *I and Thou* by Martin Buber.

Read: Martin Buber's "*I*" and "*Thou*" (online) and M. Buber Homepage. www.buber.de/en/index.html (Objective #5; knowledge, critical reflection)

Man's experience in relationship with the world, man, and God. How should we relate to students, each other, and ourselves? Watch this video after you have finished the PowerPoint - *Hunger Inside*. (Objective #5; Knowledge, Reflective, Lifelong Learners)

Theme 9: Bullying – Find several articles from journals or books on bullying and share it on the Discussion Board.

Theme 10: Education as a system for reform. What is the relationship between equal educational opportunity and Social Equality in the U.S.? Do special programs in education promote social justice? Read: *Letter from the Birmingham Jail*. Martin Luther King, Jr. & **Fredrick Douglass**. Watch this video - *MLK Jr. and Eye on the Prize* (Objective #5; Knowledge, Reflective, Culturally Sensitive, Empathetic)

Theme 11: Media and Education

How does media affect the way students learn? How does it create our reality? Read: *Commentary Learning in the age of TV* by Postman AND *The Medium is the Metaphor* (Objective # 1, 2, 3, 4, 5; Leaders, Reflective)

Theme 12: What is teaching and learning? What does it mean to be a good teacher? For thought: What is the source of good teaching? Read: *The Heart of Teaching* by Parker Palmer.

Final assessment