

**University of Georgia
College of Education
Social Foundations of Education
Summer 2005**

EFND 7140: The Social and Cultural Context of Teaching

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Course Description

Traditional classroom instruction is based on mainstream cultural practices that either disregard important variations among groups of students or attempt to assimilate all students into mainstream ways of thinking and behaving (AU & Kawkami, 1994). However, by integrating culture and knowledge, teaching in diverse classroom settings can raise academic achievement and prevent some students from feeling alienated from the learning process. This course will examine how various leaning environments (i.e., school, home, community) have shaped and influenced what it means to be a teacher and a student in U.S. public schools. We will explore how teacher and student identity as a cultural form and the culture of schools are interrelated, often clash, and can be complimentary.

Discussions will focus on the preparation of teachers, the cultural environments within which teachers are trained, how multi-layered societal, political, and economic forces shape school systems in within neighborhoods and throughout the United States. We will critique educational literature on topics that include cultural identity formation and construction, and teaching philosophy, and schools as political and bureaucratic structures.

Course Objectives

Analyze how pedagogical practices are influenced and shaped by former schooling experiences.

Examine what teacher education programs need to do to prepare prospective teachers to teach *all* students.

Examine how individual attributions such as race, class, gender and culture can affect classroom dynamics and teacher and student classroom interactions.

Review educational research literature that address teaching strategies that incorporate multiple ways of learning.

Compare internal school forces to external forces such as religion, family systems, community social systems, and how these affect teachers' classroom performance and teacher identity construction.

Course Requirements

Students are expected to attend all classes. There will be short writing assignments. These consist of: a book/article review, an autobiographical writing, and a final paper. Students are expected to read all of the materials assigned. You should be prepared to participate in class and group discussions. Since this class will rely heavily on student participation, excessive absences of (2) will be factored in the final grade. All late assignments will drop one letter grade each day it is late including the weekend (no exceptions). Classes will be a mixture of lectures, group presentations, viewing documentaries and additional assigned readings. Additional readings will be placed on reserve at the Curriculum Materials Center in Aderhold Hall.

1. Book Review: A review of a book or article will be assigned. It is to be 5 double-spaced pages. A specific format will be given during class.

2. Final Project: A final paper will be assigned. I am willing to discuss the topic with you, assist in locating sources, so that you will turn in a well-researched paper. Papers must demonstrate your grasp of the issues and topics we have studied. You will be required to integrate all of the material we have covered in this class in the literature review of your paper. **The final paper is to include *all* of the references from the required reading list. The final paper is not to exceed 12 doubled-spaced pages including the bibliography.**

3. Autobiography: Students will engage in autobiographical writings that reflect their school experiences, family life, and community service. These writings will occupy a central focus in our class discussions and group-think projects. (5 pages).

In reading the literature for this course the following questions may be useful in how you might "reflect on what you have read."

1) What is/are the main argument(s) proposed by the author(s)? For whom is the article written (teachers, administrators, theorists).

2) Consider the following: Why do you think the issue(s) is/are important? Do you agree or disagree with the author's view and why? Are you surprised by what you read and why? Does the material contradict other material you have read (either in or outside of the course)? Are you delighted/disgusted/confused/enlightened by what you've read and why? What are the strengths and weaknesses of the book? Who would benefit from reading the book? Does the material support or fail to support what you have learned through your personal/professional experiences?

Grading Policy Distribution

Grading for EFND 7140 is on the University approved, A,B,C,D,F, system. Specific criteria are set forth in each assignment. These should serve as a guideline.

“A” Grade: This grade is awarded to students who (1) meet all criteria for all tasks, and do so on time; (2) contribute meaningfully and effectively in class and group meetings; (3) demonstrate a high level of scholarship in written work including creativity, depth of research and analysis, and contribute to the knowledge base of the class as a whole. “A” students are exceptional, and go well beyond minimal requirements.

“B” Grade: This grade is awarded to students who (1) meet all criteria for all tasks in a timely fashion; (2) contribute meaningfully and effectively in class and group meetings; (3) demonstrate a reasonable level of scholarship in written work.

“C” Grade: This grade is awarded to students who (1) meet all criteria for all tasks within the time frame of the course; (2) demonstrate functional literacy for a graduate student in written and oral work.

“D” Grade: This grade is awarded to students who (1) achieve 70% of class assignments, discussions; (2) have 3 or more absences.

“F” Grade: This grade is awarded to student who fails to meet the stipulations for any of the above grades.

Grading Policy:

Book Review = 25%

Autobiography= 25%

Final Paper = 40%

Class Participation/Attendance = 10%

Required Texts

Dewey, J. (1938). *Experience and education*. New York: Simon and Schuster.

hooks, b. (1994). *Teaching to transgress*. New York: Routledge

Cochran-Smith, M. (2004). *Walking the road*. New York: Teachers College Press.

Spring, J. (2003). *Deculturalization and the struggle for equality*. New York: McGraw-Hill.

Course Schedule

May 17th to 20th

Read Springs's *Deculturation* and hooks' *Teaching to transgress*

May 23rd to 27th

Autobiography Paper is Due May 23rd

Read Dewey's *Education and experience*

May 30th to June 3rd (May 30th Holiday)

Book Review is Due June 1

Read Cochran-Smith's *Walking the road*

June 6

Film

June 7

Final Paper Due

*** A Note on Plagiarism and Cheating:** Plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty are extremely grave ethical violations. All students are to be aware of the University Academic Honesty Policy. In this course, any instance of academic dishonesty will result in referral to the administration for disciplinary action in accordance with university policies. All students should review the guidelines at the website: http://www.uga.edu/ovpi/academic_hoesty/culture_honesty.htm.