

EFND 2110: Investigating critical and contemporary issues in education

Spring 2008

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Office Hours: before/after class or by appointment

A. **Purpose of the course:** This course engages students in observations and analyses of critical educational issues influencing the social and political contexts of education settings in Georgia, the United States and other countries. Students examine the teaching profession, the meaning of education and schooling in diverse cultures and the moral and ethical responsibilities of teaching. In addition, there is a ten hour field experience component to the course which will provide direct experiences concerning issues raised in the course.

B. Objectives for the course:

- a. Cultivate an awareness of the complexities in the United States, drawing from personal experience and course material
- b. Examine the diverse roles, purposes and outcomes of education
- c. Consider the diverse educational experiences of different groups in American society
- d. Contemplate the realities facing teachers, students and communities in relation to education

C. **Text:** Joel Spring (2006). *American Education*. McGraw-Hill

***Other materials will be provided in handouts**

D. Assignments (additional handouts on each assignment to follow):

- a. Paper: Reflection on my own Schooling (10%)
This paper asks you to examine your schooling critically. What was your school like? Do you feel that you had a quality education? What issues did your school face? What issues did you face personally? (3-7 pages)
- b. Field Experience (10%)
Required by the Board of Regents. You will spend a minimum of 10 hours working in a local educational setting. A 1000 word report about your experience is required.

***FAILURE TO COMPLETE THE TEN HOURS OR FAILURE TO TURN IN ALL REQUIRED FORMS AND PAPERS WILL RESULT IN AN AUTOMATIC “F” IN EFND 2110**

- c. *Taking Sides* Group Presentation (15%)

You will work in groups to present a critical issue from two points of view.

- d. Current Events (Included in participation, 15%)

We will spend some class time going over current events every few weeks. You are required to come to class with a current event (print out from a reliable Internet news source or print news source), and a brief (1-2 paragraph) personal reaction—not a summary. We will discuss these as a whole class or in small groups. Be prepared to share!

- e. Final Project (20%)

Focused opinion paper about an issue in education (must be a different issue from your *Taking Sides* presentation)

Please note there is a written and presentation component to this project. Presentations will be at the end of the term, will require a visual, and information from the presentations will be incorporated into the final exam.

E. Examinations

Exams will draw primarily from class discussion and lecture, although you are responsible for all material covered in the course. Format will likely include identifications and short answers.

- a. Midterm Exam (in-class) 15%
b. Final Exam (will include a take-home writing portion and in-class portion) 15%

F. Attendance and Participation

Attendance at all class meetings is required. Excused absences require proper documentation (doctor's note, court summons, etc.). Unexcused absences will be reflected in your participation grade. Being present in class is essential in this course where the exchange of ideas is paramount. Participation is also required. You should come to class on time and be able to demonstrate that you have read the required material. Unannounced quizzes or other graded activities may be given and will be counted towards your participation grade.

G. Other Policies

- a. Late work: No late current events. Other assignments will receive a letter grade deduction for each day it is late. If you have an unexcused absence on the day of your presentation (the *Taking Sides* group presentation or final presentation) will result in a zero.
b. No cell phones, iPods, laptops or other electronic devices. If you have a particular need for an electronic (a tape recorder, for instance), please let me know.
c. No eating in class (drinks with caps, lids, tops okay)

- d. No hats or caps during exams
- e. Please remember we are a community of learners—be respectful of classmates, teacher, and your surroundings

H. Grade Determination:

Schooling Reflection Paper 10%

Field Experience 10%

Taking Sides Group Presentation 15%

Midterm 15%

Final Project 20%

Final Exam 15%

Participation (includes current events) 15%

Grading will be based on the plus/minus system.

A = 93 or higher	A- = 92-90	B+ = 89-87	B = 86-83
B- = 82-80	C+ = 79-77	C = 76-73	C- = 72-70
D+ = 69-67	D = 69-67	D- = 62-60	F = 59 or below

I. Academic Honesty Code at UGA:

There will be strict adherence to the UGA Academic Honesty Code in this course. You are required to be familiar with the specifics and provisions of the UGA Academic Honesty Code (available on the web at www.uga.edu/ovpi/academic_honest/culture_honesty.htm). Please be aware that academic dishonesty includes giving or receiving unauthorized help (i.e.: other than Ms. Sellers) or plagiarizing (including information from the Internet). The student honor pledge is: “I will be academically honest in all of my academic work and will not tolerate academic dishonesty of others.”

J. Miscellaneous

- a. Please make me aware if you have special concerns, needs or considerations.
- b. If you are struggling, need help or have problems that may interfere with your work in this course, please let me know.
- c. UGA has a variety of academic resources (tutoring, a learning center, a career center, disability resource center, learning disabilities center, writing center and more). Take advantage of these! Visit <http://uga.edu/academics/resources.html>
- d. Information is not posted on the web or on WEBCT. However, we will have a class email/listserv. Please be sure to check your email frequently for valuable information!
- e. I check email one or two times daily. Please allow 24 hours for response.
- f. Have a great semester!

K. Tentative Schedule (Changes may be made)

Class Meeting #

1. Questionnaire, Syllabus, Introductions, go over field experience (1/8)
 2. Review field experience, sign up for *Taking Sides* groups, go over reflection on schooling paper and current events assignments, history of schooling in US and Georgia (1/10)
 3. Continue with history of schooling, sample *Taking Sides* exercise (1/15)
 4. Spring chapter 1, **Current events**(1/17)
 5. Spring chapter 1, “20/20” Video “Stupid in America,” **Reflection on schooling paper due** (1/22)
 6. Spring chapter 2, **First Taking Sides Group (“Can the public schools produce good citizens?”)**, discuss schooling papers (1/24)
 7. Spring chapter 2 (1/29)
 8. **Current events**, Spring chapter 3 (1/31)
 9. Spring chapter 3, **Second Taking Sides Group (“Is full inclusion of disabled students desirable?”)** (2/5)
 10. Spring chapter 4, Midterm evaluations (2/7)
 11. Spring chapter 4, Guest Lecturer Ms. Katy Gregg, **verifications due for field experience** (2/12)
 12. **Current events**, review for midterm (2/14)
 13. **Midterm** (2/19)
 14. Documentary: “LaLee’s Kin” (2/21)
 15. Return midterms, “LaLee’s Kin” (2/26)
 16. Wrap-up “LaLee,” Spring chapter 5, **Third Taking Sides Group (“Should bilingual education be abandoned?”)** (2/28)
 17. Spring chapter 5 (3/4)
 18. Spring chapter 6, **Fourth Taking Sides Group (“Can charter schools revitalize public education?”)** (3/6)
- **Spring Break****
19. Spring chapter 6 (3/18) *Ms. Sellers at conference...plans TBA
 20. Spring chapter 6 (3/20) *Ms. Sellers at conference...plans TBA

21. Spring chapter 7, **Current Events, Fifth Taking Sides Group (“Do high stakes assessments improve learning?”)** (3/25)
22. Spring chapter 7 (3/27)
23. Spring chapter 8, **Field experience due** (4/1)
24. Spring chapter 8, Guest Lecturer Mr. Ken Hansing (4/3)
25. Spring chapter 9, discuss field experience **Sixth Taking Sides Group (“ Does school violence warrant a zero-tolerance policy?”)**, (4/8)
26. Spring chapter 10 (4/10)
27. Spring chapter 10, **Current events, Tenth Taking Sides Group (“Do computers negatively affect student growth?”)** (4/15)
28. Give take-home portion of final, **Presentations** (4/17)
29. **Presentations** (4/22)
30. Exam review, evaluations (4/24)

Important Dates:

Drop Add: Jan 7-10

MLK Holiday: Jan 21

Midterm: Feb 21

Midpoint Withdrawal Deadline: Feb 25

Spring Break March 10-14

Classes End: April 28

Reading Day: April 29

Grades Due: May 13