

THE SOCIAL STUDIES CURRICULUM IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS

ESOC 4350 | FALL SEMESTER, 2007
Wednesdays, 1:00—3:45 pm, Aderhold 627

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The purpose of this course is to help you prepare to teach social studies in secondary schools. Together with the companion methods course, ESOC 4360, and your field experience in ESOC 4450L, your work this semester should lay a foundation for effective teaching that you can draw on for years to come. The work you do in this course will focus on several interrelated goals. They include:

- (1) Demonstrating a critical awareness of current trends in social studies curriculum;
- (2) Developing and articulating a rationale for social studies education that addresses the need to promote forms of citizenship that are consistent with notions of participatory democracy;
- (3) Developing *pedagogical content knowledge* for social studies teaching that draws social studies content and pedagogical techniques together to transform subject matter into teachable material.

Your progress toward these goals will be assessed in a number of ways, but primarily you will be asked to complete three major pieces of work this semester:

- (1) A written plan that provides a general sense of how you would approach teaching a particular course in social studies to secondary students, including a course syllabus;
- (2) A unit plan that details how you would specifically approach the task of teaching a particular unit within that course; and
- (3) The most current version of your rationale for teaching social studies in secondary schools.

To the extent that it can be this course will be conducted as a seminar, meaning that your active participation is a pre-requisite for success in the course. You will be encouraged to test your assumptions and developing knowledge of social studies teaching against the backdrop of your field experience in 4450L, and you will be expected to contribute thoughtfully and constructively to class conversations. This class comes with a great deal of responsibility, just as teaching does; you owe it to yourself and to your classmates to bring a sense of preparedness and inquisitive professionalism to each and every class meeting.

COURSE THEMES

The work that you do in the secondary social studies program at UGA is designed to draw heavily on your experiences in secondary classroom field experiences. It also draws on several core themes to provide common frames of reference that can be used to inform our reflection and collaborative discussions. These themes function as “intellectual connectors” and are useful for bringing together the many issues likely to appear throughout the course. The themes will be referenced in assignments and in class discussions, so you should plan to develop a working familiarity with them early in the semester.

The Four Part Framework for Developing Effective Teaching Skills. This course is designed to raise questions that revolve around a “Four Part Framework” for teacher education. The four parts of this framework can be thought of as a checklist of what the program should do for you; they are integrated into this course as the following themes:

- (1) Rationale-Based Practice.** Decisions about what and how to teach—and about how you carry out your role as a social studies teacher—ought to be based on an understanding of what you hope to accomplish as a social studies teacher (i.e. your “rationale”). Rationales

not only address what you do and want to do in your school, but also how your work relates to the broader social conditions of schooling, and the contributions your work makes to society at large. Pulling these complicated ideas together is more difficult than it may seem to be at first and, as such, we will spend some time exploring ways of effectively developing a coherent and valuable rationale for teaching that is shaped by the knowledge you have of curriculum, as well as other issues in education.

(2) Reflective Teaching. Being a reflective teacher involves constant questioning: questioning of yourself, of your motives for teaching the way you do, questioning other people (including colleagues, students, parents, and others), questioning the conditions in which schooling occurs, and even questioning social relationships as a whole. Reflective teachers are mindful of and aware of the complexity of teaching. A reflective teacher consumes himself with the important questions of practice that all teachers should be aware of. To some extent, a *reflective* teacher is an *effective* one; by asking lots of questions, teachers open the door to better teaching practice. Remember, of course, that not all questions are created equal. In this course we will be less concerned with finding the “right” answers to problems of practice than we will be with asking the right kinds of questions.

(3) “Good” teaching. Good teaching is defined in this course as teaching that leads to active student engagement in worthwhile learning. We will focus on the definition of “powerful” social studies advanced by the National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS) in 1994; according to NCSS, social studies teaching and learning are powerful when they are *meaningful, integrative, value-based, challenging, and active.*

(4) GSTEP Framework Standards. The Georgia Systemic Teacher Education Program (GSTEP) has produced a framework of six standards designed to identify the essential competencies of *exemplary* teachers. The six standards, and each of their sub-standards, are comprehensive and ambitious. They form the basis of the evaluation form used by your Cooperating Teacher and Field Instructor during your student teaching experience. They also form the structure for the body of the ePortfolio assignment to be completed at the conclusion of the student teaching experience. The framework standards are:

<i>One</i>	Content and Curriculum
<i>Two</i>	Knowledge of Students and Their Learning
<i>Three</i>	Learning Environments
<i>Four</i>	Assessment
<i>Five</i>	Planning and Instruction
<i>Six</i>	Professionalism

REQUIRED TEXTS AND RESOURCES

You are not required to purchase any texts for this course. All reading assignments will be made available to you via our course website on WebCT. You can access these readings by clicking on our course name after logging on to WebCT and then following the link to “Course Materials.” We will also occasionally draw on the texts you have purchased for ESOC 4360. Access to WebCT can be had by pointing your internet browser to the following address and entering your UGA ID and password: <http://webct.uga.edu>.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND EVALUATION

Shared assignments. You will have two major assignments that will count as 50% of your grade in this class and in ESOC 4360, your methods course. Though these assignments will be due in both classes, they will be graded separately by each of your respective instructors. We will look at different criteria and assign separate grades. The two assignments are:

- **Teaching Rationale.** You will be expected to submit a draft of your rationale for teaching social studies as it stands at the conclusion of the course. Please note that this is to be

considered a draft in the *formal* sense (if such a sense exists); in other words, this is not the place for benign platitudes and statements like “I think it’s important for students to experience multiculturalism because multiculturalism shows them that every person is different and I believe we are all unique.” I want to see evidence that demonstrates that you have thought about the ideas you encountered this semester. Your rationale *is* a work in progress to the extent that any good teacher’s thinking must always be susceptible to change, but this paper will be a formal paper. It should be carefully written and proofread, and it should reflect the best possible effort you can put into defining what kind of teacher you want to be. The rationale will comprise 20% of your grade for this course.

- **Curriculum Unit Plan.** The culminating project for the course will be construction and presentation of a plan that details a unit of study in social studies that you might use in your classroom. This will be a single project you complete in both this course and your methods course, but the criteria each of your instructors use to assess your work will be different. In this class, I will focus on such aspects of your work as how you select and use content in your plan; how your unit plan reflects the values stated in your rationale; and how you integrate the curriculum theories we have talked about in class into your plan. This project accounts for 30% of your final grade.

Other assignments. These assignments will account for the other half of your grade in this course.

- **Reading guides and Content Analyses.** You will be asked to complete two “reading guides” this semester. Mostly they will consist of writing an analysis of assigned reading guided by a specific question or group of questions provided by me. Details will be discussed in class. Additionally, you will need to complete “content analyses,” which will also be explained in more detail in class. **You must complete all reading guides and content analyses to receive credit for any of them.** These assignments will comprise 15% of your final grade.
- **Syllabus and Course Plan.** Toward the end of the semester you will be expected to turn in a syllabus for a course you intend to (or would like to) teach in the future. We will discuss different approaches to writing course syllabi and different ways of planning courses effectively. The syllabus and course plan will account for 15% of your course grade.
- **Assessment Sample.** Finally, at the conclusion of our discussion of assessment you will be asked to create an assessment of your own that reflects best practices in assessment. Your assessment piece will be calculated as 15% of your final grade.

Attendance and Participation. Your attendance and active participation in this course are both essential and expected. Teaching is professional work; as such, you will be treated like professionals and I will expect professionalism from you. Expect to be confronted if your attendance or participation begins to pose a problem for yourself or others in class. Although there is no separate category for attendance and participation in the evaluation schematic laid out above, rest assured that your grades on individual assignments are very closely tied to appropriate participation in class and to your prompt and regular attendance at class meetings. You are expected to be in class every time we meet, without exception, and prepared to participate fully.

University of Georgia Grade Scale. Your final grade will be calculated based on the percentages described above and converted to a letter grade using UGA’s approved scale:

A (100—90) / B (89—80) / C (79—70) / D (69—60) / F (59—0)

Pluses and minuses will be awarded as well to more accurately reflect your work in the course.

ACADEMIC HONESTY AT THE UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA

The University of Georgia seeks to promote and ensure academic honesty and personal integrity among students and other members of the University community. A policy on academic honesty and procedural guidelines for adjudication of alleged violations of academic honesty have been developed to serve these goals. Academic honesty means performing all academic work without plagiarizing, cheating, lying, tampering, stealing, receiving assistance from any other person or

using any source of information that is not common knowledge unless that assistance or use is authorized by the person responsible for supervising that academic work or fairly attributed to the source of assistance or information.



Academic honesty is vital to the very fabric and integrity of the University of Georgia. All students must comply with an appropriate and sound academic honesty policy and code of honest behavior. All members of the University community are responsible for and involved in bringing about an honest University and all must work together to ensure the success of the policy and code of behavior.

The Student Honor Code. All students agree to abide by the honor code when they sign the application for admission to the University. A full rendering of the University's statement on academic honesty, entitled "A Culture of Honesty—UGA's Academic Honesty System," can be found at at <http://www.uga.edu/ovpi>.

Students and faculty who suspect that an act of academic dishonesty has taken place should contact the Office of the Vice President for Instruction in Old College at 706.542.0432.

CLASSROOM RESEARCH NOTIFICATION

As part of my own continuing efforts to improve the quality of the teaching I do, I constantly evaluate and re-evaluate my work in the classroom. Be aware that I consider my classrooms to be places of research, places where ideas about good teaching are shared, analyzed, and deconstructed by all members of the class, including me. As such, you should know that this class, like every class I teach, is part of an ongoing research project driven by a simple question: what can I do to be a better teacher? This is a question you should begin asking yourself as well, starting with your initiation into student teaching next semester. We will explore the notion of "teacher as researcher" in this class to help lay the groundwork for those explorations.

If you ever have any questions about the nature or purpose of the educational research happening in our classroom, please do not hesitate to ask.

