

Early Childhood Social Studies ESOC 3420 Fall 2009
 Mondays/Wednesdays, 10:45am – 12:00pm Room 581

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Course Description In this Block 2 course, we will be inquire about four overarching questions:

What funds of knowledge and interests do we draw on as individuals and as a group that we can apply to our teaching of social studies?

How can we teach social studies content to diverse groups of prekindergarten to fifth grade students in significant and connected ways?

Who are we teaching, how do we tap their funds of knowledge and interests, and how do we make connections to them so as to include and reach all students?

What are the natures of classroom cultures in prekindergarten to fifth grade classrooms that can serve as foundations for teaching the social studies?

The centerpiece of our work together will be work in grade level groups where we will explore young children's learning and classroom contexts as well as develop content knowledge and resources related to the task of teaching social studies. Our plans for teaching will be based on *Georgia's Pre-K Program Content Standards* (2007; Social Studies, Creative Development, Social and Emotional Development), the *Georgia Performance Standards* (social studies, kindergarten to fifth grade), the *National Council of Social Studies Standards* (1994), goals for equity and social justice in education (e.g., *Rethinking Schools*), as well as our own goals and purposes for teaching that will be outlined as part of our work together this semester.

My expectation is that at the end of this course you will have your own clearly articulated social studies statement of purpose linked to a collection of strategies for planning, teaching, and evaluating social studies that you can take into your future classrooms.

Course Goals:

- Strengthen your commitment to social justice and equity through the teaching of social studies
- Examine closely the assumptions, beliefs, and values underlying what and how you teach social studies and how you relate to students and other teachers
- Reflect upon present-day social studies knowledge(s) and instructional practices as historically situated, socially constructed, and dynamic
- Investigate current curriculum standards for the social studies at the national, state, and local levels

- Increase your theoretical knowledge of and practical experience in planning, teaching, and assessing your performance and that of your students
- Explore the complexities and possibilities of teaching multi-ability and multicultural classes
- Broaden your repertoire of teaching strategies, including the use of various technologies, narrative forms, inquiry, controversy and concept formation
- Become more attuned to the enduring dilemmas that face social studies teachers and come to manage these dilemmas with a heightened degree of awareness of the inherent trade offs

Early Childhood Teacher Preparation Program Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for educator preparation programs in the College of Education states that the college "aspires to prepare exemplary, reflective professionals to serve a diverse global community" (see <http://ncate.coe.uga.edu/framework>). The early childhood program shares that aspiration and seeks to prepare exemplary and reflective teacher educators, researchers, and teachers of young children by committing ourselves to the standards for early childhood education of the Georgia Professional Standards Commission (<http://www.gapsc.com/TeacherEducation/Rules/Rules.asp>), the GSTEP Standards (<http://www.coe.uga.edu/gstep>) and the National Board of Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) www.nbpts.org. As we develop our understandings of social studies teaching in diverse contexts, we will consider the ways in which we are addressing and developing relevant skills outlined in the above teaching standards.

Academic Honesty Policy

This course adheres to the academic honesty policy. Admission into UGA implies agreement with the following statement, "I will be academically honest in all of my academic work and will not tolerate academic dishonesty in others." (See the Office of the VP of Instruction website <http://www.uga.ovpi/honesty/acadhon.htm>). I expect that all written work submitted will be your own original work and that the contributions of others will be openly acknowledged.

Course Texts:

Cowhey, M. (2006). *Black ants and Buddhists: Thinking critically and teaching differently in the primary grades*. Portland, ME: Stenhouse. (We will also use this text in EDEC 4030 in Spring 2010).

Jones, S. (2006). *Girls, social class, and literacy: What teachers can do to make a difference*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann. (We will use this text from EDEC 4010 as a reference).

All other readings will be provided electronically in the eLearning Commons website or course reserves in the library and are noted in the course schedule.

Course Requirements:

The reading, writing and other formal assignments listed below will provide the basis for whole group, small group, and individual work in each of our class sessions. Thus it is important that all assignments

be completed *in advance* of each class meeting, that you come prepared to discuss them, and that you *bring assigned reading materials to class*. For all written work, please bring a hard copy to class and please post a digital copy in the indicated area of the ELearning Commons website.

1) Attendance and Participation	15%
2) SS Statement of Purpose, Part 1 (5%); Part 2 (10%)	15%
3) Civic Engagement Plan (5%); Museum Presentation (10%)	15%
4) Grade Level Group Checkpoint Reports (20%); Presentation (15%)	35%
5) Final Small Group Oral Exam	<u>20%</u>
TOTAL	100%

1. Attendance and Participation (15%)

Your attendance and participation in all class sessions is expected and deeply appreciated. The baseline for participation is arriving on time for each class. To receive an A for the participation grade, you must be in class each day by 10:45am. Absences due to illness or accidents requiring medical attention will be excused if covered by a doctor's excuse stating the date of absence. For other absences, including family emergencies, written requests for credit will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Unexcused absences will influence this portion of your grade; an A for participation will indicate full participation and regular attendance without tardiness. Two or more absences or tardy arrivals will be deducted from the participation grade, moving downward from A- to C to F. Attendance will be taken during each class session.

In addition to attending each class, I expect you to fully engage with in-class activities. This means bringing required materials as well as completing in-class assignments, such as group discussions and group work and micro-teaching. We will do a lot of your grade level group work in class so that you can benefit from each other's ideas. This will save you time out-of-class, but it only works if you come prepared.

Cell phones should be turned off during class unless you are dealing with an impending emergency or crisis that will demand your immediate response. Other disruptive behaviors, including excessive off-topic talking, interrupting, texting or doing unrelated work on your computer, or disrespecting others will negatively affect your participation and attendance grade. My expectation is that you will take on the habits and behaviors of a professional educator.

2. Social Studies Statement of Purpose, Part 1 (5%)(Due August 24) and Part 2 (10%) (DUE September 21) (adapted from an anonymous colleague's work at the University of Wisconsin)

Part 1: Write a brief (3 paragraphs) statement of purpose, answering the questions, "Why teach social studies?" In answering the question, please make an attempt to explain why you have answered in the way you have, in other words, consider how your background (class, race, ethnicity, gender, religion, geographic locale, family constellation, attributes, funds of knowledge, etc.) and experiences influence your attitude and beliefs about social studies.

Part 2: Read the assigned reading for and come to class prepared to discuss it. Taking into consideration the ideas in the reading, as well as our class conversation about it, reflect on what you wrote for Part 1 and extend your statement of purpose to 2-3 pages.

3. Civic Engagement Assignment, Plan (5%) (DUE September 14) and Museum of Practice Presentation (10%) (DUE December 7)

Choose a governance or policy or service activity on campus or in the local community or at your field placement school to attend and become involved with in some way. For your plan, write a brief (3 paragraphs) statement about what you plan to do, why you chose this activity, a timeline for when you will complete the activity, and an idea for how you will present about your experience in the Museum of Practice session on December 7 .

For your Museum of Practice Presentation, decide on a grade level P-5 that you would like to be your focus for sharing your experience. Plan to explain your rationale for why your sharing of this experience would advance children's understanding of important ideas related to civic engagement and the Prekindergarten or GPS standards. Choose a creative format in which to present about your experience.

4. Grade Level Group Checkpoint Reports (20%) DUE September-November /Presentations (15%) DUE September/October/November (Adapted from Dr. Cory Buxton)

Students will be divided into 9 grade level groups. These grade level groups will be engaged in building content knowledge, pedagogical knowledge, and resources related to the task of teaching the Georgia Prekindergarten Program standards and the GPS social studies content at their particular grade level. Class time will be devoted to this group work, but outside work, too, will be necessary in order for each group to compile a high quality body of resources to present. Most weeks, each group will be making a short presentation based on how the topic of the week plays out in their grade level prekindergarten or GPS content standards. Brief checkpoint reports will be due four times during the semester and a compilation of this work will be due at the end of the semester. This portion of the class will generally be assessed as a group grade, however, individual adjustments may be made for students who do not take on their fair share of the load.

5. Final Small Group Oral Exam (20%) (December 11) (Adapted from Dr. Cory Buxton)

More specific guidelines for the assignments above will be discussed in class, and rubrics for assessment will be distributed in advance for graded assignments.

Evaluation

I will try to set clear standards for you to meet: if they are unclear, please let me know. I will also try to help you meet those standards by commenting on your work and/or meeting with you individually (the latter is by no means mandatory). Late assignments will be accepted only if prior arrangements have been made with me. I will judge your work based on the criteria outlined in rubrics that will be distributed to you before each assignment is due. Generally speaking, however, I always value the following attributes: completeness, accuracy, depth, and clarity of thought, and quality of writing.

I expect that written work you hand in will be quality work, both in its content and form. As teachers, we need to be able to articulate our reasons for what we do, to justify the claims and assertions we make about children, learning, curriculum, and our teaching practice to students, parents, administrators, and other teachers. Therefore, I expect you to use description, including specific quotes, examples, copies of children’s writing or drawing, or vignettes to support claims you make about children’s learning, a piece of curriculum, or the behavior of your class. This does not mean that I am asking you to write pages and pages, but it does mean that I am asking you to craft what you write carefully, to be clear and succinct, and to support what you say. I also expect your work to be typed, double spaced, and presented in an edited format (i.e., correct spelling and grammar). I suggest reading aloud every assignment before handing it in. Make sure, too, that all of your work is proofread carefully. Feel free to avail yourself of writing support services on campus if you feel your writing can be improved.

ENACTING DEMOCRATIC PRINCIPLES IN TEACHING: FRAMEWORK FOR CLASS MEETINGS

Our class time together from September-December will be constructed from the following set of experiences: (adapted from Dr. Betty Bisplinghoff)

Connections: We will begin our class time together with a 10 minute period called “Connections.” Connections is a way for people to build a bridge from where they are or have been (mentally, physically, etc.) to where they will be going and what they will be doing. It is time for individuals to reflect – within the context of a group – upon a thought, a story, an insight, a question, or a feeling that they are carrying with them into the session, and then connect it to the work they are about to do. It is a time for us to recognize that we come together with a shared goal (becoming professional teachers) but may bring with us unique and compelling issues. It is **not** a time for dialogue. It is a **safe** zone in which group members may choose to share with the understanding that their comments are valued without need for explanation. We will take turns facilitating this class experience.

Norms Review: We will construct our norms together during our first class. Each week we will review our norms to see if they are working for us. We will share facilitation of this process.

Daily Inspiration/Read Aloud: We will take turns with this piece.

Class Meetings: There will be time to ask questions, seek clarification of assignments, goals, and generally attend to any issues and/or celebrations that arise through our learning together..

Text-based Discussions: To explore a reading by clarify our thinking, expanding our perspectives, and building on the thinking and experiences of others.

Presentation of Supporting Information: I will develop presentations to assist you in developing your understandings of theory and curriculum in Early Childhood social studies teaching.

Collaborative Learning: Time will be consistently provided for you to receive feedback and “grow” your thinking and projects with the support of your peers. We will regularly make use of small group work time to help us learn to learn from each other.

Community Building: We will take time to learn from play.

Virtual Experiences: Whenever possible, we will try to bring the “real” world of teaching and learning with children into our university classroom through video or digital media experiences.

Reflection: John Dewey (1933) defines reflective thinking as “active, persistent, and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge” that involves a “conscious and voluntary effort to establish belief upon a firm basis of evidence and rationality” (p. 9). Reflection is a way to help you clarify your purposes, focus your methods, and ultimately improve the quality of your teaching. It is a professional attribute worth nurturing. In class, we will participate both in oral and written reflection.

<p>* The course syllabus is a general plan for the course; deviations announced to the class by the instructor may be necessary.</p>
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