

ESOC 2450: Initial Field Experience in Social Science Education

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Rationale:

The Initial Field Experience is designed as a first decision point as to whether you really want to teacher history/social science courses in grades 7-12 and whether the faculty in the Department consider you of sufficient promise to admit you to our program. You can consider this course as your first audition to complete our program.

The experience will require you to visit middle/high schools and make observations of the school context, administration, teachers, students, and resources available for instruction. In addition, you will be required to learn background information about the teaching of history/social sciences in public schools and current thought about the nature of social studies. In addition, you will examine an Issue in the teaching of social studies that you want to explore in depth and report to the class. Finally, you will develop an initial rationale for teaching social studies. If you decide to continue in the program, you will be required to reflect on this initial rationale in other courses in our program as you prepare for initial certification to teach social studies.

The main objectives for the course are:

1. Describe the views of students and teachers about middle school social studies.
2. Describe the views of students and teachers about high school social studies.
3. Compare the views of students and teachers in middle and high schools.
4. Compose a tentative rationale for teaching social studies.
5. Discuss a major issue related to social studies instructions.

Readings:

Various readings will be made available either in class handouts or through WEBCT. You are expected to download copies of the *Georgia Performance Standards* and *Georgia High School Graduation Test* for U.S. History, World History, Geography, Civics, Economic and Grades 6, 7 and 8 Social Studies (www.glc.k12.ga.us) and have them available for use in the class. In addition, you will need to obtain copies of the *Nations Report Cards* for History, Geography and Civics from the National Center for Educational Statistics (<http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard>).

Assignments:

- (1) You are to write formal reports of your visits to middle/high schools and put them in a "portfolio" to be turned in for grading periodically during the semester. In total, you are to make 60 hours of visits to schools to meet the requirements for an A grade. You will also be required to keep a time log and have it signed by the teacher/s you are observing which will also be reviewed periodically during the semester. You will be given more detailed instructions for the assignments during class including the due dates. This part of the course grade will be based on how thoroughly you complete the formal reports and the number of hours you spend visiting schools. This part of the course will count **50%** of your grade.

- (2) You are to prepare an *initial rationale* for teaching social studies and present the rationale as a formal paper. More detailed instructions for the assignment will be given during class, including the due date. This assignment will be evaluated using a rubric which you will be given along with the more detailed instructions for the assignment. This rationale is one of the primary documents used to determine your admission to the program, so it is important to begin work on the rationale soon after your introduction to the field of social studies through class lectures and discussions. Like the formal reports of your visits to schools, you will include this in your end of course portfolio. This part of the course will count **25%** of your grade.
- (3) You will make a presentation to the class on an issue in teaching social studies that arises during your observations of middle and high school social studies classrooms. A copy of the presentation will be put in your portfolio. You will be given more detailed instructions for the assignments during class including the due date. This part of the course will count **25%** of your grade.

Miscellaneous:

Attendance: Notify the instructor of any absence, especially an excused absence. **DO NOT** miss class unless it is a dire necessity. It is your responsibility to catch up on notes and handouts after an absence. Excessive absences can result in a lower grade for the course.

Work in assigned groups will be graded accordingly; otherwise you will work alone. Consider that “authorized assistance” constitutes only that allowed by the instructor.

Academic Honesty Policy: The University of Georgia’s honor code will be upheld in this course. The student honor pledge is: “I will be academically honest in all of my academic work and will not tolerate academic dishonesty of others.” For more detailed information, see: www.uga.edu/ovpi/academic_honest/culture_honesty.htm