

SOCIAL STUDIES CURRICULUM IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS

ESOC 4350 / FALL SEMESTER, 2006
Mondays, 1:00—4:00 pm, Aderhold 417

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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.

As you prepare for life in the classroom, the work you do in this course will focus on several interrelated goals. They include:

- (1) 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;
- (2) Developing *pedagogical content knowledge* for social studies teaching that draws social studies content and pedagogical techniques together to transform subject matter into teachable material;
- (3) Developing an ability to balance the shifting and often conflicting responsibilities of classroom teaching; and
- (4) Developing an understanding of the impact and value of standards-based reform efforts on student learning and on the many contexts of teaching.

This course will be conducted as a seminar, meaning that your active participation is a pre-requisite for success in the course. Just as it is in ESOC 4360, your class time in this course will be structured to help you frame your thinking about the substance of the course but it will also be incumbent upon you to share your thoughts and experiences with the class, including interpretations and analysis of the texts we read as well as your thoughts on the nature of the field experience in 4450L. You will be encouraged to test your assumptions and developing knowledge of social studies teaching against the backdrop of the field experience, 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 and are described in more detail below.

Part One. Encourages development of an articulated and working mission/ rationale/vision statement for social studies teaching rooted in a sophisticated understanding of “education for democratic citizenship.”

Part Two. Encourages development of an understanding of what you would do in schools to make the mission you described in Part One a reality.

Part Three. Encourages critical awareness of the obstacles you are likely to encounter as you attempt to carry out the goals defined in Part Two to make the mission of Part One happen.

Part Four. Encourages thoughtful reflection on ideas about how you will persist in developing your rationale and your skills as a teacher given the obstacles identified in Part Three as you attempt to carry out the stuff of Part Two to make the mission of Part One happen.

(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 a great deal of our time together exploring ways of effectively developing a coherent and valuable rationale for teaching.

(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 improved practice and markedly better classroom experiences. 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) What is “good teaching”? Good teaching is defined in this course as teaching that leads to active student engagement in worthwhile learning. Your success in this course will be directly tied to your ability to develop an understanding of what these two concepts mean and how they can, and will, impact your practice as a teacher. We will also 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.”

[<http://webct.uga.edu>]

You will also need to download the Georgia Performance Standards for social studies in grades 9-12. The good news is that this download is free. You can claim your copy by visiting the link below and clicking on “Grades 9-12 Social Studies Standards.”

[<http://www.georgiastandards.org/socialstudies.aspx>]

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND EVALUATION

Field experience. A major requirement of this course is your active participation in a supervised field experience that should enable you to “test” some of your assumptions and expectations about teaching by visiting actual elementary classrooms in the Athens area. More details on this experience will be distributed in class.

Reaction Papers and Directed Student Responses (DSRs). Reading and writing assignments will be made throughout the semester. Most weeks you can expect to have a reaction paper or DSR to write; these will sometimes be open-ended responses to reading assignments and at other times will be guided by questions posed in class to direct your responses. Reaction papers account for 35% of your final grade for the course.

Midterm Paper. At the midpoint of the term, you will be expected to write an in-class essay in response to prompts provided to you. We will discuss this assignment in more detail as the time draws closer. The midterm essay will account for 15% of your final grade for the course.

Attendance and Participation. This course is based on the thoughtful contributions of every class member. Thus, your punctual attendance is required at each class meeting, as is responsible class participation. Please notify the instructor, via phone or email, if conditions arise that prevent you from being able to meet these expectations. Participation is expected in seminar meetings and also via weekly postings to class discussions on WebCT. Your attendance and participation grade will be determined at the end of the semester based on my assessment of the frequency, nature, and quality of your contributions to the course. This requirement accounts for 15% of the final grade.

Curriculum Unit Plan. The culminating project for the course will be construction and presentation of a unit plan that details a unit of study in social studies that you might use in your classroom. You are encouraged to seek feedback from me regarding your project throughout the semester and you are also encouraged to seek the advice and support of your classmates and the teachers you work with in your field experience. This project accounts for 20% of your final grade.

Policy Analysis Project. You will also be expected to engage in an inquiry project that involves you in the investigation of a problem faced by society. Details on this project are forthcoming. Your policy analysis will account for 15% of your final grade in the course.

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)

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 <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. Please 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?

Additionally, I will begin collection of data for a no less ambitious doctoral dissertation project this semester. It is likely that some of you will be asked to volunteer to participate in this research. Please know that any support you provide to my research efforts is unconditionally voluntary and can be withdrawn at any time and for any reason without penalty. 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. classroom, please do not hesitate to ask.