EDUC 392: Education in a Multicultural Society
Section 005: Thursdays, 4-7pm
Winter 2014
Room: 2328 SEB

To educate as the practice of freedom is a way of teaching that anyone can learn. That learning process comes easiest to those of us who teach who also believe that there is an aspect of our vocation that is sacred; who believe that our work is not merely to share information but to share in the intellectual and spiritual growth of our students. To teach in a manner that respects and cares for the souls of our students is essential if we are to provide the necessary conditions where learning can most deeply and intimately begin.

The classroom, with all its limitations, remains a location of possibility. In the field of possibility we have the opportunity to labor for freedom, to demand of ourselves and our comrades, an openness of mind and heart that allows us to face reality even as we collectively imagine ways to move beyond boundaries, to transgress. This is education as the practice of freedom. (bell hooks, Teaching to Transgress)

Instructor: Natalie Davis
Office: 2211 SEB
Email: davisnat@umich.edu
Phone: (734) 985-0763

Office Hours: Immediately after class, or by appointment.

392 OVERALL COURSE OVERVIEW AND GOALS

This course introduces the work of teaching and the context in which teachers do that work in the contemporary United States. This course is focused foremost on cultivating an understanding of how teachers can act and think in ways that maximize the learning opportunities for all students; in essence, what it means to be an effective, culturally responsive educator. We will examine illustrations of some of the teaching dilemmas that arise in relation to racial and socio-economic inequities and that coincide with the increasing diversification of our society. In the process of doing so, we will contemplate how teachers might configure their professional realities in ways that allow them to take advantage of and build upon the variety of cultural knowledge and resources which students, their families, and the school community possess.

Our study of culturally responsive teaching rests on the premise that although U.S. schools traditionally serve some students better than others, teachers can work in ways that either exacerbate or ameliorate group differences in children’s opportunities to learn. Through learning how to mitigate cultural conflicts and misconceptions between home and school, teachers increase their likelihood of diminishing the differences in educational outcomes that are witnessed along the lines of race, class, gender, ethnic and linguistic differences, which are a function of institutional, social, economic, and political forces. With these foci in mind, our class community will:

1. Examine our own assumptions about what constitutes effective teaching and equitable classrooms and schools;
2. Study the various ways teachers have employed culturally responsive practices in their classrooms and the dilemmas that might arise in pursuing these approaches in an increasingly diverse society;

3. Develop a working understanding of the context of teaching in the United States, including the demographics of the school-aged population, the landscape of academic achievement and opportunity gaps, historical influences, and the policies and programs that schools have used – with greater and lesser success – to contend with diversity;

4. Simulate and engage with dynamic teaching practices with the intention of developing professional insight into the moves that teachers make – raising our awareness of the relationship between teachers’ thinking and decision-making and all students’ learning opportunities;

5. Develop a “working” understanding of what else we may need to do, experience, or learn in the interest of building our capacity to be culturally responsive and effective teachers over the course of our professional development.

In addition to reading educational and social science literature that bear upon these five objectives, we will pursue these objectives in light of what we can learn from our practicum placements and from “records” of teachers and schools that have worked towards equity (i.e., case studies, video footage, and web sites of teaching and school practices). Because this course provides only an introduction to thinking about being an effective teacher, our aim is to orient ourselves to the professional possibilities inherent in pursuing this goal and to develop questions and ideas that can be further explored and experimented within other parts of the teacher education program, including subject-matter methods courses and field placements.

**COURSE ASSIGNMENTS**

Below are brief descriptions of the major course assignments; detailed instructions will be distributed in class and posted on our CTools site as necessary. Assignments are due to CTools before each class session. Barring extenuating circumstances (instructor’s discretion), and in the absence of alternative arrangements, NO LATE WORK will be accepted. This guideline will be strictly adhered to. Please bring a paper copy to class where noted below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project (weight)</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teaching Philosophy</td>
<td>Interns will prepare (or bring in) a 1-2 page document that answers the questions of <em>what</em>, <em>why</em> and <em>how</em> they intend to teach. This document will characterize interns’ orientation(s) towards the work of teaching, expectations/goals for students, as well as the implications for their work.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Transformative Teaching Group Project (25%)</td>
<td>Interns will be tasked with identifying a challenge or complex problem at their practicum worksite that can be ameliorated via culturally relevant instruction. In small groups, interns will design and enact a dynamic mini lesson which points towards a solution to the specified issue. The goal of this activity is to work collaboratively to demonstrate a deep understanding of CRP (culturally relevant pedagogy) and its potential in improving the educational experiences of diverse students.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Multicultural Teaching Philosophy Revisit (20%)</td>
<td>Interns will revisit the teaching philosophy, submitted at the start of the semester. They will be expected to revise this philosophy and apply new concepts and understandings from the course.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Open Genre Final Project (15%)</td>
<td>As a culminating project, interns will contemplate their growth and development throughout the course. They will then briefly present this growth to the class through any media form of choice (dance, art, speech, poem, music, puppet show, etc).</td>
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<tr>
<td>My Educational Background **</td>
<td>Students will write a ~2 page reflection paper that describes their experiences in schools.</td>
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**Denotes a participation assignment that will factor into your participation grade.**

**COURSE EXPECTATIONS**

**Attendance, Preparation, and Contributions (25%)** Interns are expected to:

Complete ALL participation assignments: Participation assignments are mandatory and should be completed during or by the start of class if assigned as homework. These assignments will ask you to reflect on your personal experiences in order to help you prepare for and enrich class discussions. All participation assignments will require you to reflect on the way that the readings enrich or complicate your understanding of course themes. The instructor expects that your writing/thinking will demonstrate a careful analysis of the required readings and a sincere attempt to “puzzle” over the focus issues. These responses, in oral and written form, will be considered evidence of preparation for class. **Failure to complete or actively participate in any of the above will result in full or partial loss of participation points for that day.**

Attend Every Class and On Time: Class attendance is mandatory thus absences will be reflected in your final grade via a deduction in participation points. Missing more than one class may result in an incomplete or further disciplinary action. Class will begin at 6:10 pm. For each tardy and early departure, points will be deducted from your participation grade. **If you must miss class for an excused illness or emergency, you are responsible for contacting the instructor in advance of class,**
acquiring class materials, and making up in-class activities and assignments. Please review your exam schedule at the beginning of the semester so that you can plan accordingly.

Prepare for Each Class Session: You are responsible for completing all readings, written, and/or reflection tasks before the class session for which they are assigned. In addition, being prepared for class requires bringing all needed materials, including assignments and readings with you to each class session. NO late assignments will be accepted.

Actively Engage the Content and Activities of the Course: While attendance and participation are important for what they signal in terms of professionalism, as students of education you are aware that they have further more important implications for a learner's development. Much of our learning will take place through interactions in class. This is not a lecture-based course; active learning is the objective. By engaging with each other in discussions, explanations, critiques, and clarifications we contribute to our own and each other's understandings. The richness of this learning community is something to which we all have the responsibility to contribute; all of your interactions in class should be responsible, timely, thoughtful, and respectful. Although students are encouraged to volunteer their participation in class, the instructor will also call on students in order to maximize classroom opportunities to hear from ALL students.

COURSE GRADING

Grades will be determined using the following scale:

94-100 = A  
84-87.9 = B  
74-76.9 = C  
90-93.9 = A- 
80-83.9 = B-  
70-73.9 = C-  
88-89.9 = B+  
77-79.9 = C+ 
67-69.9 = D+  
64-66.9 = D

PLEASE NOTE: Given the substantive content and urgency of issues, this course has high expectations for student work and engagement. As such, students enter into 392 with a B+, which reflects adherence to assignment guidelines, and the production of quality work absent systematic inadequacies. Only interns who consistently surpass base expectations should anticipate an A or better in this course.

ADDITIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE STUDENTS

Attend to Electronic Etiquette: (Borrowed from Matt Ronfeldt) Common sense demonstrates, and research is now showing, that we are not as good at multi-tasking with electronic devices as we may think. The instructor asks that all electronic devices (including phones) be off during class time except during class breaks and when electronics are explicitly integrated into assignments (e.g., you must use video equipment to present or watch video clips or access CTools). And then there is the special case of the laptop. For students who use laptops to take notes, refer to articles during class discussions, etc. the instructor requests that you disable internet capabilities while our class is in session when not in use for class purposes. If you cannot disable the internet, then we ask that you not access the web during class, this includes NOT having your email or Facebook browsers open or minimized. There are always exceptional circumstances; please see us with
specific concerns, and we will make arrangements that work for us all. **Being caught out of accordance with the above policy will result in full loss of the day’s participation points. No questions asked.**

**Meet with the Instructor:** I would like you to set up appointments to meet with me if you are experiencing difficulty with the course. Also if life situations are affecting the quality of your work in the course, please discuss these matters with me as soon as possible.

**Own Your Work and Cite the Work of Others:** You will draw on multiple resources as you complete assignments for this course—readings, conversations with peers and colleagues, internet resources, and your experiences. When you write lessons or other assignments for this class, you MUST provide citations and attributions for the work of others included in your written work. This includes references or resources in any media form you used. As a professional practice, you should also footnote and succinctly describe and attribute ideas that were generated in conversation with others. Be fair and honest in representing your work to others. Do not plagiarize, cheat, or otherwise misrepresent your work. If in doubt about what constitutes plagiarism, check with us, or consult the following website: www.lib.umich.edu/acadintegrity.

**Accommodations**

Please talk with me, if you require accommodations due to religious practices, learning disabilities, physical requirements, medical needs, or any other reasons. We will work together to identify resources and make accommodations. As adults, we all have needs and a broad range of responsibilities—it is your job to speak up and talk with us if you need an accommodation.

**GUIDELINES FOR CLASS DISCUSSIONS**

Given the content of this course, we often discuss sensitive matters (such as race, class, gender, sexual orientation, politics, and ideas about preferred styles of teaching). Because we consider it essential to our learning together, everyone in this class must feel safe to express him or herself and to ask potentially embarrassing questions. As such, it is important that we commit to and honor certain principles of discourse. To facilitate this, we borrow the following discussion guidelines from Gary Fenstermacher:

1. Listen and understand before you judge. Learn to “hear” and comprehend before you draw conclusions or evaluate what others are saying.

2. Probe and ask questions as a means of gaining a fuller measure of understanding. Before you ask questions that criticize or negate, ask questions that ensure you grasp what the other person is saying. Some examples: “If I understand you correctly, you are contending that . . .” OR “Would you help me gain a better understanding of what you are saying by explaining a little more the idea that . . .”

3. Do what you can to make the discussion atmosphere safe for different perspectives and for considerate controversy over different perspectives. Present your own
positions gently and tentatively, and listen to the positions of others in the same way.

4. Invite fellow students who are not participating to engage the topic. Ask them what they think (and take a genuine interest in their answers). Keep an eye on the ebb and flow of discussion and take responsibility for keeping the discussion moving along, treating all participants considerately, and maintaining a balanced and gracious tone.

5. Be aware of your own participation, checking occasionally to ask whether you are monopolizing the conversation or failing to contribute at all.
COURSE SCHEDULE (Subject to Modification)

Required readings are available via CTools; bring the readings for each session with you to class, either a paper or an electronic copy. Also, please read the articles in the order listed below.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic of Study &amp; Central Questions</th>
<th>Required Readings</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 January 9th, 2014</td>
<td><strong>Course Introduction</strong>&lt;br&gt;Who are we and where do we come from?&lt;br&gt;What are the course objectives, policies and procedures?</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Session</td>
<td>References</td>
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<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Topic</td>
<td>Readings and Notes</td>
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**social diversity? What happens to those students who are out of the linguistic and behavioral norms? How and why are teacher perceptions regarding linguistic and behavioral norms important in the classroom?**


*Nieto (1992): Multicultural Education in a Sociopolitical Context Read Chapter 6 “Linguistic Diversity in Multicultural Classrooms”*
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Readings</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Topic</td>
<td>Reading/Administration</td>
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<td>12 April 3rd, 2014</td>
<td><strong>Critical Consciousness</strong></td>
<td>Why is critical consciousness essential to the CRP framework?</td>
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<td>13 April 10th, 2014</td>
<td><strong>CRP in Action (Pt. 1)</strong></td>
<td><strong>Student Presentations</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>14 April 17th, 2014</td>
<td><strong>CRP in Action (Pt. 2)</strong></td>
<td><strong>Student Presentations</strong></td>
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**Why is it important to view families as a resource? What types of skills and knowledge are necessary in order to establish meaningful connections between home and school?**


**Critical Consciousness**

*Why is critical consciousness essential to the CRP framework?*  
*How can teachers design curriculum that is both rigorous and empowering?*
