Course Syllabus
Diversity and Social Justice Education and Research
Fall 2013

Course Number: EDUC 771-03 Fall 2013
Instructor: Betty Overton-Adkins
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Office: SOE 2018
Office Hours: Thursdays 1pm-3pm; or by appointment
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Class Schedule: Thursdays 4pm -6pm, September 5 thru December 11
Classroom: Room 2224 SOE

Course Overview
The primary purpose of this seminar is to sustain and strengthen a supportive network of graduate students and faculty in the School of Education who are particularly interested in research, pedagogy, and activism around issues of diversity and social justice. It is designed to enhance the preparation of students to fulfill their current and future educational roles, including serving as diversity researchers, educators, and allies.

Course Description
Higher education is a unique mirror into our society. It reflects the societal context in which it exists, and in its roles as creator and conveyor of knowledge and preparer of leaders for the society, it has a significant influence in critically examining the issues affecting the society and developing the ideas and processes for addressing those issues. As a consequence, higher education supports change within our society and the world through these multiple roles. But the result is an institutional complexity that sometimes causes competing goals related to issues of diversity and social justice.
Thus, in our contemporary global and domestic context, the business of the academy involves both shedding light on the implications and outcomes of our growing diversity, and within its own structures and spheres of influence, helping to understand and foster greater equity for its participants. Because colleges and universities have a place of privilege and responsibility within society, through their actions, they are positioned to raise awareness, increase understanding, develop commitment and inspire action related to diversity and social justice.

This class is designed as an opportunity for those studying higher education to better understand the ways that diversity and social justice manifest themselves within our own landscape and to explore how those manifestations impact our conduct within the academy and our influence of these issues beyond the campus. The course assumes that participants bring a willingness to examine their own roles or anticipated roles within the dynamics of privilege and power in higher education but also in our larger social interactions.

The course is a seminar offered for variant credit (1-3 credits). As such, students may be interacting in the course with a variety of time commitments and assignments. The class is also connected to the CSHPE Diversity and Social Justice Symposia and Workshops and as such enrollees are expected to be involved in these activities (see course schedule).

Course Objectives

The primary objectives for this course are:

- Heighten students’ personal understanding of the impacts of diversity and social justice issues within higher education
- Provide opportunities for students to interact with academic researchers and practitioners who are involved in exploring and confronting diversity and social justice issues within the academy
- Critically examine theoretical foundations of the issues related to diversity and social justice
- Develop or refine their own philosophical perspectives and stances related to various social justice issues

Learning Outcomes

Students completing this course will be able to:

- Articulate a definition and philosophy of social justice and what it means in the context of their work in higher education
- Support their own stances on diversity and social justice through the lens of relevant theoretical frames, research, and best practices
- Provide concrete examples of ways in which they have encountered and interacted with issues of diversity and social justice through the integration of a social justice perspective in their professional functions
• Present their findings and experiences in both written and oral formats

Textbook

There is no textbook assigned for this class. We will use the posted class resource readings for our readings, class meetings and discussions.

Seminar Expectations

Because the course may be taken for variant credit (1-3 credit hours), students may be interacting with it in a variety of ways. The outline of expectations listed below is designed for flexibility, and students may discuss with the instructor special opportunities they have to fulfill the requirements for the class that may vary from this published list of expectations.

• All students
  o Reading of identified articles and resources
  o Attendance at the Symposia; attendance at the workshops is recommended
  o Identification of an area of interest in diversity and social justice (approved by the instructor); the development of a plan for pursuing this interest during fall term; and a final in-class report and paper on this project

• One-Hour Credit
  o All the above and attendance at September 5, October 3, Nov. 7, and Dec. 5 meetings (Dec.5--presentation of project and submission of paper)
  o Written summaries of three articles (submitted to dropbox-see schedule)

• Two-Hour Credit
  o All of the items for one-credit above
  o Submission of a one-page journal entry twice a month—September, October, November –6 total [Drop Box –see requirements for journal entries]

• Three-Hour Credit
  o All of the items for two hour credit above (except the article summaries since it is anticipate that for three-hours credit students will be in class to discuss these articles)
  o Attendance at symposia and workshop
  o Class attendance September 5, 19, October 3, 17, Nov. 7, 14, Dec. 5
  o Mid term-Paper [Topic: The Development of a Definitional and Philosophical Frame for Diversity and Social Justice in the Context of Higher Education]
In Summary

Each participant will submit at least one paper (end of class project paper counts as the paper for those taking the course for 0-1-2 credits)

Each participant will be attending the three symposia during the semester

Each participant will spend some time in class being part of our discussion of the various resource materials.

Each student will engage with some of the reading either through discussion and/or written summaries.

Each participant will give an oral presentation about his/her project work

Since it is important to me that each student grapples with the issues of definition and philosophy, those students not writing the philosophy paper will be asked to address this issue in the content of their journal entries or in their final projects’ oral presentation and paper.

Grading

The grading scale for the course is based on a point system and the credit hour requirements. Items used in determining final grade will include:

Class participation/attendance at the required meetings

Attendance at the Symposia

Final Project Reports (written and oral presentations)

Journal Entries

Summary of articles, where applicable

Mid-term paper, where applicable

The specific points for each of the grading areas will be posted on Ctools after the first class meeting.

Pedagogical Strategies

- Engage students in learner-centered activities, supported by examination of relevant research using primary and secondary sources
• Provide a balance of structured class activities and opportunities for students to think and act independently and creatively about their learning process
• Acquaint students with resources they can use for extended study in particular areas
• Call upon students to use multiple intelligences and intellectual skills

Other Considerations

Writing Style: All written assignments must be typed, spell-checked, proofread for grammar and usage, and should conform to the style and reference notation format outlined by the 6th edition of the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association. Please double-space all assignments and use 12-point font with a one-inch margin on all sides of the paper.

Attendance Policy: This is a seminar course. Reading the material for class is important, but equally important is the conversation that takes place in the classroom. The sharing of ideas, active listening, and many questions form the basis of the learning process. This process assumes that students are in class regularly and engaged with the subject matter and each other. Electronic devices or note-taking by a peer cannot take the place of being in class.

Academic Honesty Policy: Each student is responsible for knowing and complying with the academic honesty policy for the University. This instructor will approach each person’s submitted work as the originator’s declaration of original efforts.

Late Assignments: Students are expected to submit assignments on the announced dates. Assignments submitted after the announced due date will receive point reductions—the later the submission, the more the point reduction. Students with any special learning needs or accommodations that would affect the timing of completion of assignments should notify the instructor after the first class.

Classroom Civility: This seminar, to a great extent, is based on talk—the give and take of discussion. Students are expected at all times to conduct themselves in a manner that supports the teaching-learning process. Avoid side conversations that may be distracting to others or hamper others from hearing or concentrating on classroom activities. Please turn off all cell phones, beepers, and other devices that might make noise or distract others.

Change Policy: The instructor reserves the right to alter information in this syllabus as needed to accurately reflect the course coverage and to enhance the learning outcomes of the course. When or if changes are necessary, they will be announced in advance and students will have appropriate time to make adjustments.

University Adherence to Federal Policy: The University complies with The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). This federal statute provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. The legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a supportive learning environment and requires reasonable
accommodations for their disabilities. If you require any accommodations, please contact the instructor for information about university procedures.