

# Education in a Multicultural Society

Education 392-001

Room: SEB 2310

Time: Monday, 1pm- 4pm

*Learning is finding out what we already know. Doing is demonstrating that you know it.  
Teaching is reminding others that they know just as well as you. You are all learners,  
doers and teachers.*

- Richard Bach

Instructor: Serene Koh

Office: 1228P SEB

Phone: 734-846-7997

Email: serenek@umich.edu

Office Hours: By appointment.

Group email: 392sk05@umich.edu

## **Course Overview**

Education and teaching are not limited to what occurs in classrooms. Most teachers come to realize early on in their careers that a host of historical, social, economic, and political factors has an impact upon what goes on in the classroom. This course is designed to provide you with the opportunity to explore some of these issues as they relate to education. In this course we will ask a number of important questions, including:

- Historically, how did US schools become as they are today?
- Do the structures of American schools privilege certain people or groups and, if so, how and what are the implications?
- How and why do social class, race, gender, and religion affect students' educational experiences and outcomes?
- What is "multicultural education" and what should be its goals? What are the roles and responsibilities of teachers in a multicultural society?

In other words, while we will be concerned with what it means to be an effective teacher, this course is more focused on the *context* within which teaching takes place. When you understand the forces that act on schools and have a clear sense of the purposes of education, your practice as a teacher will be invaluablely enhanced.

In order to undertake this analysis, we will draw on a variety of contemporary readings as well as our own experiences during class lectures and discussions. Paying attention to the course readings, lectures and our discussions will be important as these resources provide you with the means to develop a knowledge base of the various foundational dimensions of education—including the philosophical, sociological, psychological, political and historical—and how each of these has an effect on teaching practice.

However, this is only part of the journey that needs to be undertaken if this course is to be useful for you as future classroom teachers. Apart from learning about these issues through readings, lectures and discussions, this knowledge must also be applied to your personal perspectives and understandings in order that it may inform your future teaching endeavors.

In sum, you should complete the course with a greater understanding of the role of education in a changing and diverse society and with increased insight into the difficult, yet vital roles that you will be playing as teachers.

### **Texts and course pack**

The following texts are required for this course:

1. Mondale, S. and Patton, S. (2001). *School: The Story of Public Education*. Boston: Beacon Press.
2. Hochschild, J. and Scovronick, N. (2003). *The American Dream and the Public Schools*. New York: Oxford University Press.
3. Fenstermacher, G. D. & Soltis, J. (2004), *Approaches to Teaching* (4<sup>th</sup> ed.). New York: Teachers College Press. [Be sure to obtain the 4<sup>th</sup> edition, as it is considerably different from previous editions.]
4. A course pack.

The books are all available at Ulrich's bookstore on South University and the course pack at Dollar Bill Copying on Church Street. I have also put the books on four-hour reserve at the Shapiro Undergraduate Library.

### ***Optional readings:***

You will realize that there are optional readings included in the list of references in your course pack. These articles are not in the course pack but in the Resource section of the class CTools page.

The following books are only recommended. They are on overnight reserve at the Shapiro Undergraduate Library:

1. Nieto, S. (1999). *The Light in Their Eyes: Creating Multicultural Learning Communities*. New York: Teachers College Press.
2. Kohl, H. (1967). *36 Children*. New York: New American Library.
3. Kozol, J. (1991). *Savage Inequalities: Children in America's Schools*. New York: Crown Publishers.
4. Hirsch, E. D. (1987). *Cultural Literacy: What Every American Needs to Know*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Houston Mifflin.

You are not required to read any of these optional materials and will not be penalized if you do not. However, these are helpful resources to deepen your knowledge of particular topics, and of multicultural education in general.

If you would like to read further material (either on specific topics or multicultural education), please talk to me and I can recommend additional texts.

### **Communication with the instructor**

Keep in touch with me during this course. If you have a specific question, interest or concern, I actively encourage you to email/phone me and/or make a time for a meeting.

*If you have special needs for which accommodations may be needed, please inform me as soon as possible.*

### **Course expectations and requirements**

#### **1. Participation and attendance (25%)**

The 392 classes are structured so as to maximize interaction between all members of the group. Your participation, through the contribution of ideas and experiences and active listening is extremely important if the classes are to be successful as a means of broadening your knowledge of the foundations of education in a multicultural society.

#### **Readings**

All readings must be completed before the class for which they were assigned. It is expected that as you read the assigned texts you will keep a **written record** of questions and issues that arise. Please bring this written record with you to class, as discussions will be based around your reactions to the texts and you may be called upon to offer your perspectives.

#### **Small group work**

In order to facilitate discussion and activities, you will be placed in a group of 4-5 students and these will be the people with whom you will engage when doing small group work in class. The groups will be changed once or twice over the course. Small groups will also be responsible for compiling questions about the readings each week.

#### **Weekly responses to readings**

So that I can build your questions about the weekly readings into class activities, you will be required to write 2-3 reflective questions, and some brief bulleted notes in relation to these questions every week. These questions and short responses should demonstrate that you have engaged with the weekly readings. These weekly questions will be collated in turn by members of each discussion group and emailed to me by Sunday at 3pm (the day before class).

In addition, please save a copy of the questions that you write each week, as you will turn in a copy of this record during our last class. I will be reviewing this record of your collated weekly questions as I calculate final participation and attendance grades.

### Evaluation of participation

I will be evaluating participation holistically across the following three categories after each class and over the course as a whole:

- Whole class participation: engaging in discussion, listening actively to others.
- Small group participation: engaging in and/or leading the discussion, fulfilling responsibilities as a group member.
- Individual preparation for class: completing readings and reflective questions prior to class in a thoughtful and careful manner.

It is expected that you will attend every class and that you will be ready to start at the appointed time (10 minutes past the hour). It is very important that if you expect to be delayed for any reason or cannot attend class you communicate with me via email or phone prior to the class so that we can discuss the best course of action to follow. If you miss a class, you are responsible for acquiring missed material. Please note that attendance and participation figures into the grade for this class. Tardiness, absences or early departures that have not been discussed in advance with me will lower your grade.

At the mid-point of the course, I will provide you with a preliminary assessment of your participation and attendance grade.

### **2. Short papers (10% each= total 40%)**

You will write **four** short response papers during this course. Each of these will be a commentary and reflection on a topic or theme that we have covered in the readings and in class. The length of each short paper will be 800-1000 words (3-4 double spaced pages).

You have six topics from which to choose any four. A selection of focus questions for each topic will be handed out in class and the paper itself must be handed in at the beginning of the next class. For example, if you choose to write one of your short papers on 'language as social and cultural capital' you will collect the paper topic when it is handed out in class on October 24th (the week when we cover this theme in class). The paper itself is due at the start of the following class (Oct 31<sup>st</sup>). I have indicated in the course overview which topics will be offered as response paper options so you can better plan your schedule.

There are three reasons why I have established this system of response papers:

1. The system is flexible in that it allows you to spread out the workload over the course of the term.
2. You can select topics about which to write that spark your interest.
3. Because the short papers are due after we have covered the topic in class, you will be able to draw upon course readings *and* class discussions as you write these papers. Keep in mind, however, that the overall purpose of these short papers is not simply to repeat what has been covered in class or in the readings; in fact little credit will be awarded if your papers are a mere regurgitation/ repetition of what has been discussed. The intent of these assignments is for you to reflect upon the

topics raised and to develop a coherent and cogent text which **extends** your thinking around this theme.

### **3. Autobiographical statement and reflection (35%, 2 parts)**

#### Part 1: Autobiography (10%)

Due during class in week 2, this autobiography is a recount of, and reflection upon, your educational experiences. The length of the autobiography should be approximately 1000-1500 words (4-6 pages of double spaced, 12 pt font writing).

#### Part 2: Reflection on autobiography (25%)

This assignment is due during the last week of class. Instructions on how to develop this will be handed out in class closer to the due date.

### **4. Assignment expectations**

All assignments must be completed and handed in by the due date. All assignments are due at the beginning of class. Late assignments will not be accepted unless prior arrangements have been made with me in exceptional cases.

Ensure that you cite sources correctly in your assignments and that you exercise academic integrity. If you are in doubt about how to cite sources correctly, or what constitutes plagiarism, please check with me. The following University of Michigan site also provides a variety of very useful resources on these subjects:

<http://www.lib.umich.edu/acadintegrity/students/index.htm>

All assignments should be typed (unless a prior arrangement has been made), double-spaced and use Times New Roman, 12-point font. Please paginate your papers and turn in printed copies only.

### **5. Grading**

The following grading scale will be used:

Grades (%)	98+	A+	87-89	B+	77-79	C+	67-69	D+
	93-97	A	83-86	B	73-76	C	63-66	D
	90-92	A-	80-82	B-	70-72	C-	60-62	D