

Syllabus for Education 392: Education in a Multicultural Society

Winter Term, 2001: Sections 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, & 8

Description of the Course

This course assists the prospective teacher to understand the forces that shape the system of schooling in the U.S., and how differences in race, gender, language, creed, and class impact this system. To the extent these forces are understood, they can, in some part, be controlled by the teacher so that he or she might realize the noble ends of education we seek for every learner.

The student successfully completing this course will be able to (1) identify the major social, political, and economic forces that shape our schools and educational practices; (2) place these forces in cultural, historical, and philosophical perspective; (3) comprehend how differences in race, culture, gender, ability, and income affect educational opportunity, and (4) identify ways to manage institutional and systemic forces so that your teaching accords with high standards of disciplinary content, social justice and educational ideals.

A critical aspect of the course is the distinction between education and schooling. Education is an ideal a society has for its children; schools are the practical manifestation of this ideal. It may happen that in the construction of schools, educational ideals are lost, ignored, or overwhelmed by other social forces. We will explore this disjunction in American schools, with special attention to discerning the obligations and opportunities of schooling in a democracy, and how certain forms of teaching and learning enhance democratic ideals, while other forms impede these ideals.

For the record, here is the official catalog description of the course: "Presents philosophy, history and sociology of American education in relation to its contemporary settings. Attends to sociopolitical contexts and to roles of technology in society and schooling. Places special emphasis on multi-cultural thought and experience in American society" [*School of Education Bulletin, 2000-02, p. 143*].

We would also like you to know that . . .

. . . we have tried to plan a course that will be instructive, useful and enjoyable. It is a course that includes quite a bit of theory, some of it fairly deep conceptually, and logically challenging as well. This course is not an effort to find answers to the question, "What do I do on Monday?" It is not a methods or techniques class. However, if you take up the course material in a serious and thoughtful way, we believe you will be a different and a better teacher for doing so.

Faculty Instructor

Gary D Fenstermacher, Professor of Education

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Office hours: To be arranged. Please feel free to make an appointment to discuss any matter pertaining to the course or to your preparation for teaching. You can set up an appointment time by seeing me before or after the Tuesday class, by email, or phone.

Graduate Student Instructors (GSIs)

Four GSIs have responsibility for the discussion sections. In addition to their responsibility for the general functioning of their respective sections, the GSIs review, comment on, and grade student work. The GSIs make grade recommendations to the instructor, who assigns the final grade for the course. The GSIs are:

Malli Holoshitz , Sections 3 & 8	Email: mallih@umich.edu
Office: 1228 SEB	Phone: 996-4743 (home)
David Johnson , Sections 4 & 5	Email: djjohnso@umich.edu
Office: 3119 SEB	Phone: 615-1392
Angus Mairs , Sections 2 & 6	Email: mairs@umich.edu
Office: 2328 SEB	Phone: 647-2244 (office)
Douglas Ready , Section 7	Email: dready@umich.edu
Office: 3119 SEB	Phone: 615-1392 (office)

Texts - required

1. Gary Fenstermacher & Jonas Soltis, *Approaches to Teaching* (3rd edition). New York: Teachers College Press, 1999. ISBN 0-8077-3809-3
2. Fred Schultz, Ed. *Annual Editions: Education, 01-02* (28th edition). Guilford, CT: McGraw-Hill/Dushkin, 2001. ISBN 0-07-243317-5.
3. Joel Spring, *The Intersection of Cultures: Multicultural Education in the United States and the Global Economy* (2nd edition). New York: Mc-Graw-Hill, 2000. ISBN 0-07-232073-7
4. David Tyack & Larry Cuban, *Tinkering Toward Utopia*. Harvard University Press, 1995. ISBN 0-674-89283-6

Texts - recommended

1. Louis Fischer, David Schimmel, Cynthia Kelly, *Teachers and the Law* (5th edition). New York: Longman. ISBN 0-8013-1958-7
2. Joan Wink, *Critical Pedagogy* (2nd edition). New York: Longman. ISBN 0-8013-3257-5.

Format for Class Meetings and Assigned Readings

Here's how the course works: Each week in the Tuesday lecture we will take up a number of key questions about education, schooling, and teaching, and how these are shaped and elaborated by culture, economy, and politics. We'll use concepts and theories from history, philosophy, sociology, and a number of other social science disciplines to gain an understanding of how culture, economy, and politics impact schooling, teaching, and learning.

The discussion sections then follow up on the ideas developed in lecture, using open exchanges between you and your GSI, and among other students. The purpose of the discussion section is to deepen and extend your grasp of the key ideas by relating them to your own experience, to the experiences of your fellow students, to the assigned readings, and to the projects you have selected. We try to keep section enrollments low because we believe it is important for you to talk in section meetings. Hearing yourself speak new ideas is an important way to gain better purchase on them; it is also a way for your fellow students to hear the range of ideas and perspectives that characterize thinking about education in the United States.

The course is divided into two parts. Part I covers the system of schooling in the

United States, including the structure of schools as institutions, the history of schooling in the United States, its financing and governance, modern educational reform initiatives, and the examination of these factors through the lenses of diversity and multiculturalism. Part II examines the nature of teaching and how it is influenced by culture, economy, and politics, as well as how notions of knowledge and morality bear on the activities of teaching.

Each week you are asked to complete assigned readings prior to the Tuesday lecture. Please be aware that we **use** the readings in the lecture and discussion; we try not to **report** on or **repeat** the content of the readings. Thus the lecture, the discussion section, and the reading are complementary; they supplement and support one another. That we might not discuss all the reading assigned for a given week in that week does **not** mean that the reading was unnecessary or unrelated.

Using UM.CourseTools

Most of the “business” of this course will be transacted on the web site for the course. We will discuss the details for accessing and using CourseTools in your discussion sections. We recommend that you get in the habit of checking the site at least twice each week. At the moment, we think that Monday afternoons and Thursday evenings will be the best times to find new material at the site.

We will also use CourseTools as a medium of communication on topics of interest, as well as to share information between and among the various discussion sections.

Assignments and Grading

In addition to the weekly reading assignments, you will have three examinations and two project assignments. The examinations are intended to assess your knowledge and understanding of lectures, discussions, and readings. The project assignments are intended to engage you in critical, reflective analysis of important issues and problems of American education.

If you attend class and keep up with the readings, you should do well on the examinations without needing much additional time to prepare for them. The three examinations, taken together, constitute approximately one-half your final grade, and the two projects constitute the other half. Please be aware that GSIs and the Instructor may, when determining the final grade, alter these allocations by as much as 20% in order to take account of your level of *constructive engagement* in the course.

What do we mean by “constructive engagement”? Constructive engagement is different from simple participation. We are not assessing how much you talk in class (although we do value your contributions to discussion), but rather how seriously and diligently you undertake the work of this course. This seriousness and diligence is manifested in such things as your record of attendance, your prompt and careful completion of tasks the GSIs request of you in preparation for the weekly section meetings, and the assistance and support you give to making the course successful for you and your fellow students.

About attendance

We regard attendance at the lectures and discussion sections as a critical part of the course, and essential to your success in the course. We make evident our commitment to this requirement by offering you an incentive for perfect attendance. If

you do not miss any lectures or discussion sections in a given examination period, you will receive a 10 point bonus on your examination grade for that period. If you miss no classes for the entire term, you will receive an additional 5 point bonus on the third examination (15 points total for the third exam). If you complete the term with no more than two absences for the entire term (lecture and discussion), we will adjust your final grade to the next highest letter grade if your final average is within four points of the higher letter grade.

Note: You are responsible for notifying your GSI that you are in attendance at each lecture session. GSIs will keep attendance for the discussion sections.

More than three absences for the term (lecture and discussion) will result in penalties to your final average.

Responsibilities and Tasks of the Student

Attend all lectures and discussion sections. If absence is unavoidable, please notify your GSI in advance, indicating reason for your absence. If you miss lecture or section, you are responsible for acquiring missed material; please arrange for a fellow student to brief you on activities, topics covered, and assignments.

Complete assignments on time. You will enjoy and gain much more from the lectures and sections if you do. Note due dates for projects.

Engage the ideas. Actively engage the materials and ideas in the course. Do this while doing the assigned reading, when conversing with colleagues and friends, and when attending this and other classes. Use section discussions to clarify confusion, raise questions, extend discussion, and open new avenues of inquiry.

Meet with your GSI. Make an appointment to see your GSI at least once within the first five weeks of the course. Get to know one another. It is especially important to keep your GSI informed if you are experiencing difficulty with the course or with life situations that are affecting the quality of your work in the course.

Exercise academic integrity. Be fair and honest in representing your work to others. Do not plagiarize, cheat, or otherwise misrepresent the fruits of your own scholarly labors. If in doubt about what constitutes plagiarism, check with instructor or GSI.

Accommodations

Should you require any adjustments from the requirements of this course as a result of religious observance, handicap, disability, or other special need, please advise the instructor or your GSI during the first week of the course so the appropriate provision can be made for you.

Class Schedule and Due Dates

Part I – The System of Schooling in U.S. Society

Note: Reading assignments are to be completed by Tuesday of the week indicated.

TU=*Tinkering Toward Utopia*

IC=*The Intersection of Cultures*, 2nd edition

AE=*Annual Editions: Education 01/02*

AT=*Approaches to Teaching*, 3rd edition

1. Jan 9

Topic: Introductions, Preview of Course, Pre-Assessment,

Questions: What is this course about? Why are you required to take it?

What will you gain from it? How can you help make it successful?

Reading: None

2. Jan 16

Topic: The System of Schooling in the United States

Questions: What are schools? What do they do? How do they work? Do they educate? Do they benefit some more than others?

Reading: **TU**, pp. 1-39; **IC**, chap. 1

3. Jan 23

Topic: The Evolution of Schooling in the U.S. – Part I

Questions: How did we get the schools we have? What social, political, and economic forces had the greatest impact on the formation of our schools? Does the past influence what we do today and tomorrow?

Reading: **TU** pp. 40-109; **IC**, chap. 2

4. Jan 30

Topic: The Evolution of Schooling in the U.S. – Part II

Questions: How did mass, popular, common schooling come into existence?

Who pressed most strongly for it, and why? Who were the winners and the losers in this emerging system of schooling?

Reading: **TU**, pp. 110-142; **IC**, chaps. 3 & 4

5. Feb 6

Topic: Financing, Governing and Managing Public Schools

Questions: Who runs our schools? By what means? To what ends? Who pays for our schools and what effects follow from such financing?

Reading: **AE**, articles 17, 18, 19, then 5; **IC** chap. 5

Alert: First Examination takes place this week // Attendance period 1 ends 2/9

6. Feb 13

Topic: Selected Reform Initiatives in American Education: Accountability, Testing, Standards, Charters, Vouchers, and Contracting

Questions: How is schooling in America changing? Who is pressing the change agenda, and why? Who wins and loses as a result of such change? Is public schooling dying in America?

Reading: **AE**, articles in this order: 9, 8, 27, 7, and 3; review relevant sections in **TU**.

7. Feb 20

Topic: The Role of Education and Schooling in Democratic Society

Questions: How do notions of public and private impact the advancement of democratic ideals? What responsibilities for democratic nationhood are borne by schools, whether public or private? What is the role of subject matter instruction in the preservation and advancement of democracy?

Reading: **AE**, articles 6 and 1; Article by Gary Fenstermacher on Public and Private, available at his web site or on CourseTools.

Alert: First project due to your GSI by noon Friday, 2/23

K Feb 27 – Winter Break | No class

Part II – The Nature of Teaching and the System of Schooling

8. Mar 6

Topic: Recapitulation of Part I and Introduction to Part II

Questions: What happened in those first seven weeks of this course?

Reading: **AE**, article 30; **IC**, review chap. 5, read chap.6

9. Mar 13

Topic: Pedagogically Relevant Differences: Culture, Race, Class, Gender, Sexual Orientation, Disability, and Special Needs

Questions: What differences among human beings are relevant to what is taught, how, and to whom? How do pedagogically relevant differences impact the ways people form their identities?

Reading: **IC**, chap. 7; **AE**, articles 21, 22, 24, 26, and 2

10. Mar 20

Topic: The Nature of Knowledge and the School Curriculum

Questions: What knowledge is of most worth? Who decides?

Is knowledge controlled by and selectively distributed in schools?

Reading: **AE**, articles 34, 20, 11, & 10; **IC**, chap. 8

Alert: Second Examination this week // Attendance period 2 ends 3/23

11. Mar 27

Topic: The Teacher's Role in Fostering Moral Development

Questions: Do teachers have an impact on the moral development of the young? Should they? If so, how do they do this without crossing the church-state line? Are there ideologically neutral approaches to moral education?

Reading: **AE**, articles 12, 13, 14, 15, & 16; **IC** chap. 9

12. Apr 3

Topic: Approaches to Teaching, Part I: Executive and Fostering

Questions: Is it more than personality that makes teachers different from one another? What does teaching look like when guided by high educational ideals? Who chooses these ideals, and what makes them ideal? Do differences in students call for differences in teaching?

Reading: **AT** chaps. 1, 2, & 3, review cases connected to these chapters; **IC** chap. 10

13. Apr 10

Topic: Approaches to Teaching, Part II: Classical and Critical Liberation

Questions: Should schooling enable the student to function well in existing society, or enable the student to change, perhaps revolutionize, existing society? Is liberationist pedagogy defensible in democratic society? If so, how is it done?

Reading: **AT** chaps. 4, 5, & 6, review cases connected to chapters ; **IC** chap. 11

Alert: Second project due to GSI by noon Friday, 4/13

14. Apr 17

Topic: Bringing it all together, and bringing it all to an end

Questions: What does it take to be a fabulous teacher? What does the kind of school you teach in have to do with how good you are?

Reading: **AE** articles 28, 29, 32, & 35; **IC** chap. 12

Alert: Third Examination takes place this week // Attendance Period 3 ends 4/17

A portion of the time in this last class will be set aside for the post-assessment inventory and the course and instructor evaluation.

A parting thought: We hope you enjoyed the class, and gained from your participation in it. We wish you a great summer, filled with growth, good times, and good memories of your work in Education 392.

PROJECTS

Select one project for Part I of the course, and a second project for Part II. You must select a Project from this list. You will be requested to turn in updates on the progress you are making towards completion of your selected projects. Your GSI will advise you of his or her procedures for reporting progress on the projects.

Normally project work consists of a finished paper, six to eight double-spaced pages in length (1500 to 2000 words), excluding references. The text must be coherent, cogent, and substantive (that is, it must be well-reasoned, tightly constructed, and say something of merit). You will receive a guide to what we look for when grading these papers.

Project Selections for Part I of the Course

1. **Popular Culture** - Analyze the depiction of American schools and teachers in the popular media (newspapers, news magazines, film, radio, and television). Look carefully at what is portrayed as right and wrong about schools, teachers, administrators and students. Examine what is represented and what is ignored or impugned. Draw connections with the discussions in *Tinkering Toward Utopia*. Develop a theory for what is taking place in these media, providing disciplinary grounding for your theoretical perspective. Pay particular attention to stereotyping (with regard to gender, race, ethnicity, handicap or disability).

2. **Achievement Gap** -- The “achievement gap” typically refers to achievement differences between students of different racial or ethnic backgrounds. In the upper Midwest, the gap applies to achievement differences between black and white students, especially those students in similar socio-economic classes. Describe and analyze this gap, with attention to how it is manifest in Ann Arbor schools. Indicate what you believe are the most likely contemporary causes of this gap, and how it might more effectively be addressed.

3. **Charter Schools and Voucher Initiatives** -- Charter schools and vouchers are two of the current reform initiatives being discussed by educational policy makers at state and national levels. Describe these two initiatives, distinguishing as carefully as possible between them. Consider who is promoting these initiatives, and for what reasons. Who are the likely beneficiaries if these initiatives succeed? Who are the likely losers if these initiatives succeed? Consider whether America’s historical commitment to common, public schooling is in retreat, and whether privatized schooling is the wave of the future.

4. **Testing and Assessment** – There is an increasing emphasis in education on accountability, in an effort to ensure that students learn what they are supposed to learn. Three of the key ideas in this area are standardized testing, high stakes tests, and content area standards. Explain these ideas in some depth and indicate how they are connected to the notion of accountability. Examine the State of Michigan’s approach to accountability and testing. Determine whether these approaches to accountability have a differential impact on students depending upon culture, race, or family income. Conclude with your reasoned position on this topic.

Project Selections for Part II of the Course

1. **Moral Education** – Education is often believed to have a moral as well as an intellectual component. That is, it has long been assumed that a key purpose of education is to assist the young to become morally good, as well as proficient at reading, writing, and arithmetic. Is this moral development an appropriate goal for public or private schools in the U.S.? What role, if any, does the teacher play in the moral education of his or her students? How does the teacher perform this role, and how is it determined that the teacher has done well or poorly in such performance?

2. **Critical Pedagogy** – What is “critical pedagogy”? Who are its advocates, and what ideological convictions do they share? What connections might be drawn between critical pedagogy and democratic ideals, and between critical pedagogy and diversity or multiculturalism? Do you believe you have had a teacher who practices critical pedagogy? If so, what makes you think so? If not, why do you think that is so? What is your sense of how much (or little) of a critical pedagogue you would be as a teacher? Explain your position.

3. **Your Approach to Teaching** – Of the three approaches to teaching described by Fenstermacher and Soltis, which one are you most likely to assume or be comfortable with? Why? Explain the psychological and philosophical basis for your position. Cite additional authorities to strengthen or buttress the position you are taking. What or who constitutes the opposition to your position, and how compelling do you regard their arguments?

4. **The Demands and Opportunities of Diversity for Teaching** – What does diversity or multiculturalism require of you as a teacher? On what grounds do you make these claims; i.e., what theoretical and conceptual position are you taking on the concepts of diversity and multiculturalism (you may treat the two as equivalent for purposes of this project)? What authorities can you cite in defense of your position(s)? What arguments can be lodged against the position you are taking? Is the position you are taking here different from the position you would have taken three months ago? Why or why not?

Section Roster for Education 392

Section 1 - Lecture	Tu	1 - 2:30	Schorling	G. Fenstermacher
Section 2 - Discussion	W	1-2:30	2218	Angus Mairs
Section 3 - Discussion	W	1-2:30	2214	Malli Holoshitz
Section 10 Discussion	W	1-2:30	2224	Doug Ready
Section 4 - Discussion	W	7-8:30	2214	Dave Johnson
Section 5 - Discussion	Th	1-2:30	2214	Dave Johnson
Section 6 - Discussion	Th	1-2:30	2224	Angus Mairs
Section 7 - Discussion	Th	1-2:30	2232	Doug Ready
Section 8 - Discussion	F	10-11:30	2214	Malli Holoshitz