

UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS/Boston
Graduate College of Education
EDLDRS 720: Teaching, Learning and Curriculum in Urban Contexts
Course Syllabus

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Course Description:

This required course investigates common concerns in addressing the needs of urban students in elementary and secondary learning environments and community settings. It considers questions of human development in several domains, current problems and controversies about learning, and responsive curricula and pedagogies. Readings frame issues across age groups and educational contexts, with additional materials for each topic focusing on particular age groups and levels of schooling.

Course Goals:

The goals of this course are to provide students with background understandings and approaches to further explore issues of teaching, learning and curriculum in urban contexts. Course content is appropriate to this stage of scholarly work toward the doctorate and involves an introduction/overview of relevant literature for teaching, learning and curriculum as well as the development of a conceptual framework that may serve as the basis for further inquiry; a deepened understanding of qualitative methods as applied to particular problems and questions; and the situating of the evolving structure, policies, and practices concerning teaching, learning and curriculum in urban settings. In addition, students will examine existing practice in their own professional workplace using theoretical perspectives and constructs, laying the conceptual groundwork for making curricular and pedagogical decisions, possibilities, and choices.

Course Relationship to the Professional Education Unit's Conceptual Framework:

At UMASS/Boston, all courses that provide professional education for educators are intended to prepare thoughtful and responsive educators who demonstrate appropriate commitments, understandings, and practices. Commitments include understanding and practicing ethical behaviors, engaging in life-long learning, maintaining a dedication to serve others, and understanding and engaging in modeling and mentoring.

Understandings include knowledge of relevant content, understanding of theory and practice about relevant pedagogy, understanding of assessment, and the integration of media in educational practice. Practices include those associated with the ethic of care – creating nurturing and safe environments and respecting individual learners; working collaboratively with students, parents, colleagues and administrators, being reflective about one's own professional practices, and working in ways that will promote social justice. Reflection and inquiry are the cornerstones of this course.

Course Requirements:

This course is designed to engage students in ongoing inquiry that will further both scholarly and professional understandings. Students are expected to develop a qualitative case study in stages which identifies learning, teaching and curricular issues within or drawn from their workplace context. The final report of your study must include the following components:

- a problem statement
- a review of literature that places your case study in the context of key research in the field and establishes a conceptual framework that is relevant to the issues that you are investigating
- a critical review of curricular/pedagogical practice in your professional setting that frames the work of your case study
- a discussion of methods
- an analysis of data
- a discussion of what you learned and how it contributes to an expands existing understandings.

To meet this end, students are expected to participate in class – singly, in pairs, or in teams to promote teaching and learning and engage in all reading and writing assignments which are building blocks for the qualitative aspects of fieldwork related to this course.

Assessment:

This course is designed so that work is cumulative and provides a basis for class examination and discussion. You are required to carry out an extended study (similar to a pilot study for a qualifying paper) as the final project for this course. This study will be generative and will take shape through several aspects of your ongoing work including in-class problem-posing and weekly guided inquiries calling for focused observation, analysis, reflection on readings, theoretical application, and synthesis. Attendance is mandatory in order for us to work as a caring community of learners and teachers. If an absence is required, please contact Professor Patmon prior to the beginning of class.

To receive an A or B in this class you must actively engage in all class discussions and complete all work, including all informal weekly assignments, a formal midterm progress report, and the formal final case study.

Grade Breakdown:

Class Participation – 30%

Weekly Assignments – 20%

Mid-Term Progress Report – 20%

Final Study – 30%

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Required Readings:

Glatthorn, A., F. Obschee & B. Whitehead. 2006. Curriculum Leadership: Development and Implementation. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage

Jarvis, P. & J. Holford (eds.). 2003. The Theory and Practice of Learning, 2nd Edition. NY: Routledge

Jarvis, P. (ed.). 2001. The Theory and Practice of Teaching. NY: Routledge

In-Class Hand-Outs

Recommended Texts:

Comber, B. & A. Simpson. 2001. Negotiating Critical Literacies in Classrooms. NJ: Erlbaum

Duckworth, E. 1996. The Having of Wonderful Ideas and Other Essays on Teaching and Learning. NY: Teachers College Press

Giroux, H. 2006. Border Crossings: Cultural Workers and the Politics of Education, 2nd Edition. NY: Routledge

Marsh, C. 2004. Key Concepts for Understanding Curriculum, 3rd Edition. NY: Routledge

Mohr, M. et al. 2004. Teacher Research for Better Schools. NY: Teachers College Press and Berkeley, CA: National Writing Project

Perrin, R. 2006. Pocket Guide to APA Style, 2nd Edition. Boston: Houghton Mifflin

Sunstein, B. & E. Chiseri-Strater. 2002. Fieldworking: Reading and Writing Research, 2nd Edition. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's Press

Accommodations:

Section 504 and the American with Disabilities Act of 1990 offer guidelines for curriculum modifications and adaptations for students with documented disabilities. If applicable, students may obtain adaptation recommendations from the Ross Center (287-7430). The student must present and discuss these recommendations to each professor within a reasonable period, preferably by the end of the Drop/Add period.

Students are required to adhere to the Code of Student Conduct, including requirements for academic honesty, delineated in the UMASS/Boston Graduate Studies Bulletin and Education (EdD) program student handbook.

THIS SYLLBUS IS SUBJECT TO CHANGE.

Class Sessions:

- #1 (9/4) Teaching/Learning/Curriculum Odyssey – Self Study
- Building Community
 - “The First Day,” E. Jones – Reading/Jigsaw Activity
 - Case Exploration

Assignment: Draft a narrative of your teaching/learning/curriculum odyssey. Read Jarvis, TP of Learning.

Key Questions: What is your prior knowledge of teaching, learning and curriculum? How can this course build on this prior knowledge in urban contexts? What cultural lens do you bring to your context?

- #2 (9/11) On Looking and Looking Again/Ethnography
- Case Methodology – Overview
 - Purpose of Education/Urban Contexts
 - Learning Theory Overview
 - Debrief personal narrative – writing response groups

Assignment: Make preliminary observations of your potential case study. Observe the setting in which you’ll be carrying out your study. Peek in rooms, look at language use, watch the activity throughout the setting, on the playground or in the corridors. Look deeply at the teachers’ lounge, administrative offices, before and after school. Using a double entry notebook format, in one column record as much as possible of what you notice about the environment, artifacts, students’/adults’ behaviors, interactions and topics of conversations, etc. In the other column, reflect on what you’ve seen, make connections to the readings, ask questions, make notes for things to continue to observe. Write up a preliminary account of this work - for use in your study. Integrate aspects of your personal narrative into this account. What do you observe? What is the mission statement of this environment? Bring it to class next week. Read Jarvis, TP of Learning.

Key Questions: How does the culture of this setting manifest itself in teaching/learning/classroom practice? Who are the students, teachers and administrators in this environment? What is the typical learning style and communication in this setting?

- #3 (9/18) On Learning, Language & Cultural World of Learners
- Multiple Frames for Knowing/Learning
 - Cross-Cultural Activity
 - Preliminary observations – debriefing
 - Cognitive Coaching – Distilling Activity/Small Groups

Assignment: Look closely at the learners in this setting. Who are they? What do you observe as signs of social class identities, cultural and racial identities, linguistic backgrounds or other aspects of their identities? How would you describe their patterns of behavior? How are these identities brought into the classroom/learning setting? Include these observations in your study. Read Jarvis, TP of Learning.

Key Questions: What are the primary learning styles of students in this setting?

Key Questions: How does the environment meet the needs of diverse learners? What learning theory(ies) prevail?

- #4 (9/25) Interpretive Circle Sign-Up Sheet
Learning Theory
Review of Research
Discipline Based Studies
Case Study Sharing
On Fieldworking – I (Collecting Research)

Assignment: What theories of learning seem to be represented in the settings you observe? What are the teachers' perspectives about learning? Administrators' perspectives? Parental perspectives? Community perspectives? What is your perspective? What evidence is there of the ways in which the students are learning? Finish Jarvis TP of Learning.

Key Questions: What specifically in the readings help to explain what you see? What learning theory best frames your study?

- #5 (10/2) Abiel Smith School Visit
46 Joy Street, Boston (Beacon Hill)
L'Merchie Frazier, Director of Education, Guest Presenter

Assignment: What theories of learning were present in the 19th century Black community in Boston as uncovered in this site visit? What new learnings/insights do you have as a result of this visit? What historical questions do you have about teaching, learning and curriculum in 19th century Boston? Read Glatthorn Part I – Foundations of Curriculum

Key Questions: How might historical research support your case study? What is the historical urban context of the environment which you are now studying?

- #6 (10/9) On Curriculum – What is it and why is it?
Historical Overview
Curriculum in the 19th century African-American Community
Debrief Abiel Smith School visit
Patmon's Maxims

Assignment: What theories of curriculum are operating at the environment of your case study? What assumptions about curriculum and learning are evident? What assumptions about curriculum and teaching are evident? Which theory of curriculum guides your practice? Explain. Read Glatthorn Part II (Curriculum Processes & Part III (Curriculum Management) Key Questions: How is curriculum manifested in an urban context? What is the urban community relationship to curriculum?

- #7 (10/16) On Curriculum – Current Successes and Tensions in Urban Schools
Standards and Assessment I
Case Study Probe – Cubing Exercise
Fieldworking II – Coding Data

Assignment: Prepare for Interpretive Circle Exercise. Draft case study proposal. What is the assessment context for your setting? How are expectations for student performance set and how is this performance measured? At this point you want to get the fullest picture possible of the impact the learner's community has on him/her outside of school. What discourse practices and extra-curriculum activities does the learner participate? To get a full profile of the learner's extra-curriculum activities, what would have to be done/included? What connections are made with these ways in the classroom? What are the adults'/teachers' discourse communities and practices?

Key Questions: What question is emerging from your observations and learnings thus far this semester? Why does this particular probe interest you? Identify your problem statement. What do major studies in the field suggest about this issue/phenomenon?

#8 (10/23) Interpretive Circle – Individual Presentation/Feedback/Guidance

Assignment: Review the research about your topic. Read former doctoral dissertation research reviews. Compose your literature review.

#9 (10/30) Interpretive Circle – Individual Presentation/Feedback/Guidance
Conference with Dr. Patmon

Assignment: Complete your literature review. Read Jarvis, TP of Teaching. Prepare your mid-term progress report – DUE 11/6. Read Patmon's "Learning While Black" – hand-out

#10 (11/6) Mid-Term Progress Report - Collected
Pedagogy for Liberation
Multiple Faces of One's Professional Context
Endo's Face Theory
Fieldworking III – Data Analysis

Assignment: Read Jarvis, TP of Teaching. What assumptions about teaching seem to be in place at your setting? What theories of teaching are manifested in your case study?

What specifically in the readings helps to explain what you are investigating?

Key Questions: What method of data collection have you employed? Why? What does your data suggest at this point? How do cultural difference, race, class and language impact teaching in this environment?

#11 (11/13) Critical Theory
Teacher Expectations and Professional Roles
Teaching in Urban Contexts
Construction of Knowledge
From Risk to Resilience
Resiliency Theory MTEL
Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks

Assignment: Continue to collect and interpret your data. Finish Jarvis, TP of Teaching.

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Key Question: What are the social-psychological factors (shaping an identity, dealing with issues of authority and dominance/submission, defining one's personhood with reference to intersecting roles and cultures within society, dealing with age-appropriate concerns that are significant within the past and current experience of the learner/learners both inside and outside of the learning environment?)

#12 (11/20) Individual Conferences with Dr. Patmon

Assignment: Continue to collect and analyze your data.

Key Questions: Macro-sociology and school curriculum and learning suggest that social forces at the macro-level such as structural inequality, impact the curriculum and the response of learners at the classroom level. Is the structural inequality of society reproduced in school structures? in the environment of your study? in differentiated curriculum? in the nexus of the school culture and students' cultures? Are larger social forces acknowledged or addressed within the school curriculum, teaching exchange or classroom activities? How do the learners in your study place themselves in relation to the dominant culture? the school culture? the culture of the community? What are their experiences and expectations about their opportunities and possibilities within the larger society? How does resiliency theory operate in the context of your case study?

#13 (11/27) Individual Conferences with Dr. Patmon

Assignment: Prepare the final draft of your study. Prepare for your presentation.

Key Question: How are knowledge and the relationship of teacher/learner and learner/learner constructed in classroom practices, classroom discourse, assignments, responses to writing, etc.? To what degree can the work in this environment and the position of the learner be seen in terms of larger social/cultural/racial institutional relationships and are these questioned or examined in any explicit way?

#14 (12/4) Case Study Presentations

#15 (12/11) Case Study Presentations

Final case studies are due – Submit a self addressed stamped envelope for the return of your work

ALL WORK WILL BE PLACED IN THE LIUS/LIE OFFICE IF DR. PATMON IS NOT PROVIDED WITH A SELF ADDRESSED STAMPED ENVELOPE.

Best Wishes! Happy Holidays!

