EDL 621 FOUNDATIONS OF MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP
MIAMI UNIVERSITY
Spring, 2002

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529-6843 (w)
Office Hours:
Class meeting: Tuesday, 4-6:40

Overview of the Course:

"The answer to all our national problems comes down to a single word: education."
Lyndon B. Johnson

"For every complex problem there is a simple answer-- and it’s wrong."
H.L. Mencken

The issue of "multiculturalism" is one that permeates our contemporary society-- whether it be hiring practices, artistic evaluations, intellectual and cultural judgements, or teaching and learning. In all the discussions, there is little agreement about what “multiculturalism” is or what we should do about cultural difference. In no arena is the debate about multiculturalism more contentious than in education: How should we educate children for a culturally diverse society? How should we organize and operate schools given the cultural diversity of schools and communities? Is multicultural education simply a new curriculum that includes the experiences of multiple cultures, and if so, how does a "group" qualify as one of those cultures? Does multicultural education also require structural changes in teaching and classroom organization as well as curriculum content? Should multicultural education be designed to foster “appreciation” of other cultures or to instigate anti-racist and anti-bigotted actions?

This course introduces students to foundational issues in multiculturalism in American society and education. We begin by investigating the meaning and construction of "multiculturalism" as a social and historical phenomenon in American society. How do we conceive of cultural difference in this society? Do we have a problem with cultural difference and if so, what is the nature of that problem? Next, we investigate issues of cultural difference inside contemporary schools and try to understand the ways in which cultural inequalities happen inside the American educational system. What is the experience of racism in American schools? What structures reinforce racism, intentionally or unintentionally? What is the impact of difference-- racial, cultural, linguistic, gender or ability difference-- on childrens’ experience of school and on school achievement? Finally, we survey some practices of anti-racism and supportive multicultural environments that we can introduce to our schools to help develop the abilities of all students.

Note that this is not a class in how to teach or design multicultural curriculum, but rather, a class where we will explore the broader social and historical issues around multiculturalism, survey some studies on multicultural challenges in schools, and explore some approaches to change.
How the Class is Organized:

1. News items
   Multicultural issues are constantly in the news, but we don’t often pay attention to them, and we less often look critically at the news—how the news story is constructed and what normative values and assumptions are embedded in it. Where are issues of cultural difference discussed and how are they presented? Whose interests are served?
   Students are expected to survey the media on a regular basis for stories of interest on current multicultural issues related to education. Bring relevant clippings or reports to class and be ready to summarize the news item and its major issues in the following format:
   -- What is the stated issue?
   -- What is the author’s perspective?
   -- Do you agree/disagree or have an opinion?

   The first ten to twenty minutes of each class will be allocated for these reports and discussions. This is an informal discussion session, designed to orient the class toward current and on-going issues and to encourage debate.

2. Response papers
   Every student will write 3 response papers on 3 readings of your choice. Each response paper should be 1-2 pages long and should include
   1) a short synopsis of the main points and arguments of the reading
   2) your response/reaction to the reading.
   The response papers should be somewhat informal (although still legible, please, and preferably typed!), and should consist of your own reflections on the reading, and the meaning that you have made of it, possibly by connecting the reading with your own work, other course work, or other ideas. You can include your own questions, frustrations, concerns, and ideas.
   Response papers are graded Pass/Fail.

3. Article Review
   Each student will read and present upon one additional research article, chosen from the list on the syllabus, and due on the day that the related topic is to be discussed. Ideally, there will be only one presentation each class, with a maximum of two presentations a class.
   With each reading, students must write a short (4-5 pp.) review essay that:

   1. identifies the topic of the article: what is it about?
   2. identifies the thesis argument: what is the author trying to prove?
   3. describes the content: background, story, main points, evidence.
   4. discusses the methodology or historiography: How does the author choose and use the data to construct his/her argument? What kinds of sources are used or not used? How is the data interpreted?
   5. evaluates the articles: Is the argument effective, interesting, thought provoking? Why or why not?
   6. identifies significant and relevant issues: Why might this article be important for contemporary educators to read?

   Students present their understanding of the reading to the class in an oral presentation (maximum length, ten minutes) and provide the following:
   1. a one paragraph abstract of the article
   2. two questions for the class to consider in discussion led by the presenter
4. Movie Review

Due date: Any time before.
In groups of three, watch one of the following movies together and write a 5-6 page paper -- either individually or as a group -- that does the following:

1. An analytic reading that describes the main storyline, plot, and content of the movie (what was the film about?) and discusses how “difference” was presented in the movie. What was the movie’s "thesis" about cultural difference? How did the filmmakers articulate or support that thesis? You might think not only about the story line here, but other devices used by the filmmaker to get the point across-- for example imagery, visual moods, symbolism, characterizations, humor or tragedy.

2. An interpretive reading that establishes the historical and cultural context of the movie. When and where was the film made? How did this historical and cultural context shape the making of the film and its reception?

3. A normative reading that identifies the values and normative assumptions of the filmmakers and of you, the viewer. What do we know about the values and normative assumptions of the filmmaker or producer? How do those normative values compare to your own normative values that you bring to the film? What values and assumptions did you bring to the movie?

4. Whether in group or individual papers, include in your paper any opposing viewpoints or discussion points raised in your group viewing of the film. How might this film be viewed by somebody differently than you? How and why do you disagree with those points?

Films can be chosen from the following list:

FILMS
Rosewood (1997)
Mississippi Masala (1992)
The Wedding Banquet (1993)
Guess Who’s Coming to Dinner? (1967)
A Family Thing (1996)
The Joy Luck Club (1993)
Philadelphia (1994)
To Kill a Mockingbird (1962)
Do the Right Thing (1989)
Little Big Man (1970)
Jungle Fever (1991)
Watermelon Man (1970)

5. Final Exam:
This will be a take home exam due. We will write the exact question together, with the objective of the exam being a synthesis and analysis of at least five of the major readings from the class.
6. **Class Participation** will be evaluated on the following basis:

A letter grade will be assigned to each student's overall participation in the course. This grade derives from the **quality** rather than the absolute **quantity** of participation. Signs of excellent participation include listening and responding to other's ideas, preparing for class by reading and reflecting on the assignments, and taking a leading role in sharing both insights and questions for the entire class discussion group. Signs of good participation include coming prepared to class and participating in the discussion generated by others. Poor participation includes failure to prepare for class, and refusal to join in discussion with the class. Please note that this class is a group effort, and the contribution toward furthering the full understanding of that group is as, if not more, important than simply presenting information.

Participation also includes attendance in class, and repeated (more than one) absences will detrimentally affect this grade (minus one-half grade for each class missed). If you must miss more than one class, let me know in advance (if possible) and at my discretion, we might be able to negotiate a make-up assignment (usually a 3-4 page free write response to the readings assigned for that class).

**Evaluation**

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<tr>
<td>Response Papers</td>
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100%

**Texts:**


EDL 621 COURSE OUTLINE

1. Tuesday January 8  Introductions

THEME 1 MULTICULTURALISM AS A HISTORICAL AND SOCIAL PHENOMENON IN AMERICA

2. Tuesday January 15  What is Multicultural Education?
What do we come to this work with?
Due today: “Ideology, Policy & Practice in your Own Education” Worksheet (handout)
                 Nitza M. Hidalgo, “Multicultural Teacher Introspection” (handout)

3. Tuesday January 22  Multicultural Education and Democratic Education
What are the problems and promises of multicultural education?
Due today: Gates, Lee, & Derman-Sparks articles, Rethinking Schools, p. 5-22
                      1/2 class read: Jacquelyn Mitchell, “Reflections of a Black Social Scientist,” (Facing Racism)
                      1/2 class read: Maria de la Luz Reyes & John J. Halcon, “Racism in Academia,” (Facing Racism)

4. Tuesday January 29  Rethinking the History of American Schooling
What are some historical themes about multicultural education?
Due today: David Wallace Adams, “Fundamental Considerations: The Deep Meaning of Native American Schooling, 1880-1900,” (Facing Racism)
                      Emilie V. Siddle Walker, “Caswell County Training School, 1933-1969: Relationships Between Community and School” (Facing Racism)

Article review
David B. Tyack, "Historical Reflections on Schooling and Social Diversity," Teachers College Record 95 (Fall 1993).

Daniel Perlstein, "Community and Democracy in American Education: Arthurdale and the Fate of Progressive Education," Teachers College Record 97 (Summer 1996)


THEME 2   CULTURAL DIFFERENCE INSIDE CONTEMPORARY SCHOOLS

5. Tuesday February 5     Different Conceptions of Schooling and Culture

How do some different cultures perceive schooling as different from others?

Due today:

Carol Locust, "Wounding the Spirit: Discrimination and Traditional American Indian Belief Systems" (Facing Racism)
Lisa Delpit, “The Silenced Dialogue” (Facing Racism)
Recommended: “Teachers, Culture and Power,” An Interview with Lisa Delpit (Rethinking Schools)

Article review

Julie Kailin, "How White Teachers Perceive the Problem of Racism in Their Schools: A Case Study in "Liberal" Lakeview," Teachers College Record 100 (Summer 1999)


Cultural Issues and Their Impact on Learning, Part 1

How do cultural differences impact teaching and learning?

Due today:

Janie V. Ward, “Cultivating a Morality of Care in African American Adolescents: A Culture-Based Model of Violence Prevention” (Facing Racism)

Article review:

David C. Berliner, "Educational Psychology Meets the Christian Right: Differing Views of Children, Schooling, Teaching, and Learning," Teachers College Record 98 (Spring 1997).


Tuesday February 19 : NO CLASS (Monday/Tuesday Switch Day)
7. Tuesday February 26  Cultural Issues and Their Impact on Learning, Part 2
How do cultural differences impact teaching and learning?
Due today:
  Jim Cummins, “Empowering Minority Students: A Framework for Intervention” (Facing Racism)

Article review
  Arlette Ingram Willis, “Reading the World of School Literacy: Contextualizing the Experience of a Young African American Male,” (Facing Racism)


8. Tuesday March 5   Cultural Issues and Their Impact on Learning,
Part 3
How do cultural differences impact teaching and learning?
Due today:
   Beverly McElroy-Johnson, “Giving Voice to the Voiceless” (Facing Racism)
   Beverly Daniel Tatum, “Talking About Race, Learning About Racism: The
   Application of Racial Identity Theory in the Classroom” (Facing Racism)

Article review
   Brian M. McCadden, “Why is Michael Always Getting Timed Out? Race, Class,
   and the Disciplining of Other Peoples’ Children” in Ronald E. Butchart and Barbara
   McEwan, eds., Classroom Discipline in American Schools (SUNY, 1998)

   Javier Tapia, “Schooling and Learning in U.S.-Mexican Families: A Case Study of
   Households,” The Urban Review 32 (March 2000)

   Ricardo Otheguy, “Thinking About Bilingual Education: A Critical Appraisal,”

   Stacey J. Lee, “Behind the Model-Minority Stereotype: Voices of High and Low

   Donna B. Jeffe, "About Girls' 'Difficulties’ in Science: A Social, Not a Personal,
   Matter," Teachers College Record 97 (Winter, 1995)

Tuesday March 12   NO CLASS (Spring Break)
THEME 3: MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION & POLICY

9. Tuesday March 19  Gender & Sexuality and the Impact on Learning

How do gender and sexuality differences impact teaching and learning?

Due today:


Article review


Virginia Casper et al., "Breaking the Silences: Lesbian and Gay Parents and the Schools," Teachers College Record 94 (Fall 1992).


Heather Kirkpatrick and Larry Cuban, ” Should We Be Worried? What the Research Says about Gender Differences in Access, Use, Attitudes, and Achievement with Computers. Educational Technology 38 (July-August 1998).

10 Tuesday March 26  Policy and Practice
Due today:  1/2 class:  in Rethinking Schools, “Beyond the Classroom”
           1/2 class: in Rethinking Schools, “Building a Community: Teachers, Students, and Parents”

Article review

  Katherine Schultz, “Constructing Failure, Narrating Success: Rethinking the “Problem” of Teen Pregnancy,” Teachers College Record 103 (August 2001)


Tuesday April 2:  NO CLASS

11. Tuesday April 9  Curriculum
Due today:
  David Levine, “Building a Vision of Curricular Reform,” (Rethinking Schools)

Article review


  Marilyn Cochran-Smith, “Uncertain Allies: Understanding the Boundaries of Race and Teaching” (Facing Racism)

  Dennis Carlson, "Gayness, Multicultural Education, and Community” in Educational Foundations (Fall 1994).
12. **Tuesday April 16**  
**Progressive Practices in and with Curriculum**

**Due today:** In small groups or individually, read and report to the class on one of the following:

- Selections from *Rethinking Schools* newspaper (available from me)
  
  

Bill Bigelow, “Discovering Columbus” and Susan Shown Harjo, “We Have No Reason to Celebrate an Invasion,” (*Rethinking Schools*)


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13. **Tuesday April 23**  
**Last class**

final exam due

(informal) presentation of movie reviews

course evaluations