

Urban Scholars Seminar

Fall Semester, 2018

Thursdays, 4:15-5:50pm
5140 Posvar Hall

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This syllabus is a **living document**, and is subject to change given the needs/interests of participating students.

Overview:

The Urban Scholars seminar is a two-part series which provides a deep dive into some of the most salient issues of teaching in urban schools including the effects of systemic racism and socio-economic marginalization. These seminars are designed to prepare teachers for the essential and arduous task of teaching towards equity, social justice, and the interruption of cycles of oppression.

The first step of becoming an equity and justice oriented educator is self-reflection and perspective development. To that end, in the fall, we will begin with an examination of identity, our own as well as a lens through which to see and understand our students in personal and contextualized ways. We will also focus on the ways in which power, privilege, and White supremacy function in and through educational institutions. This will serve as a foundation for the spring seminar, during which we will develop pedagogical practices that; facilitate meaningful and loving relationships; represent and sustain our students cultural identities, maintain academic rigor, and cultivate our and our students' critical consciousness. To be clear, we will start broad during the first semester and then spend the second semester specifically developing tangible practices for the classroom.

In addition, this course will develop in response to the needs and interests of participating students. I am here as a resource to you both in seminar and in your classroom. Please let me know what you need to participate in and facilitate meaningful learning in seminar and in your placements.

Structure of Class:

Classes will incorporate discussions of important topics in urban education, but we will also have time each session for conversations about placement specific issues, successes and concerns. We will begin and end each class with 5 minutes of reflective writing. Please come to each session ready to engage in such dialogue in an open, honest, self-reflective, and authentic way.

Students should expect about an hour of additional reading/listening/watching each week. In addition, once a month, you will be engaging in a cultural immersion experience in your student'/school's community (i.e. students' sports event, cultural festival, religious ceremony, school celebration).

Class Norms*:

- **Engage, explore, express your thoughts:** Deep learning and growth will only work if we allow ourselves to be vulnerable and honest.
- **Critique ideas, not people:** This is a space for learning, all of us are in the process of growing.
- **Allow space for intellect and emotion:** This is a matter of life and death for some people.
- **Strive for intellectual humility:** You don't know what you don't know
- **Seek knowledge and understanding:** Explore and analyze anecdotal experiences, but also be willing to let go of personal anecdotal evidence and look at broader societal patterns. Everyone has an opinion. Opinions are not the same as informed knowledge.
- **Share the space:** Step up, step back. Recognize how your social positionality (such as your own race, class, gender, sexuality, ability-status) informs your reactions to and engagement with your instructor, each other, your students, and colleagues.
- **Be open to discomfort.** Change comes from disequilibrium. Notice any of your own defensive reactions, and attempt to use any of these reactions as entry points for gaining deeper self-knowledge.**

**Adapted from Sensoy & Diangelo, 2012

Course Details: Alternating Thursdays 4:15-5:55

Fall Sessions: 9/6; 9/20; 10/4; 10/18; 11/1; 11/15; 12/6

Spring Sessions: TBD

Optional Sessions: There will be an optional Saturday workshop each semester as well as many relevant CUE events.

Texts:

- Sensoy, O., & DiAngelo, R. (2017). *Is everyone really equal?: An introduction to key concepts in social justice education*. Teachers College Press**

**You may want to buy this text, but I will provide copies of the readings that we do.

Resources:

- All texts will be made available on course website
- Additional Google Doc will serve as a space for us to create a collective repository of resources to explore and use

Assignments:

- Classroom Participation (25 points) *Fall and Spring*
- Personal Ethnography (20 points) *Fall*
- Cultural Ethnography Activities and Reflection (15 points) *Fall*
- Student Profiles and Relationship Building Activities and Reflection (15 points) *Spring*
- Culturally Relevant Lesson Plan, Reflection, and Presentation (25 points) *Spring*

Grading:

- (H) Honors – 90-100 points
- (S) Satisfactory –80-89 points

- (U) Unsatisfactory –79 points and below

FALL ASSIGNMENTS:

Class Participation (25 points total) is of critical importance in this course. This is a space where we will explore our identities and inequality in society in deep, personal, systemic and critical ways. This will be both an individual and collective experience. Just like most things in life, we will each get as much out of it as we are willing to put into it, for ourselves and each other. Therefore, attendance at every class and having the courage to actively participate is paramount. This means both speaking and listening. All texts should be completed prior to the specified class so that you can tie your thoughts and questions about them into your participation. A part of your participation grade will be your reflective journals, which will be completed at the beginning and end of each class. Journaling is designed for you to spend time processing your thoughts and feelings about your week and about the content of the course. You and I will be the only ones reading them. You will not be graded based on the feelings you express, I just want to see you engaging with the content. A note on attendance: Life happens, and for that reason, one absence over the course of the year will not affect your grade. After one absence, each missed course will be 5 points (unless there is specific reasons which will be dealt with on a case to case basis).

Personal Ethnography and Teaching Statement: (Due November 20th) In this short paper (2-3 pages) you will explore how “where you’re from,” (your culture, identity, and your educational trajectory) has shaped you as a person and an educator.

Cultural Ethnography (Due December 13th): Once a month throughout the semester, you will be attending a culturally immersive experience to get to know your students, their families, their communities, and their culture. Examples of these may include sports events, cultural festivals, religious ceremonies, school celebrations, family celebrations (upon invitation). In this short paper (2-3 pages), you will reflect on the four cultural immersion experiences you have had over the course of the semester. What have you learned about your students? What have you learned about your students families and community? What have you learned about yourself? How might all of this influence your teaching practice? What questions do you still have? This activity will be a lot easier if you take a few brief notes after each immersive experience.

Meeting Date:	Topic:	Brainstorm Texts, Resources, Activities
9/6	Introductions and Intention Setting	<p>Required Texts:</p> <p>Review Data from your own school: http://www.aplusschools.org/wp-content/uploads/2017-6-12s.pdf</p> <p>Sensoy, O., & DiAngelo, R. (2017). <i>Is everyone really equal?: An introduction to key concepts in social justice</i></p>

		<i>education</i> . Teachers College Press. Appendix (in class)
9/20	Schools: To Perpetuate or Interrupt Inequity and Injustice?	<p>Required Texts:</p> <p>Milner IV, H. R. (2010). <i>Start where you are, but don't stay there: Understanding diversity, opportunity gaps, and teaching in today's classrooms</i>. Harvard Education Press. Chapter 1</p> <p>Sensoy, O., & DiAngelo, R. (2017). <i>Is everyone really equal?: An introduction to key concepts in social justice education</i>. Teachers College Press. Preface: What is Critical Social Justice (in class)</p>
10/4	Defining and Unpacking Concepts Related to Power (i.e. whiteness, colorblind racism, privilege)	<p>Required Texts:</p> <p>Sensoy, O., & DiAngelo, R. (2017). <i>Is everyone really equal?: An introduction to key concepts in social justice education</i>. Teachers College Press. Chapters 5 and 8</p> <p>Code Switch Podcast: Can We Talk About Whiteness?</p>
10/18	Exploring Broad Systemic Contexts (i.e. poverty, segregation, the intersection of race and class)	<p>Required Texts:</p> <p>The Problem We All Live With on This American Life: http://www.thisamericanlife.org/radio-archives/episode/562/the-problem-we-all-live-with</p> <p>Milner IV, H. R. (2015). <i>Rac(e)ing to class: Confronting poverty and race in schools and classrooms</i>. Harvard Education Press. (Selected case studies).</p>
11/1	Exploring the community and local context (i.e. displacement and gentrification)	<p>Required Texts:</p> <p>Fullilove, M. T. (2016). <i>Root shock: How tearing up city neighborhoods hurts America, and what we can do about it</i>. NYU Press. (Selected Sections)</p> <p>Selected Sections from East of Liberty Documentary: http://eastofliberty.com/</p>
11/15		Required Texts:

	<p>Exploring Classroom Based Contexts and Causes (i.e. teacher bias, the school to prison pipeline)</p>	<p>Just Discipline and the School-to-Prison Pipeline in Greater Pittsburgh: Local Challenges and Promising Solutions.</p> <p>Radio Replay: The Mind of the Village from Hidden Brain Podcast Series: https://www.npr.org/2018/03/09/591895426/the-mind-of-the-village-understanding-our-implicit-biases</p>
<p>12/6</p>	<p>Presentations, Celebrations, Looking Forward</p>	<p>Required Texts: Baldwin, J. (1963). A Talk to Teachers.</p>

Academic Integrity. *Students in this course will be expected to comply with the University of Pittsburgh's Policy on Academic Integrity. Any student suspected of violating this obligation for any reason during the semester will be required to participate in the procedural process, initiated at the instructor level, as outlined in the University Guidelines on Academic Integrity. This may include, but is not limited to, the confiscation of the examination of any individual suspected of violating University Policy. Furthermore, no student may bring any unauthorized materials to an exam, including dictionaries and programmable calculators.*

Disability Services. *If you have a disability that requires special testing accommodations or other classroom modifications, you need to notify both the instructor and Disability Resources and Services no later than the second week of the term. You may be asked to provide documentation of your disability to determine the appropriateness of accommodations. To notify Disability Resources and Services, call (412) 648-7890 (Voice or TTD) to schedule an appointment. The Disability Resources and Services office is located in 140 William Pitt Union on the Oakland campus.*

Language is gender-inclusive and non-sexist *when we use words that affirm and respect how people describe, express, and experience their gender. Just as sexist language excludes women's experiences, non-gender-inclusive language excludes the experiences of individuals whose identities may not fit the gender binary, and/or who may not identify with the sex they were assigned at birth. Identities including trans, intersex, and genderqueer reflect personal descriptions, expressions, and experiences. Gender-inclusive/non-sexist language acknowledges people of any gender (for example, first year student versus freshman, chair versus chairman, humankind versus mankind, etc.). It also affirms non-binary gender identifications, and recognizes the difference between biological sex and gender expression. Students, faculty, and staff may share their preferred pronouns and names, and these gender identities and gender expressions should be honored.*

Statement on Classroom Recording. *To ensure the free and open discussion of ideas, students may not record classroom lectures, discussion and/or activities without the advance written permission of the instructor, and any such recording properly approved in advance can be used solely for the student's own private use.*

DIL Departmental Grievance Procedures: The purpose of grievance procedures is to ensure the rights and responsibilities of faculty and students in their relationships with each other. When a student in DIL believes that a faculty member has not met his or her obligations (as an instructor or in another capacity) as described in the Academic Integrity Guidelines, the student should follow this procedure:

1. The student should talk directly to the faculty member to attempt to resolve the matter.
2. If the matter cannot be resolved at that level, the student should talk to the relevant program coordinator.
3. If the matter remains unresolved, the student should talk to the associate chair of DIL, Dr. Patricia Crawford.
4. If needed, the student should next talk to the SOE associate dean of students, Dr. Michael Gunzenhauser.
5. If the matter still remains unresolved, the student should file a written statement of charges with the dean's designated Academic Integrity Administrative Officer, Dr. Michael Gunzenhauser.

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Resources:

Alyssa Hadley Dunn wrote:

When I teach Peggy McIntosh's "White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack," the examples of White privilege that my White students always remember are: "5. I can go shopping alone most of the time, pretty well assured that I will not be followed or harassed." and "46. I can choose blemish cover or bandages in "flesh" color and have them more or less match my skin."

(If you haven't read the original: <http://www.racialequitytools.org/resourcefiles/mcintosh.pdf>)

If I were updating her list based on the last two weeks, originally written in 1989, I could now add:

51. I can nap in a common area of the university and not have police called on me because I "don't belong here."

52. I can celebrate at graduation and not be physically pushed off the stage.

53. I can shop for prom/special occasion wear at a major department store and not be accused of theft and have the police called on me.

54. I can golf at a reasonable pace at a country club where I am a member and not have the police called on me.

55. I can take a tour or be on another university campus and not have the police called on me because I am assumed to be dangerous.

56. I can sit for as long as I want and use the restroom at Starbucks without buying anything without having the police called on me.

57. I can use and check out of an Airbnb apartment in a new city and not have the police called on me because I am assumed to be robbing the place in broad daylight.

58. I can watch the news and be able to ignore or distance myself from stories like these, all of which happened in a two week time span.

White folks, please let's stop calling the police on people of color living their lives. And please, let's stop just calling it White privilege and name it as White supremacy.