

Syllabus

EDUC 2100: Education and Society

IMPORTANT COURSE REGISTRATION INFORMATION FOR POTENTIAL MAT AND MEd Students

If you are currently a) taking this course at the 1000 level, b) intending to be a student in the MAT or MEd program, and/or c) needing this course to earn the MAT or MEd degree (that is, the course is **not** a pre-requisite to admission), please be aware that 1000-level courses will not be counted toward your total graduate credit-hour requirement for the MAT or MEd degree. It is advised that you change the course number to the 2000 level during the drop-add period. It is also important to note that, if you are still an undergraduate student, this 2000-level course needs to be taken in your last term of undergraduate study. SCAE doctoral students should enroll in the Reform Movements course, not Education and Society.

PREREQUISITE

None

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course focuses on the interaction between educational institutions and their social contexts. The course is designed as a Basic Areas of Education (BAE) introduction to the critical theories and strategies used in the scholarly analysis of the social foundations of education. It uses methods and insights drawn from the social sciences and humanities in the examination of educational policy issues and praxis.

GOALS AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR STUDENTS

The primary goal for this course is professional competence in matters of social theory and policy as they apply to schooling. Our secondary goal is the reinforcing/awakening of imagination and critical competence as scholar/practitioner/citizen. Both are crucial to professional preparation for the successful engagement of matters pertaining to schooling and society.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

Upon completion of the course, you will be able to:

- Explain social, historical, and philosophical questions and perspectives about schooling.
- Reflect upon and critique the process of teaching and schooling.

- Theorize about education in your life as a professional, moving beyond the position of being a mere consumer of technical skills and education theory.
- Produce conceptually sophisticated syntheses that have significance for actual praxis.

REQUIRED MATERIALS

Textbooks are available for purchase at the [University Store on Fifth](#).

REQUIRED TEXTS

- Kozol, J. (2005). *Shame of the nation: The restoration of apartheid schooling in America*. New York, NY: Crown.
- Macedo, D. (2006). *Literacies of power: What Americans are not allowed to know*. Boulder, CO: Westview.
- Olson, K. (2009). *Wounded by school: Recapturing the joy in learning and standing up to old school culture*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.
- Postman, N. (1996). *The end of education: redefining the value of school*. New York, NY: Knopf Doubleday.
- Tyack, D. B. (2003). *Seeking common ground: Public schools in a diverse society*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Additional required reading for each module is posted on CourseWeb.

RECOMMENDED RESOURCE TEXTS

- American Psychological Association. (2006). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association* (6th ed.). Washington, DC: Author.
- Nash, R. (2004). *Liberating scholarly writing: The power of personal narrative*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

COURSE EVALUATION

See **Assignments** in the course navigation menu for detailed instructions. Students are required to complete four assignments that are spaced throughout the course and several “module deliberations” in the Discussion Board. All assignments must be submitted by the due date listed on the Course Schedule.

EVALUATION

Item Evaluated	Point Value	Percentage of Final Grade
Assignment 1: Purpose of Education Draft	10	10%
Assignment 2: <i>Literacies of Power</i> Book Review	20	20%

Assignment 3: Purpose of Education Essay—Rewrite	20	20%
Assignment 4: Accountability Reflection	20	20%
Module Deliberation (2 points per module)	30	30%
Total	100	100%

GRADING SCALE

Grade	Points
A+	97–100
A	94–96
A-	90–93
B+	87–89
B	84–86
B-	80–83
C+	77–79
C	74–76
C-	70–73
D+	67–69
D	64–66
D-	60–63
F	Less than 60

Read information on [G and I grades](#).

GRADING POLICY

To earn the maximum grade for weekly deliberation assignments, students are expected to do at least three postings each week (one original, one comment on a classmate’s original posting, and one response to a comment). In addition, quality of postings and comments will be considered in the grading. Quality original postings are 200–300 words long, make arguments, and include citations from the class readings as warrants. Direct quotes do not make the arguments, they serve as warrants. Comments on original postings show an effort to take the deliberation further and deeper, often including questions with this purpose.

Written assignments will be graded based on the student’s capacity to make arguments with adequate warrants; understanding of the readings from the class (through citations); and meeting the formal requirements of each assignment. Arguments will not be judged by the

professor's agreement or disagreement on the content but on the proper use of argumentation and warrants.

WRITING REQUIREMENTS

The language for this course is standard written English. Abbreviations, slang, texting language, and other non-academic writing styles are not appropriate and will be considered in assessing whether the student has provided adequate number and quality of responses and written assignments.

Students who need additional writing assistance in meeting the graduate level expectation of fluency in standard written English and academic citations should plan ahead to work with editors, peers, and/or the University Writing Center. Obtaining such assistance is not grounds for missing deadlines.

TOPICAL OUTLINE

The course is structured around six topics in 15 modules:

- Dominant Discourses in Education
- Counter Discourses in Education
- Politics, History, and Democracy
- Poverty, Race, and Class
- Accountability, Testing, and School Culture
- Epistemology, Technology, and Education

TEACHING METHODS

Reading and analysis, discussion, and group work. This is a Pitt *Online* course. At this time, the program is developed to be delivered in an asynchronous format. Pitt *Online* courses do not include any synchronous elements.

DISCUSSION BOARD FORUMS

Collective deliberation is a powerful learning experience. In online courses, discussion board postings are the counterparts of class deliberations and are incorporated into the course activities every week. Deliberations can take place within the general discussion board or in designated small groups. For the general group discussion modality, students respond to deliberation questions included in each module, and post constructive comments on their group members' postings; thus, deliberation occurs and group reflection grows. Most weeks, students are expected to do at least one original posting (200–300 words), comment on a classmate's posting, and respond to a classmate's comment on his/her original posting. In case a student does not receive any comment, it is acceptable to post a second comment on another discussion thread. For the last two modules of the course, students will be expected to write original postings in the general discussion board, but no comments on classmates' postings are required.

Small group deliberations occur in two ways. First, students are randomly assigned to groups and deliberation takes place in a way similar to the general group. Second, small groups deliberate to respond a question and do a group posting (200–300 words) in the general discussion board. Besides the group posting, students are expected to comment individually on the group postings. At some point halfway during the term, students are reassigned to new groups in order to be exposed to other ways of thinking.

Students are expected to participate in discussions as scheduled and are graded for their participation across each thematic unit. The more a student engages in online deliberations, the better the learning experience.

DISCUSSION GUIDELINES

Because we will rely extensively on interaction through frank but respectful conversations and discussions, and because we will be treating controversial topics, it is important that we work together to create a constructive environment by observing these rules:

- Deliberation in scholarly environments implies developing well-warranted arguments on critical issues related to education, not simple opinions. Arguments are articulated in coherent corpuses of ideas.
- It does not mean that arguments are rigid and static. They can evolve as students learn and develop their own ideas.
- Comments on classmates' posts should continue building on the discussion of an issue and include questions that take the reflection further and deeper.
- Responses such as "You are absolutely right," or "I completely agree with you," are not allowed in class because we assume there are not absolute truths in social issues (they depend on the way they are framed) and they do not promote reflection and deliberation. Likewise, the use of adjectives should be limited since they might sound like unwarranted opinions.
- It is important to maintain a safe environment where every student can present his/her arguments without fearing being criticized, belittled, or mocked. However, it is also necessary to be able to disagree through arguments. It is important to have and respect diverse points of view.
- Warrants that support arguments are evidence based on readings (citations), reflected-on experience, fragments on online deliberation, and other sources.
- Students may ask how another person arrived at a point of view in an effort to understand it (though the other person may pass).

WRITING ASSIGNMENTS

Students are required to complete four assignments during the course. All assignments must be submitted by the due date listed on the Schedule.

- Purpose of Education Draft: This paper is an autobiographical essay defining the student's purpose of education. The assignment can take the form of essay, narrative, or letter.
- *Literacies of Power* Book Review: This assignment is a book review of Donaldo Macedo's *Literacies of Power*. Students will analyze and evaluate the structure, style, content, and implications of this resource and briefly summarize its significance in the context of their academic and professional aspirations.
- Purpose of Education Essay—Rewrite: In this assignment, students expand on the core questions presented in the previous Purpose of Education Draft. Students will review their cumulative set of assignments and deliberations and explain how their views regarding the purpose of education have become more sophisticated through full engagement with the authors, theories, deliberations, and narratives that have been shared throughout the course.
- Accountability Reflection: This assignment is a reflection, written in the style of Scholarly Personal Narrative (SPN), on three elements or categories identified or created by the student about the accountability movement in education. Students will discuss their implications of social justice in public schooling and build on online deliberations that have helped them develop more sophisticated responses to the questions offered for discussion in this course.

COMMUNICATION, NETIQUETTE, AND EXPECTATIONS

Students, who have general questions about the course, should post them to the Discussion Board area for "Questions and Concerns." For personal concerns, please email the instructor. In the subject line of the email, please type the title of the course followed by a few words indicating the nature of your message. Use "important" symbols sparingly; few general questions truly require urgent action. If you notice a technical problem within the online design, please contact the instructor who will work with a Pitt *Online* technician to solve the glitch. If the problem is an individual operator concern, contact the [University Help Desk](#) at (412) 624-HELP.

You can email directly from the CourseWeb site or from your username@pitt.edu email. Emails that are not from a pitt.edu address may not be received because of spam filters, so please be careful about this. Because of the large number of students in this and other courses, there are guidelines that allow you to receive instructor feedback and help in an efficient and appropriate manner. Emails will be answered twice a week throughout the course, generally not on weekends, holidays, or after hours. In the subject line, it helps if you mention what you need, and please sign all emails with your full name.

Email etiquette and phone calls both require respectful, patient interactions. You may wish to have a conversation about something in the course, when email communication does not suffice, or is not an appropriate or preferred medium. You may leave a phone message at any

time at the office contact number listed under **Faculty Info**. Calls will be returned twice a week throughout the course.

TIME ALLOCATION

A BAE course represents a core competency and is therefore a rigorous, graduate-level course. An online course is not a reduced-time course. According to the University's definition of a credit hour, a one-credit course should have 14 contact hours, where a contact hour is 50 minutes of instruction. Thus a three-credit course should have 2,100 minutes of instruction, or 35 hours of direct engagement via the online functionalities. In addition, students are expected to spend 1.5 hours outside the class of each in-class hour. Therefore, you need to spend 1.5×35 course hours = 52.5 hours across the term, in addition to the core 35 hours. This includes reading, completing weekly deliberation exercises, and working on gradable assignments. The total hours you should budget for this course is 87.5 hours, on average.

PLAGIARISM & 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.

To learn more about Academic Integrity, visit the [Academic Integrity Guide](#) for an overview of the topic. For hands-on practice, complete the [Understanding and Avoiding Plagiarism tutorial](#).

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

If you have a disability for which you are or may be requesting an accommodation, you are encouraged to contact both your instructor and the Office of Disability Resources and Services, 140 William Pitt Union, at 412-648-7890 or 412-383-7355 (TTY) as early as possible, but no later than the fourth week of the term or visit the [Office of Disability Resources website](#) as early as possible, but no later than the 4th week of the term. DRS will verify your disability and determine reasonable accommodations for this course.

ACCESSIBILITY

Blackboard is ADA Compliant and has fully implemented the final accessibility standards for electronic and information technology covered by Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act Amendments of 1998. Please note that, due to the flexibility provided in this product, it is possible for some material to inadvertently fall outside of these guidelines.

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