

ADMPS 1001: Social Foundations of Education (Spring 2021)

Instructor: Dr. Jason Méndez

Location: Asynchronous

Office Hours: By Appointment

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Course Description

Students in the Social Foundations of Education course will survey the historical, philosophical, ideological, social, cultural, political, and economic foundations of American education. Specific topics of study will include culture (religion, national origin), language, and social identity (i.e., sexual orientation, gender, race, etc.) and how these phenomena affect students' experiences in school as well as their opportunities for success in life. The course also explores the role of education in the social construction of hierarchy, inequality, difference, identity, and power to identify how school and societal factors may lead us to a more just society and how these may perpetuate injustice in the US and worldwide. In the study of historical and contemporary educational issues, education is considered contested territory. As such, the class will investigate how political agendas and power struggles influence what students are expected to learn and how they experience schools. Current issues affecting schools, teachers, students, families and communities will be examined and discussed throughout the course.

Through an interdisciplinary approach, readings and activities are designed for school practitioners, or those contemplating careers in different levels of education, to engage in the study of those cultural aspects and consequences. The general intent of foundational study is to introduce students to **interpretive** uses of knowledge germane to education and to establish a basis for life-long learning through normative and critical reflection on education within its historical philosophical, cultural and social contexts. Special emphasis is given to the role of schooling in cultivating the habits necessary for **democratic citizenship**, which include ongoing efforts to secure warranted arguments, equitable and just social relations, quality access, and participation, and to advance the common good.

Course Goals

This course is an opportunity to achieve the following goals:

- Learn about ways of being together that foster dialogue.
- Critically interpret arguments and perspectives, as well as increased understanding of multiple perspectives and appreciate the complexity inherent in educational issues.
- Interpret the world using the lenses of sociology, history, and philosophy.
- See the connections between the institution of school and the broader culture.
- Develop an informed response to the cultural context of schooling.
- Embrace a willingness to creatively work for social justice as an agent in schooling and education in America.
- Reflect on different forms of racism, xenophobia, ableism, genderism, homophobia, anti-intellectualism, ageism, and classism, and how we can build an inclusive and open learning environment to respect the different experiences and ways of being of human beings for the sake of the health and well-being of our communities and the nation.

Grading Procedures

A: 93-100; A-: 90-92; B+: 88-89; B: 83-87; B-: 80-82; C+: 78-79; C: 73-77; C-: 70-72; D+: 68-69; D: 63-67; D-: 60-62; F: 59 and below

Assignments

Weekly Participation	30%
Education news reporting	10%
Positionality Statement	20%
Final Project	40%
Total	100%

Guidelines for Assignments

Weekly Participation (30%)

Weekly class participation is essential to ensure we learn the multiple perspectives present in class and to connect us as a community. “**Speaking**” and “**listening**” in a group is a relevant capacity to develop as teachers and citizens. The aim is to achieve deliberative dialogue, which requires everyone’s participation.

This is how it works: There will be **weekly forums** on the Discussion Board. Each forum relates to each week’s topic and readings/videos. Students must do at least **three posts**: a) An **original response** to each forum questions (200-300 words long with citations from all the week’s readings); b) a **meaningful comment** on another classmate’s original response; c) a **response to a comment** on a student’s own original post. Original posts are due early each week (Monday-Wednesday) and comments/responses to comments later on (Thursday-Sunday). Comments **build upon** original arguments or **challenge** them with questions. The professor encourages students to comment on posts that have not received any comments yet to ensure some balance. Students who do original responses earlier get more chance to receive more comments. In case nobody commented on a student’s original response, she/he can comment on other two post. There are not right or wrong answers to the forum questions since the issues studied can be seen from different lenses (**interpretation**). However, the course encourages students to learn to develop **warranted arguments** (with citations). Therefore, **responses based on mere opinion are not valid**. Acceptable **citations** come from class readings, news, videos/documentaries, or deliberations from previous weeks. Students can also support their statements with their own reflected experiences.

Important rule: writing “I agree with you” is not enough; you must include informed reasons. Also, **avoid** “**absolutist**” terms (e.g., “totally” or “completely agree”) as well as adverbs and adjectives because they make arguments weak, and turn them into mere opinion. The goal is to create a democratic classroom where everybody’s arguments are respected but open to contestation, thus all can learn from the experience. In addition, each week students must comment at least once on any of the **education news articles** posted by designated reporters on the Discussion Board. **Thus, the total number of expected weekly posts on the Discussion Board is four (4).**

Education News Reporting (10%)

In order to connect the topics and issues reviewed in class with what happens in the “real world” outside the virtual and/or brick-and-mortar classrooms, students are expected to bring and comment on news about education issues. Each week, two (2) to four (4) **designated news reporters** will be in charge of finding one education news article each and post it on the Discussion Board by Monday evening of that week. The posting must include:

- Full reference: **author(s), date, title, news outlet, URL**
- A 200-to-300-word **summary** for each article with a brief **analysis** comprising the issue at stake, opposing views/perspectives about the issue presented, and reporter’s take about the issue.

News topics could be (but not limited to) about: government, legal system, politics, policy, funding and finance, corruption and ethics, public/private education, charter schools, school districts, teachers, students, curriculum, standards and testing, rankings, accountability, social justice, diversity, socioeconomic status/poverty, race/ethnicity, rural-urban divide, religion, gender, sexual orientation, bullying, security and crime, multiculturalism, media, international contexts, and other issues. As indicated for the previous assignment, students must post individual **meaningful responses** on one of the news articles at least once every week (it counts as class participation).

Positionality Statement (20%)

As an educator, it is important for you to continuously assess your personal and professional development, challenge your strengths and weaknesses, and reflect on your social, cultural, and political influences on your ability to learn, teach, and lead. This paper gives you an opportunity to reflect on your cultural identity and the ways in which who you are (e.g. race/ethnicity, social class, gender, religion/spirituality, etc.) and where you are from impact how you view the world. You will speak from personal experiences, such as interactions with family and friends, education and work experiences, and traditions, and discuss how your worldview influences your approach to school leadership practice, policy and research. As such, you may want to take an autobiographical approach to this paper. **Your paper should be 3-5 pages (Times New Roman, 12-point font, Word).**

Guiding Questions:

- How has my way of thinking about education changed from the **philosophical** and **epistemological** lenses?
- How can schools be agents of change to address societal **conflicts** and **social injustice**?

Final Project (40%)

During the span of the Social Foundations of Education course, students will deliberate about the many societal challenges to achieve educational success, the implications for school structure, curricula and policies, and the potential to foster social justice and/or unintentionally perpetuate injustice. For the final project (PowerPoint presentation or video), students are asked to individually create their **Ideal Schools** using mainly the materials and evidence reviewed in class to support their decisions. Students must submit a **philosophy/framework** and a **final presentation**. It is important that the school context is realistic or inspired in a real setting.

- First deliverable: The **Philosophy/Framework** assignment is a paper with 2,000 words at most (without counting the references). This paper should include the focus/foci, philosophy/pedagogy, values, mission, and vision. [*This is the theoretical part of the project where the instructor can see what have students learned from the class experiences*]
- Second deliverable: The **PowerPoint presentation** or **video** is the final project, and does not require a paper unless it includes a script/narrative instead of recorded voice. The final presentation should address a set of questions listed below. [*This is the application/design part of the project and hopefully the most fun one, since students can be creative, innovative, and purposeful*]

First deliverable: Ideal School Philosophy/Framework (20%)

The **philosophy/framework** assignment replaces the traditional outline submitted in most courses to show the purpose, main references, and how a final project/paper will be structured. In the Social Foundations of Education course, the philosophy/framework is the first step of the final project in which students identify the **leading theory(ies), philosophy(ies), pedagogy(ies), principles, ideas, and/or values that will guide the design of their “Ideal Schools.”** To create a successful philosophy/framework, each student should make decisions regarding:

- The main **focus/foci** of their Ideal School, which can be written as a purpose or goal, for instance, “*to promote sustainable development and environment advocacy.*” It could also be an overarching concept, such as a “*Democratic School,*” or even a philosophy, such as a “*Socratic School*” or a “*Montessori School.*” In the past, students have even chosen themes like “*Disney School,*” “*Environmental School,*” “*Learning through the Arts and Theater,*” or “*Science School.*” It is important that the focus/foci is present in every element and decision of the project, the curriculum, and the organization.
- **Philosophy(ies)** and **pedagogy(ies)** that will guide the school values, policies, and organization. Students can use any framework they have studied during their college time. However, they are highly encouraged to go back and review the materials studied in Social Foundations regarding philosophy, epistemology, sociology, history, international context, politics and policy, and social justice/civil rights in education, to include in their projects. The philosophies and pedagogies should be articulated with the focus/foci.
- Main **values** that the school will promote. The focus/ foci and philosophies/ pedagogies should be translated into a set of values that the Ideal School projects will promote. For instance, a school focused on “*Human Ecology*” could promote values such as *creativity; balance between the individual and the common good; respect for the nature and fellow humans;* and so on.
- Synthesize the philosophy in a **mission**: “what the school is and what type of education it promotes. (One short paragraph)
- Include a **vision**: short-term and long-term goals.

The focus/foci, philosophy/pedagogy, values, mission, and vision of this assignment should permeate all subjects taught, teaching-learning experiences, learning assessments, activities, decisions, policies, and organizational structures. The latter will be included in the PowerPoint/Video presentation during the last week of class. For instance, regarding the curriculum, your Ideal School’s philosophy/framework should be **trans-curricular** or **cross-curricular**, that is, be the part of the framework of every subject, teaching-learning activity, and assessment. Using a previous example, how could the values a school with a focus on “*Human Ecology*” be incorporated in the curriculum? (Please, note that **curriculum** is not only the organization of subjects in classes, but the entirety of student learning experiences that happen in the educational process).

Keep in mind that the **purpose of schools** is not merely the transmission and memorization of information. They should promote the development of a person as a whole, as a member of a society, with duties and rights, and who could help transform it for the betterment of all. Therefore, the Ideal School projects should incorporate how they will **promote social justice/human rights/civil rights**.

The **philosophy/framework** assignment should include at least 10 references cited in the text. The length will be 2,000 words at most (without the references).

Second Deliverable: PowerPoint Presentation/Video with Script (20%)

On **Monday April 19, by 5pm**, students will submit via the Discussion Board PowerPoint presentations or videos of their Ideal Schools. PPT presentations may have audio and/or a script with the narrative of each slide. The presentation must respond/address the following questions:

- What is the school's name?
- What are the focus/foci and guiding philosophy of the school?
- What are the school's mission, vision, and main principles/values?
- Is the school context realistic and/or inspired in a real setting?
- Does the project describe the community it will serve and location?
- What type of school is it (public, private, charter, online, etc.)?
- What is the student size of the school?
- What facilities, resources, and technology are envisioned for the school?
- Does it include general characteristics of curriculum? (Be creative)
- Is the curriculum coherent with the school's mission and values?
- What are the admission policies (consider an inclusive school)?
- What are the expected characteristics of the faculty?
- How will the school include accountability procedures (for instance, quality of teaching, pursue of social justice in decisions made)?
- Who are the stakeholders (do not think of homogeneous communities)?
- How will the school embrace different types of families (LGBT, single parents, working class, grandparent caregivers, etc.)?
- How does the school promote social justice/civil rights/human rights?
- Does the school include policies and strategies to manage the different challenges that students face (pregnancy, poverty, crime, drugs, bullying, adverse environments at home, sexual abuse, etc.)?
- How does the school turn its tenets and mission trans-curricular or cross-curricular components that integrate classes, school life, interactions, rules, etc.?
- Does the presentation include citations and support statements with readings reviewed in class and other sources?
- Does the presentation include a reference list?

During **Week 15 (April 19 - April 23)** students must look at all the presentations and post meaningful comments at least to **four (4)** of them. Please try to comment on those presentations that have not received any feedback yet. This activity will count as class participation for this week.

Course Schedule

Week	Date	Topic	Readings
1	1/18 – 1/22	Getting to know you: Agency and Voice	Respond to the writing prompts on discussion board
2	1/25 – 1/29	Education, Experience, & Resistance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plato, <i>Allegory of the Cave</i> • Spring, <i>The History and Goals of Public Schooling</i> • Dewey, <i>Criteria of Experience</i> <p>Video – Allegory of the Cave https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UQfRdl3GTw4</p>
3	2/1 – 2/5	Curriculum & Pedagogy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anyon, <i>Social Class and School Knowledge</i>
4	2/8 – 2/12	Critical Pedagogy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Darder, <i>Critical Pedagogy as Foundation</i> • Duncan-Andrade & Morrell, <i>The Challenges and Opportunities of Urban Education</i> <p>Video – Changing Education Paradigms https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zDZFcDGpL4U</p>
5	2/15 – 2/19	Critical Thinking & Education for Liberation	<p><i>Pedagogy of the Oppressed</i>, Chapter 2</p> <p>Film – Resolved https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S-NUWRvZ-Ms</p>
6	2/22 – 2/26	Schooling & COVID-19	Respond to the writing prompts on discussion board
7	3/1 – 3/5	Positionality Statement: Crafting you narrative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carrillo, <i>Lost in Degree</i>
8	3/8 – 3/12	Charter Schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Darling-Hammond & Lieberman, <i>Educating Superman</i> • Apple, <i>Starting the Wrong Conversations: The Public School Crisis and "Waiting for Superman"</i> • Buras, "It's all about the dollars": <i>Charter Schools, Educational Policy, and the Racial Market in New Orleans.</i>
9	3/15 – 3/19	Critical Race Theory in Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ladson-Billings and Tate, <i>Toward a Critical Race Theory in Education</i> • Milner, <i>Analyzing Poverty, Learning, and Teaching Through a CRT Lens</i> • Bell, <i>The Space Traders</i>
10	3/22 – 3/26	De-centering Whiteness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hytten & Adkins, <i>Thinking Through a Pedagogy of Whiteness</i> • Thompson, <i>Tiffany, friend of people of color: White investments in antiracism</i>

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Patterson and Rayle, <i>De-Centering Whiteness</i> <p>DUE: POSITIONALITY STATEMENT</p>
11	3/29 – 4/2	“Smartness”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> King, <i>Culture-Centered Knowledge</i> Fairbanks, Crooks, Ariail, <i>Becoming Esme</i> Hatt, <i>Smartness as a Cultural Practice in Schools</i>
12	4/5 – 4/9	TFA and NCLB	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Darling-Hammond et al, <i>Does Teacher Preparation Matter? Evidence about Teacher Certification, Teach for America, and Teacher Effectiveness</i> Guilfoyle, <i>NCLB: Is There Life Beyond Testing?</i>
13	4/12 – 4/16	Organic Intellectuals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gramsci, <i>The Intellectuals</i>
14	4/19 – 4/23	Culturally Responsive Pedagogy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Baldwin, <i>A Talk to Teachers</i> Gay, <i>Preparing for Culturally Responsive Teaching</i>
15	4/26 -4/30	FINAL PROJECTS	UPLOAD FINAL PROJECTS (Papers & Presentation)

Course Policies

Expectations for Commitment: As an undergraduate course, the expectation is students spend an average of 12 hours each week for each 3-credit course. For this course, plan now for that level of effort on a weekly basis.

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 taking a course in the Department of Educational Foundations, Organizations and Policy (EFOP) 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 the procedure described in the Guidelines by (1) first trying to resolve the matter with the faculty member directly; (2) then, if needed, attempting to resolve the matter through conversations with the associate chair of EFOP, Dr. Michael Gunzenhauser mgunzen@pitt.edu; (3) if needed, next talking with the academic integrity officer of the school, Asst. Dean Shederick McClendon, sammccclendon@pitt.edu; and (4) if needed, filing a written statement of charges with Asst. Dean McClendon.

Academic Integrity. Students in this course will be expected to comply with the University of Pittsburgh's Policy on Academic Integrity, posted on the School of Education website. 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 School of Education [Academic Integrity Guidelines](#). 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.

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.

Reference Style for Written Work: You can use any reference style (e.g., American Psychological Association [APA]; Chicago; and Modern Language Association [MLA]) for your bibliographical references in written assignments; just be consistent within each paper.