

Pitt Education

Doctor of Education (EdD) Program

EDUC 3004, Contexts of Practice

Syllabus (Fall 2021)

This syllabus is a living document.

We will make adjustments to the syllabus to meet class needs.

“The paradox of education is precisely this--that as one begins to become conscious one begins to imagine the society in which he is being educated.” James Baldwin

Course Meetings:

September 11th, October 2nd, November 6th, December 4th
8:00 AM to 12:00 PM

Instructors: Dr. Lori Delale-O'Connor
loridoc@pitt.edu

Dr. Leigh Patel
lpatel@pitt.edu

Office Hours: By appointment. We are happy to schedule a mutually convenient time to meet via Zoom or over the phone.

Grading: Letter

Doctor of Education (EdD)

The University of Pittsburgh is a center for excellence in professional programs, and the School of Education school-wide Doctor of Education (EdD) program is grounded in this ***commitment to excellence***. The program prepares working professionals to become **leader scholar practitioners** to develop *specialized knowledge in their area of concentration* and *apply their intellectual and practical skills to address and mitigate enduring problems affecting children, families, and communities*.

School of Education Mission/Vision

We ignite learning. We strive for well-being for all. We teach. We commit to student, family, and community success. We commit to educational equity. We advocate. We work for justice. We cultivate relationships. We forge engaged partnerships. We collaborate. We learn with and from communities. We innovate and agitate. We pursue and produce knowledge. We research.

We disrupt and transform inequitable educational structures. We approach learning as intertwined with health, wellness, and human development. We address how national, global, social, and technological change impacts learning. We shape practice and policy. We teach with and for dignity. We think. We dream. We lead with integrity. **We are the School of Education at the University of Pittsburgh.**

Program Learning Goals

As a result of attending the EdD program at Pitt, students and graduates become leader scholar practitioners who:

1. Identify problems of practice, including questions of equity, ethics, and justice.
2. Use data to inform decisions in daily operations and improvement projects.
3. Communicate and collaborate to work with diverse communities and build partnerships.
4. Lead change that improves practice.
5. Are committed to use improvement science to address problems of practice.

Course

I. Rationale:

The overarching goal of this course is to explore the institutional and structural features of the educative process and academic and life outcomes. Educational systems reflect inequalities in society; as professionals it is imperative that students understand the ways that social context impacts inequality. This course supports students in analyzing and understanding the contexts that shape their places of practice.

II. Description:

This course is an overview of the structural relationships informing education and educational systems. We will examine the historical and philosophical roots of education and analyze the nature of power, culture, resources, and identity in educational contexts. Throughout this course, we will promote increased understanding and ability to articulate the role of structural and lived contexts in assessing and developing leadership, policy, practice, interventions, and outcomes.

III. Course Aims and Outcomes:

To achieve this goal, course participants will be engaged in:

- Identifying and analyzing specific structural, sociopolitical, historical, and philosophical features of their place of practice;

- Exploring definitions and case studies of justice-oriented approaches to education and examining their own context through a justice-oriented lens; and
- Harnessing their leadership skills to advocate for justice and equity in their individual contexts.

IV. Doctoral Requirements:

This course offers historical, sociological, and philosophical context to students' analysis of their places of practice. Subsequently, this course and students' takeaways will inform their construction of their problem of practice.

V. Format and Procedures:

As instructors we are committed to pedagogy that is anti-racist, non-sexist, non-classist, non-heterosexist, non-gender-normative, non-ableist, and further. This includes fostering an environment that is as safe and inclusive as possible. It is our intention to name and correct as best as possible any actions on our part that fall short of these commitments. If everyone in the class is likewise committed, the work should be more easily facilitated. We are also committed to making the class mentally and physically accessible to anyone wishing to participate.

VI. Course Requirements:

1. Course readings: The articles and some of the book chapters will be available electronically either on Canvas or through Pitt's digital library. The required course books are available from the [University Store on Fifth](#) and should be available from most booksellers. Links are provided to the e-books at the Pitt library, which you can access when you are logged in. They can be purchased in the medium you prefer:

(a) Required texts:

Ahmed, S. (2012). *On being included: Racism and diversity in institutional life*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press. [E-book link](#)

Shalaby, C. (2017). *Troublemakers: Lessons in freedom from young children in school*. New York, NY: The New Press

(b) Additional readings (outlined in the schedule below) are available on the course Canvas web site.

2. Assessments of Learning

Collective Journal Entries: These **three journal assignments** will be an opportunity for you to reflect on the readings and course content and apply the concepts to your problem of practice. They will also be an opportunity for you to engage and reflect with your colleagues.

Learning Community: Everyone has been assigned to a learning community of 5-6 people (noted in Canvas). You will work with the people in this group as part of each of these 3 assignments.

There are four steps to these collective journal assignments:

1. **Write Journal:** Everyone will complete a journal entry and submit to their learning community by the end of week one of the assignment (1-page single spaced, 1-inch margin, 12-point font). Individual Journal due dates listed below. Learning community members may share their entries with each other in the manner they decide is most convenient for them, such as via email, group app, or by posting them in the group space on Canvas.
2. **Synthesis and Analysis:** Two people from each learning community will synthesize and analyze the themes from the journal entries (1-page single spaced, 1-inch margin, 12-point font).
3. **Reflection and Analysis:** Everyone from the learning community will read the synthesis and clarify, reflect, and/or post additional questions they have on the content (Half page or less, 1-inch margin, 12-point font)
4. **Submit:** The synthesizers will be responsible for submitting the synthesis and reflections, in one document, to the instructors by the end of the second week of the assignment. Synthesis and reflection due dates listed below.

	Journal Prompts	Individual journal entries due to the group:	Submit synthesis and reflections:
1	How do your identities inform the ways in which you engage with and perceive your problem of practice? How do your identities inform the ways in which you are perceived within your place of practice?	September 5 th at 10:00PM	September 19 th at 10:00 PM on Canvas

2	What are some different ways to understand the purpose of education? After the reading/viewings, how are you thinking about the purpose of education? To what degree is your place of practice working towards this purpose (i.e. how can you tell this is the purpose)?	September 26 th at 10:00PM	October 3 rd at 10:00PM on Canvas
3	In what ways do educational institutions currently perpetuate inequality? How do you see this playing out in your own place of practice?	October 31 st at 10:00PM	November 7 th at 10:00PM on Canvas

Non-Performative Assessment Project (Due Sunday, October 24th by 10:00 PM; A more detailed assignment is posted on Canvas)

Drawing from Ahmed's description of "non-performatives" you will engage in the following:

- Find an artifact from your organization that you can view as a nonperformative.
- In 3-5 pages, analyze how the artifact is a non-performative according to Ahmed's description, including the following:
 - o How does this connect with the structure of the organization?
 - o How does it connect with what we've discussed and read about social justice?
 - o What are the micro and macro connections between this non-performative and others within your setting?

Work-plan Project (Due Sunday, December 5th by 5:00 PM; A more detailed assignment and examples are posted on CANVAS)

Drawing from our course readings and, in particular, the examples/case studies from Weeks 13-15, think through and write a 5-page work plan about the following:

- What would social justice look like in your place of practice?
- What information (data) would you need to know?

Final product: 5-page workplan.

VII. Feedback and Grading Procedures:

Feedback:

Feedback is essential for high quality learning and teaching. Therefore, we are committed to giving you detailed and timely feedback so that you can improve your learning on future assignments.

Assignment	Points	Due Date
Collective Journals	30 points (10 points each)	Journal 1: September 19 th at 10:00PM Journal 2: October 3 rd at 10:00PM Journal 3: November 7 th at 10:00PM
Non-Performative Assessment	30 points	October 24 th at 10:00PM
Work-Plan Project	40 points	December 5 th at 5:00PM

Grading Scale:

A = 4.00 Superior attainment

A- = 3.75

B+ = 3.25

B = 3.00 Adequate graduate-level attainment

B- = 2.75 Attainment below graduate-level expectations.

C+ = 2.25

C = 2.00 Attainment below graduate-level expectations

C- = 1.75

D+ = 1.25

D = 1.00

D- = 0.75

F = 0.00 Failure

G grades and I grades. Under certain conditions you may receive a “G” or an “I” grade for the course. The Graduate Catalog explains the difference between two kinds of Incompletes:

***G Grade:** The G grade signifies unfinished course work due to extenuating personal circumstances. Students assigned G grades are required to complete course requirements no later than one year after the term in which the course was taken. After the deadline has passed, the G grade will become an NG grade and remain on the record (without impact on grade point average), and the student will be required to reregister for the course if it is needed to fulfill requirements for graduation.*

I Grade: *The I grade signifies incomplete course work due to nature of the course, clinical work, or incomplete research work in individual guidance courses or seminars.*

VIII. Course Calendar for Weeks 1-7 (*We will update this to accommodate class needs*)

Week	Topic	Watch/Listen	Read	Due
Week 1: 8/29-9/4	Course introduction + Defining the Problem(s)	Instructor Introductions + Syllabus Overview	Course Syllabus Sharkey, P. Taylor, K-Y & Serkez, Y. (2020, June 19) The gaps between white and Black America, in charts. New York Times. https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/06/19/opinion/politics/opportunity-gaps-race-inequality.html DiAngelo/Sensoy Chapter McMillan Cottom, T. (2021, January 24) Breaking up with white supremacy was always the end game. Medium. https://tressiemcphd.medium.com/breaking-up-with-white-supremacy-was-always-the-end-game-e7101f578363	

Week 2: 9/5-9/11	Towards What Justice: Constructs of social justice	<p>Nice White Parents podcast https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/30/podcasts/nice-white-parents-serial.html</p> <p>SNCC website: Freedom Schools https://snccdigital.org/inside-sncc/culture-education/freedom-schools/</p>	<p>Bajaj, M., Ghaffar-Kucher, A., & Desai, K. (2016, Winter). Brown Bodies and Xenophobic Bullying in U.S. Schools: Critical Analysis and Strategies for Action. Harvard Educational Review, 86(4).</p> <p>Erevelles, N. (2018). Toward justice as ontology: Disability and the question of (in) difference. In Toward What Justice? (pp. 67-83). Routledge.</p> <p>Laura, C. T. (2018). Against prisons and the pipeline to them. In Toward What Justice? (pp. 19-28). Routledge.</p> <p>Patel L. Immigrant Populations and Sanctuary Schools. Journal of Literacy</p>	<p>Individual journal response due to your group September 5th at 10:00PM</p>
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September 11, 2021
Class Meeting 1

Week 3: 9/12-9/18	Conflicting and contradictory purposes of Schooling		<p>Au, W. (2016). Meritocracy 2.0: High-stakes, standardized testing as a racial project of neoliberal multiculturalism. <i>Educational Policy</i>, 30(1), 39-62.</p> <p>Baldwin, J. (1963). A talk to teachers. <i>Child development and learning</i>, 7-12.</p> <p>Freire, P. (1998). <i>Pedagogy of Freedom</i>. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Chapter 2. "There is No Teaching Without Learning."</p> <p>Jones Brayboy, B. M., & Maughan, E. (2009). Indigenous knowledges and the story of the bean. <i>Harvard educational review</i>, 79(1), 1-21.</p>	
Week 4: 9/19-9/25	Nonperformatives/ Marking the difference between studenting and learning	Ahmed lecture: The Institutional as Usual: Diversity Work as Data Collection	<p>Ahmed, S. (2012). <i>On being included: Racism and diversity in institutional life</i>. Durham: Duke University Press. Introduction-Ch. 3</p>	Collective Journal 1: September 19th at 10:00PM

Week 5: 9/26-10/2	Nonperformatives/ Marking the difference between studenting and learning	Non- performatives mini-lecture	Ahmed Ch. 4-Conclusion	Individual journal response due to your group September 26 th at 10:00PM
<p>October 2, 2021 Class Meeting 2</p>				

Week 6: 10/3-10/9	History of U.S. education	CUESEF Historian Panel	<p>Choose 2:</p> <p>Akiva, T., Delale-O'Connor, L., & Pittman, K. J. (2020). The Promise of Building Equitable Ecosystems for Learning. Urban Education, 0042085920926230.</p> <p>Dancy, T. E., Edwards, K. T., & Earl Davis, J. (2018). Historically white universities and plantation politics: Anti-Blackness and higher education in the Black Lives Matter era. Urban Education, 53(2), 176-195.</p> <p>Hannah-Jones, N. (2015, September 9). A prescription for more Black doctors. New York Times Education Issue. https://www.nytimes.com/2015/09/12/education/edletter/black-doctors.html</p>	Collective Journal 2: October 3 rd at 10:00PM
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			<p>Wheatle, K. I. (2019). NEITHER JUST NOR EQUITABLE. American Educational History Journal: Volume 46# 1 & 2, 46(2), 1-20.</p> <p>Collins, P. H. (2009). Another kind of public education: Race, schools, the media, and democratic possibilities. Beacon Press. (Chs 2-3)</p>	
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Week 7: 10/10-10/16	School funding	PittEd Justice webinar	<p>Chignos, M. & Blagg, K. (2017) Making sense of State School Funding Policy. https://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/publication/94961/making-sense-of-state-school-funding-policy_0.pdf</p> <p>Williams, L. A., & Grande, S. (2021). Trumpocalypse and the Historical Limits of Higher Education Policy: Making the Case for Study/Struggle. <i>Qualitative Inquiry</i>, 10778004211014615.</p>	
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IX. Use of Technology: This course uses a web site (Canvas) provided through the University. To access the Canvas site, go to <https://canvas.pitt.edu> and log on using your Pitt user name and password. Or, you can go to www.my.pitt.edu and access the Canvas site there. For help logging onto the course, call 412-624-HELP. This help is available 24/7. The instructors cannot assist you with log-on problems.

X. Policies

Attendance

Regular and prompt attendance in the Saturday online class sessions is an essential part of the educational experience in the EdD program. Each course meets only four times throughout the term – missing one of those sessions constitutes a significant portion of the time for face-to-face interaction with instructors and peers.

Although students are expected to attend all Saturday class sessions, working professionals sometimes find themselves in circumstances that cause them to miss these class meetings. Exceptions may be made for a required work-related commitment, illness, or valid emergency. In addition, due to the current COVID-19 global pandemic, we recognize that you may face challenges around your attendance for a variety of reasons, including but not limited to child or eldercare, internet connectivity issues, and increased job challenges.

In such cases, students should contact the course instructors ahead of time to determine ways to make up missed classwork.

Incomplete Grades

For this course, an “I” (Incomplete) Grade will be granted only if the student has actively attended to the course requirements, but needs extended time to complete the required work to meet minimum expectations. If an “I” grade becomes necessary, the instructors will require you to propose a plan of action outlining how you will complete the work within no more than one term from the end of the course (and preferably a shorter period of time).

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.

Disability Services

If you have a disability for which you are or may be requesting an accommodation, you are encouraged to contact both the instructors and Disability Resources and Services (DRS), 140 William Pitt Union, (412) 648-7890, drsrecep@pitt.edu. (412) 228-5347 for P3 ASL users, as early as possible in the term. DRS will verify your disability and determine reasonable accommodations for these courses.

Academic Integrity Guidelines

All students are expected to adhere to the standards of academic honesty. Any student engaged in cheating, plagiarism, or other acts of academic dishonesty would be subject to disciplinary action. 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](#)

Provided here is the School of Education [Academic Integrity Policy](#). Please read the policy carefully.

The rights and responsibilities of faculty and students are described in the [University's Academic Integrity Guidelines](#).

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 the EdD program 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 (See below) 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 chair/associate chair of the department; (3) if needed, next talking to the associate dean of the school; and (4) if needed, filing a written statement of charges with the school-level academic integrity officer.

The more specific procedure for student grievances is as follows:

1. The student should talk 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 department chair or associate chair (if the issue concerns a class) or his or her advisor.
3. If the matter remains unresolved, the student should talk to the chair of the EdD program, Dr. Tom Akiva (tomakiva@pitt.edu)
4. If needed, the student should next talk to the Assistant Dean of Student Engagement, Mr. Shederick McClendon (email: sam06@pitt.edu; phone: 412-383-3751. If the matter still remains unresolved, the student should file a written statement of charges with the dean's designated Academic Integrity Administrative Officer (also Mr. Shederick McClendon).

Federal and State Background Checks and Clearances

All SOE students are now required to have federal and state clearances on file if they are working with or observing children as part of any university class or requirement. We are putting in place a new system that will be in place soon to make sure that we are in compliance. For now, see [how students can get their clearances](#).

The School of Education [Policies and Forms](#) page on the SOE website explains several policies and procedures, including academic probation, course repeats, leaves of absence, monitored withdrawal, transfer credits, and statute of limitations.

Telephone Calls or Office Appointments

You may need to have a conversation about something in the course. We will be happy to arrange either a telephone “office hours” or meetings on an as needed basis. Just email your primary instructor and let them know your available time/days. We will be glad to schedule a conference at a mutually convenient time.

Inclusion and Nondiscrimination

As the course instructors, we are committed to pedagogy that is anti-racist, non-sexist, non-classist, non-heterosexist, non-gender-normative, and further. This includes fostering an environment that is as safe and inclusive as possible. It is our intention to name and correct as best as possible any actions on my part that fall short of these commitments. If everyone in the class is likewise committed, the work should be more easily facilitated. We are also committed to making the class mentally and physically accessible to anyone wishing to participate.

The University of Pittsburgh prohibits and will not engage in discrimination or harassment on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, ancestry, sex, age, marital status, familial status, sexual orientation, disability, or status as a disabled veteran. The University is committed to creating a learning environment that is inclusive of all races, genders, socioeconomic statuses, religions, sexual orientations, nationalities, and languages.

In particular, we are committed to including the voices of minoritized groups in this class, including those of womxn and other people of color, transgender people, LGBTQIA+ people, non-Christian people, non-US citizens, and those who speak multiple languages. If you feel uncomfortable as a result of your social identities and background or how they are perceived, please let us know.

We seek to be with each other in ways so that each person can feel safe to unlearn and learn. Learning involves taking risks, including letting go of worldviews that don’t serve education as a tool for liberation. While you may feel discomfort during the flow of the course, you should not feel unsafe. If you do feel unsafe, please contact the instructors, or if you feel more comfortable, the Office of Diversity & Inclusion <http://www.diversity.pitt.edu/>

Office of Diversity and Inclusion (ODI)

Resources, consultation, and bias incident reporting: <https://www.diversity.pitt.edu/>

Title IX office, resources regarding sexual harassment, gender-based discrimination, and sexual violence: <https://www.titleix.pitt.edu/>

Cases of discrimination and harassment based on protected identities should be reported to the Title IX office <http://www.titleix.pitt.edu/report/report-incident>

Additional University Resources

Education Library Guide

See this Hillman Library [customized libguide](#), a gateway to resources for education students and faculty.

Religious Observances

See the [Provost's annual memo](#) about religious observances.

Emergencies

Do you have Pitt Police saved on your mobile phone? 911 works, or Pitt Police, 412-624-2121

Catalogs

The University Catalogs have comprehensive information about policies, programs, and courses. There are University-level policies and policies specific to the School of Education. Bookmark these links and review these documents periodically. [Pittsburgh Campus Graduate and Professional Studies](#)

Student Mental Health

Resources to support student mental health and wellness are available here at Pitt:

Counseling Center, in the Wellness Center in Nordenberg Hall:
<https://www.studentaffairs.pitt.edu/cc/> Call **412-648-7930**, any time.

Please note the availability of Therapy Assistance Online:
<https://www.studentaffairs.pitt.edu/cc/therapy-assistance-online/>

Sexual Assault Response: 412-648-7856

Care and Resource Support Team (CARS): Email pittcares@pitt.edu or see:
<http://www.studentaffairs.pitt.edu/cars/>

Student Affairs Summary: [Faculty and Staff Guide for Helping Distressed Students](#)

Basic Needs Security

Some students are unable to afford groceries or access sufficient food to eat every day. Some students lack a safe and stable place to live. Some students experience challenges balancing school with paid work, childcare, and other family obligations. Those challenges can create considerable anxiety for students and may also affect students' performance in their courses. Students experiencing those challenges are urged to contact the Assistant Dean of Student Engagement, Mr. Shederick McClendon (email: sam06@pitt.edu; phone: 412-383-3751). Students experiencing challenges with food, housing, work and/or family obligations are also encouraged to let your instructors know if you are comfortable in doing so. This will enable us to assist you in accessing support. In addition, the University maintains a student food pantry and a resource guide compiled by the University Library System with food, housing, health, employment, health, and other resources.

Pitt Food Pantry: <https://www.studentaffairs.pitt.edu/pittserves/sustain/pantry/>

Pitt Resource Guide: <https://pitt.libguides.com/assistanresources>

In addition, both the School of Education and the Center for Urban Education have developed additional resource guides to support your wellbeing during this time:

School of Education Resource Guide: https://www.education.pitt.edu/covid-19-resources-and-guidance?utm_source=sendgrid.com&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=website

Center for Urban Education Resource Guide: <https://www.cue.pitt.edu/cue-resources>

A Special Note for Learning in Community During COVID-19

Finally, we want to acknowledge that we are not simply learning in hybrid or participating in virtual learning. We are engaged in this learning during a global pandemic that has taken the life and livelihoods of so many and both laid bare and magnified the structural inequities already present in our society (e.g. food insecurity, disparate health outcomes by race, access to technological infrastructure, just to name a few). Among these has also been the further exposure of our national failure to attend to the needs of working people and their caregiving responsibilities. And yet, we are all, in a variety of ways being asked to proceed as “normal” or “act professionally” (which themselves are racist, anti-feminist, and ableist concepts).

To make this course and our time together in virtual community and in person a humanizing space, we want to make sure we are explicit about the following:

- If you need to turn off your camera or step out of the room, please feel comfortable doing so.
- If you need to attend to a child, elder, pet, yourself during class— please feel comfortable doing so.
- Feel free to eat food and drink water during class.
- Children are welcome—they are not a distraction.
- That said, we will respect your boundaries of what we ‘see’ in your home.
- If you are uncomfortable or struggling for whatever reason and need flexibility, please let us know (you do **not** need to disclose any health information, although you are welcome to share and we will work to support you), and we will work with you.
- Above all—learning is important, but your health and well-being are more important.

We look forward to embracing our full humanity and supporting each other as we learn in community.

Adapted from J. Weiner (University of Connecticut); and A. Heiss (Georgia State University)