05:300:401:03 Individual and Cultural Diversity in the Classroom
Fall 2015
Tuesday 7:40p – 10:50p
Graduate School of Education 25B

Instructor: Kevin Clay
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Office Hours: by appointment

Prerequisites or other limitations: Admission to the GSE Teacher Education Programs or Designation as an Education Minor and 05:300:200 Introduction to Education

Mode of Instruction:
___ Lecture
___ X Seminar
___ Hybrid
___ Online
___ Other

Permission required:
_x_ No
__x Yes

Directions about where to get permission numbers: from the instructor

Rutgers University welcomes students with disabilities into all of the University’s educational programs. In order to receive consideration for reasonable accommodations, a student with a disability must contact the appropriate disability services office at the campus where you are officially enrolled, participate in an intake interview, and provide documentations: https://ods.rutgers.edu/students/documentation-guidelines. If the documentation supports your request for reasonable accommodations, your campus’s disability services office will provide you with a Letter of Accommodations. Please share this letter with your instructors and discuss the accommodations with them as early in your courses as possible. To begin this process, please complete the Registration form on the ODS web site at: https://ods.rutgers.edu/students/registration-form.

Learning goals
The goals of this course are that students learn to:

1. Notice and question their own assumptions and prejudices
2. Recognize the potential impact of those assumptions and prejudices on students
3. Identify examples of structural inequality based on race, class, gender, religion/culture, sexual orientation, and ability
4. Identify examples of cultural inequality based on race, class, gender, religion/culture, sexual orientation, and ability
5. Describe how individual, structural, and cultural actions of the school create success for some students and failure for others
6. Describe and explain the varied responses of students to these conditions
7. Think outside narrow definitions of “ability” or “school readiness” to identify a range of strengths and ways to succeed
8. Identify specific actions to take and to avoid to create more equitable classrooms, including consideration of both the social and the academic curriculum
Course catalogue description

Focuses on the range of student diversity in contemporary classrooms, including cultural, linguistic, and academic differences. Emphasizes strategies to enhance academic success, promote interaction, and facilitate the inclusion of diverse students in the regular school setting.

New Jersey Professional Standards for Teachers (2014) Addressed in this Course:

Standard Two: Learning Differences. The teacher uses understanding of individual differences and diverse cultures and communities to ensure inclusive learning environments that enable each learner to meet high standards.

ii. Essential Knowledge:

1. The teacher utilizes resources related to educational strategies for instruction and methods of teaching to accommodate individual differences and to employ positive behavioral intervention techniques for students with autism and other developmental disabilities.
2. The teacher understands and identifies differences in approaches to learning and performance and knows how to design instruction that uses each learner’s strengths to promote growth;
3. The teacher understands students with exceptional needs, including those associated with disabilities and giftedness, and knows how to use strategies and resources to address these needs;
4. The teacher knows about second language acquisition processes and knows how to incorporate instructional strategies and resources to support language acquisition;
5. The teacher understands that learners bring assets for learning based on their individual experiences, abilities, talents, prior learning, and peer and social group interactions, as well as language, culture, family, and community values; and
6. The teacher knows how to access information about the values of diverse cultures and communities and how to incorporate learners’ experiences, cultures, and community resources into instruction.

iii. Critical Dispositions:

1. The teacher believes that all learners can achieve at high levels and persists in helping each learner reach his or her full potential;
2. The teacher respects learners as individuals with differing personal and family backgrounds and various skills, abilities, perspectives, talents, and interests;
3. The teacher makes learners feel valued and helps them learn to value each other
4. The teacher values diverse languages, dialects, and cultures and seeks to integrate them into his or her instructional practice to engage students in learning.

Standard Three: Learning Environments. The teacher works with others to create environments that support individual and collaborative learning, and that encourage positive social interaction, active engagement in learning, and self-motivation.

ii. Essential Knowledge:

1. The teacher understands the relationship between motivation and engagement and knows how to design learning experiences using strategies that build learner self-direction and ownership of
learning;
(2) The teacher knows how to help learners work productively and cooperatively with each other to achieve learning goals;
(3) The teacher knows how to collaborate with learners to establish and monitor elements of a safe and productive learning environment including norms, expectations, routines, and organizational structures;
(4) The teacher understands how learner diversity can affect communication and knows how to communicate effectively in differing environments;
(5) The teacher knows how to use technologies and how to guide learners to apply them in appropriate, safe, and effective ways; and
(6) The teacher understands the relationship among harassment, intimidation, bullying, violence, and suicide and knows how and when to intervene.

iii. Critical Dispositions:
(1) The teacher is committed to working with learners, colleagues, families, and communities to establish positive and supportive learning environments;
(2) The teacher values the role of learners in promoting each other’s learning and recognizes the importance of peer relationships in establishing a climate of learning;
(3) The teacher is committed to supporting learners as they participate in decision-making, engage in exploration and invention, work collaboratively and independently, and engage in purposeful learning
(4) The teacher seeks to foster respectful communication among all members of the learning community.

Council for Accreditation of Education Professionals Standards (2013)

Standard 1: Candidate Knowledge, Skills and Dispositions
1.2 Providers ensure that completers use research and evidence to develop an understanding of the teaching profession and use both to measure their P-12 students’ progress and their own professional practice.

1.3 Providers ensure that completers apply content and pedagogical knowledge as reflected in outcome assessments in response to standards of Specialized Professional Associations (SPA), the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS), states, or other accrediting bodies (e.g., National Association of Schools of Music – NASM).

Class materials:

About the Course: This course considers how our society—and our schools in particular—responds to difference. Differences in race, gender, class, sexual orientation, cultural and/or linguistic background, religion, and ability are often assumed to be intrinsically significant. In contrast, this course suggests that these differences are made to matter through cultural
processes. Students in this course will begin by examining their own assumptions and associations around these differences, and will go on to examine historical, structural, and cultural inequalities that shape people’s lives based upon their race, gender, etc. Students will then consider how schools in particular respond to student diversity and how students are impacted by and react to these responses. Finally, students will consider how teachers’ actions can create more equitable learning outcomes for the young people in their classrooms.

**Stance & Ground Rules**

“To engage in learning always entails the risk that learning may have an impact on you, that learning may change you. This means that [learning and therefore] education only occurs when the learner is willing to take a risk.”  
- G. Biesta

In this course, we will be discussing topics that are not only complex, but have the potential to bring up powerful emotions for all of us. At times, you might disagree with each other, with the ideas in the readings, or with me. You might feel uncomfortable. This is a good thing—it provides a wonderful opportunity for real learning to occur.

As part of creating a community in which discomfort can be productive, I am asking you to embrace a stance of **humility**, **inquiry**, and **empathy**. By **humility**, I mean that we will all be open to considering new ideas—especially ideas that might conflict with our current worldview. By **inquiry**, I mean that we will be constantly seeking to ask questions and to learn from each other, from the readings, and ultimately, from our future students and their families. By **empathy**, I mean that we will attempt to step into other people’s shoes, and that we will treat one another with kindness and respect.

We will also be adhering to certain ground rules in our class. Though we will discuss these rules together, the following rules are those that I have found to be most helpful in the past:

- **Take risks.**  
  Ask questions, raise new perspectives, stay engaged—even when you are uncomfortable.

- **Assume good intentions.**  
  If someone in the class says something you find hurtful or offensive, assume that they did not do so intentionally. Share your perspective—educate them.

- **Take care of yourself.**  
  The topics we discuss in class often bring up strong emotions for people. Remember to take care of yourself, and please come talk to me or write me an email if ever something happens that makes you particularly uncomfortable.

One final point regarding class expectations: I consider you all to be teachers now. As teachers—people who will be caring for children—you have a professional responsibility to take what we are learning seriously, to do you part by reading and participating, and to treat your classmates with kindness and respect.
Course Expectations

- It is essential that you attend all sessions of this class, and that you are actively engaged in discussions and activities. Doing so not only significantly impacts your own learning, but also the learning of your peers, and of your future students. If you need to miss class please email in advance to let me know. Paperwork must be provided for an absence to be excused. More than two absences will cause you to lose points for attendance/participation. Significant numbers of physical or mental absences will also impact your final grade, and could result in you receiving no credit for the course.

*All that said, I understand that people have a lot going in their lives—please talk to me if there is something that is making difficult for you to attend class, complete the reading, etc.*

- Reading is assigned weekly, and you are expected to complete ALL readings prior to class. Reading is a critical part of this course. All required readings have been carefully selected based upon their relevance to the topic at hand, the significance of the ideas they contain, and how accessible and (hopefully) interesting/enjoyable they are to read. None of the readings are expendable—**please take this seriously.** It is imperative for you to complete all of the readings; otherwise it will diminish your analytical capacity for every assignment. Bring full texts to class or notes from your reading.

- You are expected to turn in all work on time. If you need an extension, be sure to ask for it before the due date. Extensions will only be granted for legitimate reasons. Late papers, for which you have not been granted an extension, will be subject to a grade penalty. When an extension has not been granted, grades on assignments will be lowered one grade for each day they are late (i.e. 4.0 to 3.7 to 3.3 etc.) No papers will be accepted more than one week from the due date. There is no extra-credit or make-up work.

- Please use electronics responsibly in class. Research has indicated that multitasking (e.g. checking email while participating in a class discussion) is incompatible with deeper conceptual thinking. For both your own learning and that of your classmates’, we need you at full capacity during class. Therefore, **please use computers, tablets, etc. ONLY to take notes or reference readings.** Continuous cell phone use or unacceptable use of the aforementioned electronics will result in a reduction from your final grade.

- Anyone with a learning difference needing accommodations of any kind should contact me as soon as possible.

ASSIGNMENTS

Reading Blogs (20%)

All students will be responsible for blogging a total of 12 times using the Sakai Discussions tab.

- Introduction
• ELEVEN Reading Blogs
  o Due each week MONDAY before MIDNIGHT.
  o Note: we will have 14 weeks of readings, so you may take three weeks "off" from blogging before class. You are still expected to complete the reading for those weeks.

  Further Instructions on Reading Blogs:
  ➢ Use the readings provided each week to answer the question posed for that week. Discuss the central points from each reading and their relationship to one another. I urge you to take a reflective tone in your blog. Your objective is to fully explore your point of view (for example, sometimes you might be unsure of your position and thus write on both or multiple sides of an issue), and to explain why your perspective is what it is to the best of your ability.

  ➢ You should discuss ALL of the readings or videos for that day (for example, by explaining whether they agree or disagree with the point that you are making), but you do not have to discuss them all equally. After reading your post it should be clear to me that you read-- enough to discuss each text in some detail.

  ➢ You are also encouraged to draw from personal experience sparingly, though please remember that your blog is NOT private. I think anecdotes are important to learning at times; however, your anecdotes should help illustrate your point, and it should not take up more than ¼ of your total post.

• Blog Comments
  o Due each week by THURSDAY afternoon after class (1:00pm).
  o You should comment on your classmates’ blogs at least 6 times over the course of the semester. You should use these comments to extend or follow up on our class discussions. Credit is only applied weekly (e.g. commenting 5 times in one week counts as one comment)

Your Reading Blogs should begin in a word processor -- like Microsoft Word – then cut and paste it into the discussion tab on Sakai. Your blog posts should be no less than 600 words, not because I favor quantity, but because it takes at least that to write something meaningful in response to your readings and questions. All blog entries should be informal, but well-written. In other words, you can use casual language and should write in the first-person. However, your blog entries should have a clear structure – they should not read like stream of consciousness. They should also be free of spelling and grammatical errors.

BE SURE TO SAVE YOUR BLOG POSTS TO YOUR COMPUTER. If they do not upload
properly, you MUST have a TIME-STAMPED copy saved to show me in order to receive credit. IF YOUR POST IS LOST, YOU WILL NOT GET ANY CREDIT FOR IT. NO LATE BLOGS WHATSOEVER WILL EVER BE ACCEPTED, NO EXCEPTIONS.

**Personal Inquiry (20%) - DUE WEEK 4, SEPTEMBER 22**
All of us have absorbed stereotypes about others just through growing up in this society. In this assignment, you will challenge your preconceived notions and push your comfort level by attending an event or visiting a community with which you are unfamiliar. You will then write a 5- to 7-page analysis of your experience, focusing on the experience of bringing your preconceived notions into conversation with reality. A detailed description and rubric will be distributed in class.

**Institutional Inquiry (25%) - DUE WEEK 8, OCTOBER 20**
In this assignment, you will work in small groups in order to investigate structural inequality in our society. You will do this by choosing an institution (e.g. grocery store, community center, government office, etc.) and visiting that institution in two separate locations: in a middle- to upper-income neighborhood, and in a low-income neighborhood. Your group will present the results of your inquiry to the class on OCT. 20, 27, and NOV. 3. You will also write individual blog posts analyzing your inquiry experience. A detailed description and rubric will be distributed in class.

**Advocacy Presentation (15%) – DUE WEEK 12, NOVEMBER 17**
In groups of 4 or 5 you are charged with entering the role of teacher-advocates. Your group of colleagues is responsible for leading a mock staff development to advocate for a student group encountering one of the several issues that we read about/discussed this semester. In a 15-minute presentation you will outline the issue your student is facing that you want your faculty colleagues (i.e. your peers in I&CD) to understand more intimately, then you will attempt to convince them of the best course of action to address the way/s in which this student group is being marginalized. Groups will lead mock in-services on NOV 17, 24, and DEC. 1. A detailed description and rubric will be distributed in class.

**Curriculum Toolkit (20%) - DUE DEC 9, BEFORE MIDNIGHT**
In this assignment, you will have the opportunity to begin compiling resources that you can use in your classroom. You will choose 10 different resources pertinent to equity and/or diversity. You will then create a website on which you list, describe and critique these materials. A detailed description and rubric will be distributed in class.

**GRADING, ETC.**

**Academic Integrity:** Any violation of academic honesty is a serious offense and is therefore subject to an appropriate penalty. Refer to [http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/integrity.shtml](http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/integrity.shtml) for a full explanation of policies.

**Grading:**
Students in the Graduate School of Education are graded in each course at the end of each term as follows:
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Numerical Equivalent</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Outstanding</td>
<td>4.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>B+</td>
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<tr>
<td>B</td>
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<td>C+</td>
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<td>C</td>
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<td>F</td>
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The School does not assign the grades of D or D+ in its courses nor are minus grades assigned.

Writing Guidelines
- Detailed descriptions are provided for each assignment. Please refer to the grading rubric posted on Sakai.
- Your writing should reflect a critical analysis – think of it as you are building a case, or an argument to support your point of view. Be sure you have a thesis statement to frame your paper.
- In-text citations, and bibliography should be in APA format. You can go to the following website to get specific guidelines for APA: http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/
- Please be sure to edit your work for spelling and grammar. You will lose points for these errors. Don’t forget to use paragraphs!!!

CLASS TOPICS AND READINGS
*Note that all reading and blogs should be completed by Monday of each week (Discussion tab closes Monday at 11:55pm) with the exception of the first week.

Week 1: Introductions (Sept. 1st) **Blog due Thursday Sept. 3rd before 11:55pm**

Write an introductory blog which includes 1) your academic plans and standing, and information about how this class fits into your academic plan, 2) any experience you have had with thinking about issues of diversity, and any concerns you have about doing so in this class, 3) what you hope to get out of this class – what questions you hope it might answer.

You should also address the questions, “Who are you? How do you understand your identity?” Think of a time where you were highly aware of a particular aspect of your identity.

Week 2: Teachers and Schools in a Modern Democratic Society (Sept. 8th)

* NO CLASS – Monday classes in session
* Reading blog schedule resumes as normal (due Monday Sept. 7th by 11:55pm)

In the development of students, what function should schools serve? Describe the ideal relationship between students and teachers.


**Week 3: Differences (Sept. 15th)**

*As a teacher, does knowing what socially recognized groups your students belong to (e.g. their race, cultural background, religion, gender, sexual orientation, etc.) tell you anything important about them? Do our social identities matter when we enter classrooms as teachers? If so, how?*


**Week 4: Identity & Stereotypes (Sept. 22nd)**

*Growing up in our society, we are exposed to many stereotypes about others (and ourselves) based on gender, sexual orientation, race, ability, religion, etc. Do you think stereotypes impact how you perceive other people? How other people perceive you? Are students vulnerable to our biases?*


   a. Read EITHER ch. 3: The Early Years OR ch. 4: Identity Development in Adolescence

   b. Read ch. 2: The Complexity of Identity


PERSONAL INQUIRIES DUE

Week 5: Social Structures of Privilege & Oppression (Sept. 29th)

Is everyone treated justly and equally in our society, or do some people receive privileges that others don’t? If you do believe our society is sometimes unequal or unfair, how should privileged people handle their privilege?


   a. Read ch. 1: Defining Racism

   b. Read ch. 6: The Development of a White Identity


Week 6: Social Reproduction in School (Oct. 6th)

Do students learn inaccurate or harmful information about other people or themselves from schools and teachers? How can schools and teachers resist sending oppressive messages?

Chapter 7: Land of Opportunity.


**Week 7: Structural Inequality Part I (Oct. 13th)**

*Does our society provide a sufficient opportunity for everyone to have a good life? In other words, does everyone have a reasonable possibility of “making it”? If not, do past structural injustices in law and public policy impact current social outcomes?*


**Week 8: Structural Inequality Part II (Oct. 20th)**

*How does race and class segregation impact the quality and character of education for different communities in America?*