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**Social Studies in the Elementary School**  
**Spring 2017 Wednesdays 4:30 – 7:30**  
**Scott 101**

Instructor: Justin G. Negraval	justin.negraval@gse.rutgers.edu
Phone Number 732-239-0672	
Office Hours: By appointment	Prerequisites or other limitations: N/A
Mode of Instruction: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Lecture <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Seminar <input type="checkbox"/> Hybrid <input type="checkbox"/> Online <input type="checkbox"/> Other	Permission required: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes Directions about where to get permission numbers: from the instructor

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### Course Description

#### Learning Goals

#### **New Jersey Professional Standards for Teachers (2014)<sup>1</sup>:**

**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

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

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

iii. Critical Dispositions:

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.state.nj.us/education/code/current/title6a/chap9.pdf>

- 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

**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;

iii. Critical Dispositions

- 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.

**Standard Five: Application of Content.** The teacher understands how to connect concepts and use differing perspectives to engage learners in critical thinking, creativity, and collaborative problem solving related to authentic local and global issues.

ii. Essential Knowledge

- 6) The teacher understands communication modes and skills as vehicles for learning (for example, information gathering and processing) across disciplines as well as vehicles for expressing learning;

iii. Critical Dispositions

- 3) The teacher values flexible learning environments that encourage learner exploration, discovery, and expression across content areas.

**Standard Seven: Planning for Instruction.** The teacher plans instruction that supports every student in meeting rigorous learning goals by drawing upon knowledge of content areas, curriculum, cross-disciplinary skills, and pedagogy, as well as knowledge of learners and the community context.

ii. Essential Knowledge

- 2) The teacher understands how integrating cross-disciplinary skills in instruction engages learners purposefully in applying content knowledge.
- 3) The teacher understands learning theory, human development, cultural diversity, and individual differences and how these impact ongoing planning

iii. Critical Dispositions

- 1) The teacher respects learners' diverse strengths and needs and is committed to using this information to plan effective instruction
- 4) The teacher believes that plans must always be open to adjustment and revision based on learner needs and changing circumstances.

**Standard Eight: Instructional Strategies.** The teacher understands and uses a variety of instructional strategies to encourage learners to develop deep understanding of content areas and their connections, and to build skills to apply knowledge in meaningful ways.

ii. Essential Knowledge

2) The teacher knows how to apply a range of developmentally, culturally, and linguistically appropriate instructional strategies to achieve learning goals

iii. Critical Dispositions

1) The teacher is committed to deepening awareness and understanding the strengths and needs of diverse learners when planning and adjusting instruction.

**Council for the Accreditation of Education Professionals (2013)<sup>2</sup>**

**Standard 1: Candidate Knowledge, Skills, and Dispositions**

1.1 Content Knowledge and Pedagogical Knowledge

1.2 Instructional Practice

- Learning Experiences

1.6 Learner and Learning

- Learning Experiences

1.8 Learner and Learning

- Relationships and Communication

**CATALOGUE DESCRIPTION**

The impact on the elementary school of new developments in social studies and new refinements in teaching social studies; content, method, materials, and general curricular implications.

**Course Overview**

What are the social studies and why should we bother to teach them to elementary school children? What type of social studies is meaningful and useful to children? In this course we will explore both theoretical and practical aspects of teaching social studies in the elementary school.

**Course Goals**

The purposes of the course are for students to:

- develop a coherent and meaningful definition of social studies.
- differentiate between “good” history and “bad” history.
- understand how social studies can be integrated into the broader elementary curriculum.
- know and employ a variety of instructional strategies for teaching social studies.
- identify important skills and content in social studies.
- consider the interconnectedness between social studies content, pedagogy, and social justice in the classroom.
- sharpen skills in unit and lesson design.

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<sup>2</sup> [http://caepnet.files.wordpress.com/2013/09/final\\_board\\_approved1.pdf](http://caepnet.files.wordpress.com/2013/09/final_board_approved1.pdf)

## Course Requirements

### ❖ Participation

Participation in this course will include taking part in a variety of activities – written, verbal, individual, and group. I expect students to arrive on time and be prepared for every session. Frequent, unexcused tardiness or absence will result in a reduction in the course grade. I also ask that students do not use laptops or cell phones during class, unless the use is clearly related to class purposes. Please let me know ahead of time if you will be missing class, as it will affect how I plan lessons.

Class activities: Part of every class will be participation in activities and discussions. Outstanding participation goes beyond regular attendance, attentiveness and cooperation. To receive an A grade for class participation one must demonstrate meaningful participation in all class activities and discussions. For activities this means serious effort should be evident. During class discussions comments should reflect thoughtful consideration of the topics, demonstrate consideration of course readings and make meaningful contributions to the class discussions (these are contributions that go beyond just expressing one's opinion).

### **IMPORTANT: Completing all readings prior to class is essential**

### ❖ Sakai Reflections

Throughout the course you will be required to reflect on class topics and your learning as part of the Sakai reflections. There will be four reflections spaced out across the semester. **Be sure to follow the Sakai prompts and respond with a 1-2 page reflection.** Reflections will be graded based on the following rubric:

- 0 = Assignment not completed
- 1 = A minimum response was offered, however it didn't demonstrate comprehension or that the required reading/research was adequately completed. Also may lack a thoughtful response to the assignment.
- 2 = Response may not fully demonstrate comprehension, or fails to demonstrate that the required readings/research were adequately completed, or only a minimal reflection is offered.
- 3 = Response has a single component of the assignment is missing (e.g. all is well, but no reflection is offered)
- 4 = Response demonstrates an understanding of the topic, and evidence that the required reading/research was completed, however the reflection offered could be more thoughtful or offer more depth.
- 5 = Response demonstrates comprehension of the topic, evidence that the required reading/research was completed and a comprehensive and thoughtful reflection that responds to the assignment is provided

### ❖ Purpose of Social Studies Paper

In this paper you will explore the question of what role should social studies education play in public education from multiple perspectives. You will also have the opportunity to develop your own philosophy of what should constitute social studies education. This is a research-

based paper; therefore you must incorporate at least five sources. Three of the sources **MUST** be selected from the assigned readings from the first month of class and you need to include two additional sources that you identify from your own research (not readings listed on the course syllabus). The articles you select should be used to present different perspectives on the goals of social studies.

In your paper you should address the different authors' perspectives on key issues such as, *what should be taught, why and how*. In the final portion of the paper present your own philosophy along with an explanation. Rely on readings and personal experiences to defend your position. Papers should be between 5 -7 pages. Please stay within these page limits, failure to do so will impact your grade. All references to articles must be properly cited using MLA or APA formats.

### ❖ **Interdisciplinary Lesson Plan**

The elementary classroom offers many opportunities for interdisciplinary learning. The possibilities to build literacy skills and address the goals of Common Core Standards while teaching social studies content and skills are practically endless. One effective way to accomplish this interdisciplinary goal is to teach social studies content through the use of children's literature. Throughout the semester several examples of this will be provided. In this assignment you will design your own interdisciplinary lesson based on a children's piece of literature. The steps you will need to take are outlined below:

- First you will need to select a children's book for use in an interdisciplinary social studies & language arts lesson for primary classroom. Part of this process is determining what content and skills you want to teach. You should consult the NJ social studies standards k-4 and the common core standards for k-2 reading.
- Next you will create a lesson plan based on the decisions you made in step 1. Lessons will be assessed based on the provided lesson plan template and on how well Best Practices in social studies are represented.

### ❖ **Literature Book Club**

We will discuss the importance of using children's literature to promote fuller understanding of historical events; as well as an opportunity to utilize varied resources to encourage multiple perspectives; and explore the role narrative plays in helping students appreciate the human condition. In this assignment, you will select a book to achieve these goals and participate in a classroom activity.

- Selection of book: as a group of 3 -4, you will choose a Grade 3-5 chapter book that promotes teaching elementary children about the experience of a marginalized group. It is suggested that you speak to your cooperating teacher(s) and/or media specialist at your field placement for appropriate books. Books must be selected, approved by February 1st and the actual book brought to class for use on February 15th.

### ❖ **Current Event Practice Lesson: Planning, Teaching, Reflecting**

Groups of 3-4 students will plan and teach a 40-50 (depends on grade level) minute lesson to our class related to a “current event” news item of their choice (for this assignment current events are defined as any event that is now or has been in the news over the last year). The lesson should be constructed around a key question that would make sense to elementary children. Lesson plans must be written using the GSE lesson plan model and include reference to specific NJ State Standards for Social Studies and Common Core Standards for Literacy.

Grades for this assignment are based on the lesson plan, teaching the lesson and an individual reflection. The lesson plan and teaching will be assessed based on the Danielson Framework, as well as best practices of social studies education. Each member of the group is expected to participate equally in the planning and teaching of the lesson.

**One week after** the lesson, students must submit an individual reflection on Sakai. Reflections must be a minimum three-paragraph response to the teaching experience. The first paragraph should detail who did what work. The second will be a narrative of what happened in the lesson. The third paragraph will be an analysis of “how it went,” why and what could be modified.

### ❖ **Unit Plan**

All students will be given the option to collaborate with others in the class or work individually to design a unit plan, (requirements will vary based on the number of people contributing to the plan). Unit plans are a guide for several days or weeks of instruction. The unit plan must be framed around “Big Ideas” or “Essential Questions” and include a series of interrelated lesson topics and descriptions that explain how the topics will be addressed. All unit plans should include concepts and practices learned throughout this course, clear skills and content goals, daily objectives and brief descriptions of the daily teaching methods and references to source materials. The unit plans must be written in accordance with the GSE unit plan. Unit plans will be assessed based on the Danielson Framework for planning and on how well the concepts and best practices presented throughout the course are incorporated.

#### **Grading:**

Class Activities & Participation	15%
Sakai responses	20%
Purpose of Social Studies Paper	20%
Interdisciplinary Lesson Plan	10%
Literature Book Club	5%
Current Events Group	
Lesson Plan & Teaching	10%
Unit Plan	20%

DATE	CLASS TOPICS	ASSIGNMENT for CLASS
1/18 Week 1	What is social studies education and is it important?	
1/25 Week 2	Meeting the goals of S.S. education Examine 3 Authors	<b>READ:</b> Whalen, Finn & Wade readings
2/1 Week 3	What should be taught? Strategy: Scavenger Hunt	<b>READ:</b> Levstik & Barton (Ch. 1) <b>DUE:</b> "Literature Book Club" Book Approval
2/8 Week 4	Using Children's Literature to Teach Social Studies	<b>READ:</b> Zarnowski
2/15 Week 5	Literature Circles "Literature Book Club" Activity	<b>DUE:</b> Reflection # 1 on Sakai <b>DUE:</b> Bring Book Club Book to Class
2/22 Week 6	History: What to teach? Strategy: Assessing the validity and use of resources	<b>READ:</b> Herbert Kohl <b>DUE:</b> Purpose of Social Studies Education paper
3/1 Week 7	History: Good vs. Bad History Strategy: Centers Activity on Columbus	<b>READ:</b> Loewen <b>DUE:</b> Interdisciplinary Lesson Book Approval
3/8 Week 8	Civic Education Strategy: Role playing Constitutional Convention	<b>READ:</b> Engle & Ochoa <b>DUE:</b> Reflection # 2 on Sakai
<b>3/15</b>	<b>SPRING BREAK</b>	<b>SPRING BREAK</b>
3/22 Week 9	Problem Solving Strategy: Decision-making	<b>READ:</b> Levstik and Barton Chapter 8
3/29 Week 10	How to teach students to deal with conflict & controversy Strategy: Mediation Activity Current Event Lesson	<b>READ:</b> Harwook & Hahn <b>DUE:</b> Bring Interdisciplinary Lesson Plan Draft to Class
4/5 Week 11	Planning for Effective Instruction (Unit Planning) Current Event Lessons cont'd	<b>READ:</b> Wiggins and McTighe, Understanding by Design, chapters 1, 2 <b>DUE:</b> Interdisciplinary Lesson Plan Due
4/12 Week 12	Researching Social Studies in the Elementary School (Guest Speaker) Current Event Lessons cont'd	<b>DUE:</b> Reflection #3 to Sakai
4/19 Week 13	Unit Plan Workshop Current Event Lessons cont'd	<b>READ:</b> Wiggins and McTighe Understanding by Design, chapter 4 <b>DUE:</b> Bring Unit Plan Draft to Class
4/26 Week 14	Unit Plan presentations Semester Feedback	<b>DUE:</b> Unit Plans Due <b>DUE:</b> Reflection #4 (For CE Lesson Plan)

Citations:

Finn, C. (2003) Forward in Leming, J., Ellington, L., & Porter-Magee, K. (Eds.). *Where Did Social Studies Go Wrong?* Thomas B. Fordham Institute, available at [www.edexcellence.net/institute/publication](http://www.edexcellence.net/institute/publication)