Colby College
Education Program

EDUCATION 215:

CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS IN SCHOOLS AND SOCIETY

Fall 2008

Tuesday, Thursday, 1:00 – 2:15 pm

MARK B. TAPPAN
Professor of Education and Human Development

Diamond 103

(O) 859-4426
(H) 877-6675
e-mail: mbtappan@colby.edu

Office Hours:
Wednesday, 12:00 -- 2:00 pm
and by appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION

In this course we will explore the experience of contemporary children and adolescents, using a variety of sources, including novels, memoirs, case materials, film, and autobiographical reflection. We will also consider a variety of theoretical perspectives that seek to interpret these experiences; we will discuss how effective they are in explaining and responding to the challenges and opportunities that children and adolescents face as they negotiate their way through society, and more specifically, through school. Our goal is to understand the complexity of childhood and adolescence, and to develop a pool of knowledge and resources from which to draw in our future work with young people, both in and out of the classroom.

Throughout the course we will also consider gender, racial, social class, and sexual orientation differences, and the ways in which these differences, and the dynamics of privilege and oppression that are associated with them, shape and influence one’s understanding of self, and one’s relationship to others, during childhood and adolescence. This focus is consistent with the social justice designation that this course carries, as well as with the mission of Colby’s Education Program.

This course also includes a substantial civic engagement component: You will be required to spend 25-30 hours (~2.5-3 hours/week) over the course of the semester working with local children and adolescents in a structured setting. The placements will occur in the after-school program at the Alfond Youth Center, the South End Learning Center, or the South End Teen
Center. Your responsibilities will include getting to know the children/adolescents in the program, helping with homework, working with small groups on art projects, games, athletic events, supervising in the computer lab, etc. This civic engagement experience is designed to enable you to contribute to the well being of children and youth in the local community, and to introduce you to the realities of the lives of contemporary children and adolescents. It will also provide you with another opportunity to reflect on the relationship between theory and practice.

COURSE GOALS

In this course you will:

1. Explore the complex opportunities and challenges facing contemporary children and youth.

2. Gain familiarity with a wide range of theoretical and empirical work from a number of different disciplines focused on understanding and interpreting the experience of contemporary children and youth.

3. Forge relationships with children and youth living in the local Waterville area, via a structured civic engagement experience.

4. Analyze the operation of power as it relates to the preservation of privilege in the contemporary US by: (a) considering the values and politics that pervade educational institutions, as well as the more pragmatic issues of teaching and organizing schools; (b) asking critical questions about how taken-for-granted assumptions and conventions about theory and practice came to be, and who in society benefits from such assumptions; (c) attending to differences in gender, race, ethnicity, social class, sexual orientation, and ability that result in political, social, economic, and educational marginalization and inequality, particularly for children and youth; and (d) examining the connections among different forms of privilege, particularly as these relate to the experience of children and youth.

5. Continue to hone your intellectual skills, including comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation; your ability and capability to engage in critical thinking; your expertise in written and oral expression; your capacity for both collaborative and independent work; and your ability to design lessons, to use instructional strategies and technologies, and to create a classroom environment that supports and encourages learning (see MITC STANDARDS 4-6).

REQUIRED BOOKS


**EXPECTATIONS**

I expect regular attendance and active participation in all course-related activities. I also expect to be notified if you must be absent from class, and you will be responsible for any work missed. Failure to attend may lead to a warning, grading penalty, and/or dismissal from the course with a failing grade.

The in-class component of this course will consist primarily of discussions so it is very important that you read the assigned readings prior to class and come prepared to participate fully in our consideration of those readings. We will share responsibility for initiating and leading these discussions—I will take primary responsibility during the first half of the course; each of you (as a member of a team) will take primary responsibility for initiating and leading discussion for one class session during the second half of the course (see STANDARD). I expect that written assignments will be handed in on time; if they are you can expect me to return your work promptly; if they are not, you may forfeit the opportunity to receive any detailed feedback on your writing, and I can not promise when I will return your work. **I also expect that you will take your civic engagement role and responsibilities very seriously—if you do not, you will be dropped from the course.** The staff and children/youth with whom you work will be counting on you to follow through on all of your commitments. Needless to say, there is a significant amount of work required for this course—reading, preparation, and writing as well as your work at your civic engagement site—so you must manage your time wisely (I expect the Colby standard of approximately 8 hours per week of reading/writing/preparation for this 4 credit course).

I expect that all of your work in the course will abide by Colby’s policy on Academic Honesty, as stated in the *Colby College Catalogue*: “Plagiarism, cheating, and other forms of academic dishonesty are serious offenses. For the first offense, the instructor may dismiss the offender from the course with a mark of ‘F’ and will also report the case to the department chair and the dean of students, who may impose other or additional penalties, including suspension or expulsion…A second offense automatically leads to suspension or expulsion.”

Finally, in keeping with our commitment to social justice, behaviors that create a hostile, offensive, or intimidating classroom climate based on gender, gender identity expression, race, national or ethnic origin, color, religion, age, disability, marital status or sexual orientation will not be tolerated.

**PORTFOLIO DEVELOPMENT**

Students who are seeking Maine state teacher certification through our Professional Certification program are expected to engage in development of a portfolio to document their mastery of Maine’s Initial Teacher Certification Standards (attached) over the course of their Colby career.
In pursuit of this goal, students on the path to certification should plan to collect and reflect upon at least one item/artifact from this course for inclusion in their portfolio.

I encourage you to meet with me to discuss the details about the portfolio process at Colby. I have also suggested several certification standards that could be documented through each of the following assignments for this course:

**ASSIGNMENTS/GRADING***

*See course Moodle for more details and guidelines

1. **Autobiographical Narrative—Childhood and Adolescence**

   In order to have the opportunity to reflect on your own childhood and/or adolescence, I will ask you to write a brief autobiographical narrative that tells the story of a significant event in your life. Writing such an account will encourage you to bring your own personal experience into dialogue with the material we will be considering in the course (~1500 words). **Due Friday September 12, 2008.** (ungraded)

2. **Reflective Journal**

   You are to keep an ongoing journal that contains one entry for every visit you make to your civic engagement site—as well as entries on topics that may be assigned periodically throughout the semester. Given that writing helps to create consciousness, your journal will thus provide you with the opportunity to record and reflect on your work in this class, and at your civic engagement site, and to make relevant connections between your experience, the readings for the course, and the discussion of those readings in class. Additional information about journal-keeping will be provided throughout the semester. I will collect your journals three times during the semester—**Friday October 10, Friday November 14, and Friday December 12, 2008.** (10% of final grade)

3. **Take Home Demonstration of Mastery**

   I will provide you with a set of questions that focus on the readings in the first part of the course—questions designed to enable you to demonstrate your mastery of the material we have covered up to this point. You will take the questions home, choose several of them to which to respond, and present your responses in the form of an essay (~2500 words). **Due Friday October 17, 2008.** (30% of final grade) **STANDARDS 3, 7, 9, & 10.**

4. **Term Paper**

   This assignment will provide you with the opportunity to explore a topic/issue/problem related to the lives of contemporary children and adolescents, broadly defined, that is of particular interest to you. You may do this by writing a traditional term paper, or by writing a case study about one particular child or adolescent. Your project should be based on relevant contemporary
scholarship, and represent your own contribution to that scholarly dialogue. As such, you should start with readings considered in the course, and then identify other readings and resources relevant to your topic (~2500 words). Due Friday November 20, 2008. (30% of final grade) STANDARDS 3, 7, 9, & 10.

5. Take Home Final/Self Evaluation

For the first part of this paper I will provide you with a set of questions designed to enable you to demonstrate what you have learned about contemporary children and adolescents as a result of your work in the course. For the second part of this paper I will ask you to prepare a brief self-evaluation of your work in your civic engagement site. This self-evaluation should highlight both what went well for you and what didn't go so well in your work with the children/adolescents at your site (~2500 words). Due Friday December 12, 2008. (30% of final grade) STANDARDS 3, 7, 9, & 10.

A note about grading: Successful completion of the five assignments listed above is required if you are to receive credit for the course. On the two major “graded” assignments during the semester (#s 3 & 4) I will be using a “revise and resubmit” approach. That is, if you complete all aspects of the assignment, show initiative and a desire to excel, and, most importantly, demonstrate genuine mastery of the content of the course (i.e., the concepts and ideas covered in the readings and class discussions), and an ability to use those concepts and ideas effectively in your writing, you will receive an A/A- for the assignment. If, however, there are aspects of the assignment that do not attain this level of mastery I will give the paper a provisional grade, and ask/encourage you to revise and resubmit the paper, in order to reach the A/A- level. If you choose not to revise and resubmit the assignment, your provisional grade will turn into the final grade for the paper.
**COURSE OUTLINE AND READINGS**

**All readings marked by “Moodle” are available on-line**

Th. 9/4  **Introduction and course overview**

What is “civic engagement”? GOOGLE and find out.

Tu. 9/9  **Growing up in Waterville, ME**


**Recommended:**


Th. 9/11  **Growing up in Lorain, OH**


I. THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES ON CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS IN SCHOOLS AND SOCIETY

Tu. 9/16  **Social justice: Understanding power, privilege, and oppression**

McIntosh, Peggy (2003). White privilege and male privilege: A personal account of coming to see correspondences thorough work in women’s studies. *Moodle*


**Recommended:**


Th. 9/18  Social justice: Understanding power, privilege, and oppression (cont.)


Recommended:


Tu. 9/23  The development of mind


Th. 9/25  The development of intimacy


Tu. 9/30  The development of identity


Th. 10/2  The development of morality


Tu. 10/7  The development of mediated action


**Recommended:**


**Th. 10/9**  
Integrating the perspectives


**Tu. 10/14**  
Fall Break!!!

**Th. 10/16**  
Developmental assets: Resources that shape success in schools and society


**Additional resources:**


**Tu. 10/21**  
Developmental assets and asset-building communities

Benson, Peter. (2006). *All kids are our kids.* Chs. 5-11.
Additional resources:


II. DIFFERENCES THAT MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN CHILDHOOD AND ADOLESCENCE

Th. 10/23 Social Class [GROUP 1]


Recommended:

Howard, Adam. (2001). Students from poverty: Helping them make it through college. *About Campus* Moodle


Tu. 10/28 Race and ethnicity (cont.) [GROUP 2]


**Recommended:**

Fordham, Signithia. (1988). Racelessness as a factor in Black students' school success: Pragmatic strategy or pyrrhic victory? *Moodle*


**Th. 10/30**  
**Supplemental education and developmental capital [GROUP 3]**


**Tu. 11/4**  
**Gender: “Good girls” [GROUP 4]**

Brown, Lyn Mikel & Gilligan, Carol. (1992). The psychology of women and the development of girls. *Feminism and psychology.* *Moodle*


**Recommended:**


**Th. 11/6**

**Risk and Resilience I: Eating disorders [GROUP 5]**


**Tu. 11/11**

**Gender: “Real boys” [GROUP 6]**


**Recommended:**


**Th. 11/13** Risk and Resilience II: Violence [GROUP 7]


**Tu. 11/18** Sexual Orientation [GROUP 8]


**Th. 11/20** Risk and Resilience III: Harassment and Bullying [GROUP 9]


Brown, L.M et al. (2003). *Maine’s best practices in bullying and harassment prevention*. Augusta, ME: Maine Governor’s Children’s Cabinet. [http://www.state.me.us/education/bullyingprevention/schools.htm](http://www.state.me.us/education/bullyingprevention/schools.htm)


**Tu. 11/25** Growing up digital


**Th. 11/27** THANKSGIVING BREAK
Tu. 12/2  
**Sexuality and Sex education: No-body in school [GROUP 10]**


**Recommended:**


Th. 12/4  
**Conclusion: Beyond risk and resilience to courage and hope**


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**Maine’s Initial Teacher Certification Standards**

In order to help all students achieve Maine’s Learning Results, the initial teacher candidate:

1. Demonstrates knowledge of the central concepts, tools of inquiry, and structures of the discipline(s) s/he teaches and can create learning experiences that make these aspects of subject matter meaningful to students.
2. Demonstrates the ability to integrate the concepts, tools of inquiry, and structures among the disciplines.
3. Demonstrates knowledge of the diverse ways in which students develop and learn by providing learning opportunities that support students’ intellectual, physical, emotional, and social development.
4. Plans instruction based upon knowledge of subject matter, students, and curriculum goals.
5. Understands and uses a variety of instructional strategies and appropriate technologies.
6. Creates and maintains a classroom environment which supports and encourages learning.
7. Demonstrates the ability to support students’ learning and well being by engaging students, home, school, colleagues, and community.
8. Understands and uses a variety of formal and informal assessment strategies to evaluate and support the development of the learner.
9. Demonstrates an awareness of and commitment to ethical and legal responsibilities of a teacher.
10. Demonstrates a strong professional ethic and a desire to contribute to the education profession.