ED 235
MULTICULTURALISM
and the Political Project

Colby College
Fall 2009
Tuesday and Thursday
11:00 am – 12:15 pm

Professor: Adam Howard
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Office Hours: 10:00 – 11:00; 1:30 – 3:00, Tuesday
11:00 – 12:30, Wednesday
10:00 –11:00, 1:30 – 3:00, Thursday
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COURSE DESCRIPTION

Introduction to the critical tradition in education, particularly to the work of critical theorists and postmodern multiculturalists. This work questions Western, patriarchal, capitalistic structures of modern society and its institutions, and through an emphasis on postcolonial, neo-Marxist, feminist, and social theory it attempts to uncover how Western European foundations of American schooling have privileged some and marginalized others. Critical educators work to maintain the link between the struggle for critical knowledge and the struggle for democracy. A forum for students to analyze these basic assumptions and to gain a deeper understanding of the struggle for transformative knowledge and critical democracy.

COURSE GOALS

• Become familiar with critical theories of power, oppression and change in the educational system.
• Determine how the purposes of schooling reflect the elements of the United States
society and culture.

- Understand the relationship pre-K-12 educational institutions have with society’s economic, political, and social structures, beliefs, and concerns.
- Develop a critical understanding of the influences of class, gender, sexual orientation, ability, race, culture, religion, ethnicity, and language on American schooling.
- Examine various models of multicultural education and critique these models.
- Interpret and analyze practices, philosophies and research on teaching and learning in a pluralistic society.
- Examine various learning theories.
- Develop a philosophy of education guided by a consciousness of the diversity of students in the United States.
- Become aware of their own political, sociocultural, and economic location and privilege as derived from racial, gender, sexual preference, and class positioning.

COURSE PHILOSOPHY

The textbook and other readings and written responses will offer a starting point for our discussions and will provide many opportunities to question, reflect, and debate. We will use our reading and writing to advance our class discussions on the topic we are exploring that day. Students will be expected to be active, reflective readers, coming to question with questions and insights that will guide and further the learning of the class.

This course is based upon several educational premises about learning: learning occurs best through inquiry that is driven by curiosity; learning is assimilated most effectively when new ideas can be connected to prior student knowledge (Dewey); learning occurs progressively as the learner processes new situations, issues and dilemmas; higher-order thinking develops by encountering and accepting new challenges that force the learner to analyze, evaluate, and solve problems; and successful collaboration heightens learning.

PORTFOLIO DEVELOPMENT

Students who are seeking Maine certification are expected to engage in development of a portfolio to document their growth during the period of their professional preparation. In pursuit of this goal, students in the certification program should plan to collect and reflect upon at least one item from this course for inclusion in their portfolio.

Students are encouraged to meet with the professor to discuss the details about the portfolio process at Colby. When appropriate, the professor has suggested a certification standard that could be documented through an assignment completed in this course.

REQUIRED TEXTS


**ASSIGNMENTS**

**Papers.** There will be three papers assigned in this course (4-5 pages in length). Except for the autobiography, these papers must show evidence that the student has engaged in a critical reading of the assignment as well as expressing a personal opinion constructed in response to the arguments presented in the readings. These papers require students to critically discuss various positions, NOT to describe or reiterate those positions. (*Paper 2: Maine’s Initial Teacher Certification Standards 3, 7*)

**Response Journal.** Students are expected to write response journal entries (1-1 ½ pages in length per entry) as assigned throughout the semester. A total of 10 entries are expected. The purpose of each assignment is to locate the main points of the reading and then surface questions the reading challenges us to consider. Students will complete their assignments before class in order to share what they have written/drawn/created with the entire class. There will be other entries that focus on class discussions and activities. (*Maine’s Initial Teacher Certification Standards 1, 2*)

**Moon Journal.** Students will keep a journal of their observations, understandings and impressions of the moon. Poems, musical lyrics, drawings, short phrases, and written entries are some of the examples for journal entries. Students will observe the moon throughout the semester. A total of 15-18 entries are expected.

**Multicultural Education Project.** Students will work in groups to develop a lesson plan for one of the five models of multicultural education developed by Sleeter and Grant. Groups can choose any subject at any grade level in developing this lesson. Groups will demonstrate this lesson in a brief teaching presentation. At the end of the teaching presentation, the groups will present the model to the class by discussing their lesson and their analysis and evaluation of that model. (*Maine’s Initial Teacher Certification Standards 3, 4, 5*)

**Political Project.** Students will work in groups to address one of the following issues dealing with the challenges of multiculturalism and diversity on the Colby College campus: gender, class, race, sexuality, and ability. For this assignment, groups will research one of these issues through interviews with various groups on campus, reflections of your own experiences, and traditional library and journal research, and then construct a case study. Using PowerPoint,
groups will prepare a 30-minute presentation that includes the case study, the climate of the campus in relation to your issue, and recommendations for addressing the challenges of multiculturalism and diversity on campus as it relates to your issue. (Maine's Initial Teacher Certification Standards 2, 3, 5 & 10)

Self-Evaluation. At the end of the semester, students are required to write a three-page reflective self-evaluation speaking to the student’s intellectual and personal growth during the semester. In order to do this effectively, it is advised that students read through all their written assignments and to critically reflect on how one’s thinking about education has changed (if, indeed, it has) through the experience of this course.

Performance Pedagogy Project. Details about this assignment will be provided later in the semester.

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**COURSE EXPECTATIONS**

**Attendance and effective participation are expected.** Students are expected and required to attend every class meeting. It is advised that students take this requirement seriously. If a student must be absent from a class meeting, then the student should contact and notify the professor that she/he will be absent before the class meets. The professor will determine the validity of the reason for the absence.

**Demonstrated knowledge of all reading assignments.** Readings will be assigned to correspond with class topics, concepts, skills, and experiential exercises. The books for this course have been chosen to reflect current educational practice, methodology and research. It is expected that students will approach the assigned reading material reflectively and critically. Students are, therefore, expected to utilize information from the readings, in class discussions as well as, when processing of simulations in order to analyze, synthesize and integrate assigned reading material in course assignments. To prepare for active participation in class, assigned readings must be completed before they are scheduled to be discussed in class. It is recommended that you take reading notes and bring them to class. Connections to readings outside of this class are encouraged and welcomed, however, they are not substitutes for the required texts or assigned readings. Failure to incorporate readings and/or the assigned text into papers will result in a lower point value.

**Meeting deadlines for the submission of the assignments.** Unless negotiated differently as a class and in advance, it is expected that assignments are due on the date listed in the syllabus. Assignments received more than 1 week after the due date will have one point deducted per day for each day that the assignment is late. In addition, if you are late, expect that your assignment will be returned late.

**Meeting the requirements of the papers.** Written papers will be graded according to their content, adherence to directions for the assignment, (when appropriate) the integration of books, articles, videos, and classroom discussions, as well as the assigned texts. Papers are expected to
be logically organized, with smooth transitions, free of grammatical errors, and adhere to 5th edition APA style for citations and format. All papers are expected to be typed, double-spaced, using 12-inch font. Critical thinking, creativity and attention to detail are essential elements of all assignments!

**GRADING AND POINT DISTRIBUTION**

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<tr>
<th>Distribution of Points</th>
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<tr>
<td>Reading Journal</td>
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<td>Moon Journal</td>
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<td>Papers (10 points each)</td>
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<td>Multicultural Ed Group Project</td>
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<td>Group Political Project</td>
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<td>Performance Pedagogy Project</td>
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<td>Self-Evaluation</td>
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**Letter Grade Distribution**

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Note: Professor may assign a plus (+) or a minus (-) to letter grades based upon a student’s class participation throughout the semester.

**DETAILED SCHEDULE**

**Tuesday, September 15**

- Course Overview
- Introductions

**Thursday, September 17**
- Moon Journal Discussion
- Bring Cultural Artifact
- Begin reading Spring’s book
- Read “Lessons of Poverty: Towards a Literacy for Survival” by Adam Howard

**Tuesday, September 22**

- Introduce Paper #1
- Watch *In the White Man’s Image*
- Read Joel Spring’s *Deculturalization and the Struggle for Equality*
- Read Readings 4, 8 in Rosenblum and Travis
- Read “Standards, Multicultural Education, and Central Curriculum Questions” by Christine Sleeter

**Thursday, September 24**

- Moon Journal Discussion
- Optional Reading “Standardized Solutions? A Dialogue with Deborah Meier” by Adam Howard
- Optional Reading “Countering Standardization” by Julie Landsman and Paul Gorski
- Introduce Paper 2

**Tuesday, September 29**

- Paper #1 Due
- What is multicultural education?
- Read “Multicultural Education – What For?” by Duarte and Smith in *Foundational Perspectives in Multicultural Education*
- Read “The Afrocentric Idea in Education” by Molefi Kete Asante in *Foundational Perspectives in Multicultural Education*
- Read “White Studies: The Intellectual Imperialism of Contemporary US Higher Education” by Ward Churchill in *Foundational Perspectives in Multicultural Education*
- Optional Reading “Some People Push Back” by Ward Churchill (please note this is a very controversial article that eventually led to Churchill being fired from his academic post at University of Colorado – Boulder)

**Thursday, October 1**

- Critical Multiculturalism
• Read “Insurgent Multiculturalism and the Promise of Pedagogy” by Henry Giroux in *Foundational Perspectives in Multicultural Education*
• Read “White Terror and Oppositional Agency: Towards a Critical Multiculturalism” by Peter McLaren in *Foundational Perspectives in Multicultural Education*
• Journal Entry: How are McLaren’s concepts of “border narratives,” “boarder identity,” and “boarder cultures” similar to/different from Giroux’s category of “boarder pedagogy”?
• Introduce Multicultural Education Group Project

**Tuesday, October 6**

• Liberal Democratic Multiculturalism
• Read “Challenges of Multiculturalism in Democratic Education” by Amy Gutmann
• Read “Culture, Subculture, Multiculturalism: Educational Options” by K. Anthony Appiah in *Foundational Perspectives in Multicultural Education*
• Journal Entry: Do you think “increasing the self-esteem of disadvantaged students” is a legitimate goal of multicultural education? Explain.
• Paper #2 Due
• Introduce Group Political Project

**Thursday, October 8**

• Multicultural Education Project Presentations

**Tuesday, October 13**

• Fall Break – No Class Session

**Thursday, October 15**

• Adam is attending a conference
• Meet with your group to come up with a plan for political project

**Tuesday, October 20**

• Moon Journal Discussion
• Read Readings 55, 56, 57 in Rosenblum and Travis
• Response Journal Due (5 entries)

**Thursday, October 22**

• Race and Ethnicity
• Read Readings 1, 7, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28 in Rosenblum and Travis

**Tuesday, October 27**

• Watch *It’s Elementary*
• Sexual Orientation
• Read Readings 17, 19, 20, 33, 35 in Rosenblum and Travis
• Journal Entry: Is it appropriate for teachers to teach queer issues to all students in all schools? Why or why not? How do you respond to the critics that say teaching or talking about queer issues is catering to the special interest groups that support the queer community?

Thursday, October 29

• Introduce Paper #3
• Read “Not So Sweet: Portrayals of Privilege in My Super Sweet 16” by Adam Howard OR “We’re Here, We’re Queer … but Have you Dealt with it?” by Jimmy Kalamaras
• Read “Gangsta Pedagogy and Ghetto-centricity: The Hip-Hop Nation as Counterpublic Sphere” by Peter McLaren

Tuesday, November 3

• Moon Journal Discussion
• Whiteness and Privilege
• Read Readings 6, 46 in Rosenblum and Travis
• Read “Overcoming White Supremacy: A Comment” by bell hooks in Foundational Perspectives in Multicultural Education
• Read “Multicultural Education, Social Positionality, and Whiteness” by Christine Sleeter in Foundational Perspectives in Multicultural Education
• Optional Reading “White Privilege Shapes the U.S.” by Robert Jensen
• Journal Entry: Peggy McIntosh’s essay provides a listing of some of the privileges she enjoys as a white person. How aware are you of these privileges in your own lived experiences? How have these privileges that some groups have influenced your own life?

Thursday, November 5

• Internalized Oppression?
• Read “Reframing Internalized Oppression and Internalized Domination: From the Psychological to the Sociocultural” by Mark Tappan
• Read “Multicultural Education as a Form of Resistance to Oppression” by Christine Sleeter
• Read Reading 45 in Rosenblum and Travis
• Journal Entry: Do we have the agency to engage in political action to change the everyday practices and routines and the institutional structures that reflect and maintain oppressive conditions? Explain.

Tuesday, November 10

• Paper #3 Due
• Ability/Learning Differences
• Read Readings 21, 22, 23, 40, 41 in Rosenblum and Travis

Thursday, November 12

• Moon Journal Discussion
• Social Class
• Read Chapter 12 in hooks’ *Teaching to Transgress*
• Read Readings 12, 13, 15, 36, 38, 39, 61 in Rosenblum and Travis
• Optional Reading “Considering Curriculum in the New Economy” by Adam Howard (note this is the paper that I presented at the South African conference at the beginning of the semester)
• Journal Entry: How do you define social class? What are the factors that determine class positionality?

Tuesday, November 17

• Gender
• Read Readings 9, 10, 11, 30, 31, 55 in Rosenblum and Travis
• Read “Censoring Girls’ Choices: Continued Gender Bias in English Language Arts Classrooms” by Beth Benjamin and Linda Irwin-DeVitis

Thursday, November 19

• Language
• Read “We Speak in Many Tongues: Language Diversity and Multicultural Education” & “Language, Literacy, and Culture: Intersections and Implications” by Sonia Nieto
• Journal Entry: Should we embrace linguistic diversity or have non-English speakers assimilate in order to be successful in the US? What are the challenges and opportunities with each option?

Tuesday, November 24

• Moon Journal Discussion
• Read “Barriers to Multiculturalism” by Peter Appelbaum
• Read Readings 49, 50 in Rosenblum and Travis
• Journal Entry: Appelbaum lists five barriers to multiculturalism. Are there additional barriers that need to be considered? What are the most significant barriers in working toward social justice and equality?

Thursday, November 26

• Thanksgiving Break, No Class

Tuesday, December 1
• Read Chapters 1, 2, 3 in bell hooks’ *Teaching to Transgress*

**Thursday, December 3**

• Response Journal Due (a total of 10 entries)
• Read Chapters 7, 8, 9, 13, 14 in bell hooks’ *Teaching to Transgress*
• Journal Entry: bell hooks talks about teaching without limits (or transgressing traditional boundaries for teaching and learning) to bring our humanity into the teaching and learning process. How do you respond to these understandings of teaching and learning? Is this effectively moving towards social justice?

**Tuesday, December 8**

• Group Project Presentations

**Thursday, December 10**

• Last Day of Classes
• Final Moon Journal Discussion
• Moon Journals are due
• Group Project Presentations

**Final Exam Day**

• Performance Pedagogy  Project and presentations

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**PAPER 1**

**Autobiography Paper**

As students in this class on multiculturalism, you will encounter knowledge, ideas and questions that may be new to you and/or present you with various ways of thinking about issues of diversity—in terms of national origin, race, class, gender, culture, language—in school, society and the world. This encounter may challenge (and even disrupt) some understandings of ourselves and others that we take for granted.

Before we engage in this process of encountering (possibly) the unfamiliar, we have to form more critical understandings of how we understand ourselves and others. Your autobiography then is one way to begin exploring the complexities of multicultural education.

Write a 4-5 page typewritten, double-spaced paper using the following questions as a guide to your own thinking:

a) In what ways might such factors such as national origin, social class, race and/or
ethnicity, gender, culture, and language have influenced your development as a child and a student?

b) Growing up, what and who around you seemed different from you, your life? In what ways?

c) Thinking back over your life, what are the values, beliefs and experiences that have shaped your view of other people and the world?

d) What are some of your earliest memories as a learner: as someone curious about the world? How was that curiosity cherished, channeled, and/or blocked through home and/or schooling experiences?

e) How do you understand and interpret your encounters with difference?

You are asked to gather data (seek information) from parents, grandparents, your former teachers, friends, neighbors, etc; records of your life such as school and family photographs, school events, yearbooks; and so on, to illuminate your past experience and incorporate them as examples in your autobiography.

PAPER #2

Using Joel Spring’s *Deculturalization and the Struggle for Equality*, the film *In the White Man’s Image*, and the No Child Left Behind Act, A Toolkit for Teachers, compare, contrast, and critically analyze the historical, legislative and socio-political forces which have shaped current legislation, pedagogy and practice.

Assignment Directions:

1. Read No Child Left Behind Act, A Toolkit for Teachers. You might also find some of the optional readings useful to read that relate to NCLB. These readings discuss the implications for teaching and learning in schools and districts who educate children living in poverty and other disadvantaged groups of students.

2. Read, compare, contrast, deconstruct and both deeply and critically analyze the author’s thesis in the book; *Decentralization and the Struggle for Equality* (Spring) paying particular attention to the historical, socio-political framework which shapes legislation, methodology and practice. Then --

3. Write a 3-5-page paper that answers the following 3 question families: (1) what role does history play in current trends and legislation? What is the same? Different? How do you know? How do you know what you know? What evidence do you have? (2) What are the implications of No Child Left Behind Act for schools? Families? Teaching and learning? (3) How is No Child Left Behind working in support of or contradiction to the goal of equal opportunity and achievement for ALL students? How do you know? What evidence do you have?

PAPER #3

The primary goal for this assignment is to write an insightful cultural analysis essay
In your analysis keep these questions in mind:

- What is seductive about the subject?
- How has this subject become popular and culturally significant?
- What curriculum (i.e., content, lessons of culture) does this subject offer the public?
- How does this subject perpetuate and transgress the ideology of imperialist white-supremacist capitalist patriarchy and culture of hedonistic consumerism?
- How does the subject address issues of gender, class, race, sexuality and the intersection of these issues?
- What is the cultural significance of the subject? What impact has the subject had on our culture?

The most difficult task of this assignment is to consider multiple viewpoints of the subject that are often contradictory. You may find the cultural analysis essays that we’ve read in class useful examples for this assignment. You are to use at least two additional sources for your paper.

THE POLITICAL PROJECT

Students will work in groups to address one of the following issues dealing with the challenges of multiculturalism and diversity on the Colby College campus: gender, class, race, sexuality, and ability. For this assignment, groups will research one of these issues through interviews with various groups on campus, reflections of your own experiences, and traditional library and journal research, and then construct a case study. Using PowerPoint, groups will prepare a 30-minute presentation that includes the case study, the climate of the campus in relation to your issue, and recommendations for addressing the challenges of multiculturalism and diversity on campus as it relates to your issue.

Case Study

Case studies have the advantage of incorporating multifaceted elements that reveal their interactivity. They are organic depictions of phenomena and their interrelatedness. They are dynamic. They recognize that meaning is of great importance and that meaning results from an analysis of the dynamics of the many parts of phenomena. In a basic description, a case study is a detailed examination of one setting, or an individual, a single collection of documents, or a particular event. The aim of case construction is to understand some aspect of human experience and then contextualize that experience within the individual’s everyday world.

In Sonia Nieto’s *Affirming Diversity*, there is model for developing a case study. Using that
model and keeping the above description in mind, the group will construct a case study that reveals their assigned issue on Colby’s campus – inside and outside the classroom.

To develop this case study, the group will first need to gather data. This data gathering process may include interviewing students, staff, faculty, and/or administrators, collecting school documents such as admissions materials, and college policies and practices. This plan must be specific – for example, if the group is going to conduct interviews then the group is to identify how they will interview (e.g., Dean of Faculty, leader of a specific student group).

**Political Plan**

After developing the case study, the group will then develop a plan for improving Colby’s campus in relation to their issue. This plan should be specific about what needs to happen to bring about change for social justice. This plan should reflect the recommendations of various individuals and groups on campus that were offered during interviews as well as your own recommendations. Looking at what other colleges are doing to address your group’s specific issue and conducting traditional library and journal research also should be incorporated in this plan.

In short, this plan is to offer recommendations for making Colby a place where social justice prevails.