LEARNING CONTEXTS AND CURRICULUM

Online - Blackboard
Spring 2015 - Minimester

Instructor: Dr. Stacey Duncan
Office Hours: Online & by appointment
Contact: slduncan@utep.edu, Blackboard mail, or (575) 323-1861
{leave name & number}

REQUIRED TEXTS
- Professional articles available on Blackboard.

COURSE DESCRIPTION
We will examine the theoretical frameworks and broad definitions of curricula, processes of curriculum alignment, pedagogy and assessment, State standards, curricular resources, curriculum integration, learning theory and lesson planning. Course participants will practice reflective and critical thinking to contemplate their roles as curriculum providers in educational systems.

COURSE GOALS AND VISION
The goal of TED 5301 is to provide educators with understandings of curriculum and instruction in contexts of a diverse society. Education in the 21st century absolutely requires that we deeply understand and engage the social, cultural, historical, and economic problems facing ALL students, and the complex ways these are connected to the structure of schooling and pedagogical process. In this course we will engage a critical, foundational knowledge of the philosophy of curriculum and instruction (theory), while examining current practices in the classroom (praxis).

COURSE FORMAT
Learning Community Overview
Online learning (and teaching) requires that an “online community” be developed in order to ensure successful and full understanding of course content, and to meet the criteria of a constructivist curriculum, which is foundational to this course. Community will be developed through the use of continuous communication via several modes of networking and group projects. Class members are expected to participate fully in all assigned discussion activities, chats, synchronous/asynchronous meetings, etc.

Netiquette & Discussion Expectations
“Netiquette” is the term used to describe the courteous and civil exchange of electronic communications, and will be the guide and expectations of this course. Distance separation between members of this course community does not provide any member the right to be impolite or discourteous to any other member (including the instructor). Members (students and instructor) are expected to desist from personal attacks when disagreeing with others or critiquing their work (“flaming”), and should use emoticons and acronyms to convey emotions. “Capitalized” or “bolded” text imply shouting and will be avoided. Members will “support, not divide”, “critique, not criticize”, “question ideas, not people”, “provide scholarly information, not personal opinions”, “think critically and creatively”, and “communicate assertively while respecting personal boundaries” (Parra & Bovard, 2009).
Online Preparation
Plan to spend at least as much time in this web course as a three-credit classroom lecture course. A classroom lecture course requires three hours a week in class with approximately 3-6 hours of homework. Expect to spend the same amount of time or more. Although this course is designed to be flexible, it is not self-paced. There are weekly discussions and intermittent deadlines.

Student Learning Objectives
Upon successful completion of TED 5301, students are able to do the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learning Outcomes</th>
<th>Assessments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Simulate the teacher’s role in curriculum planning for the school year,</td>
<td>• Written analysis papers, reflective written discussions, research presentations and projects assessed through the use of a rubric</td>
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<tr>
<td>for instructional units, and for daily lessons by demonstrating understandings</td>
<td>• Reflective writing assignments, research presentations and projects assessed through the use of a rubric</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>of the course readings</td>
<td>• Research presentations and projects assessed through the use of a rubric</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Develop an understanding of the key tenets of curriculum</td>
<td>• Final project assessed through the use of a rubric, analysis papers, online written discussions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Select, develop, and incorporate appropriate cognitive and affective objectives</td>
<td>• Analysis papers, class discussion, reflective written discussions, presentations, and projects assessed through the use of a rubric</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>by successfully addressing all the stated objectives of a curriculum issue group project</td>
<td>• Reflective papers, reflective written discussions, oral presentations, and projects assessed through the use of a rubric</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Design learning experiences and materials for the enrichment of quality</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>curriculum, including the effective use of technology</td>
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<td>5. Integrate critical theory into effective teaching strategies through an</td>
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<tr>
<td>assessment of existing curricula</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. Align culturally relevant instructional approaches to state and national</td>
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<tr>
<td>standards</td>
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</table>

Assignments

- **Attendance & Participation (of course):** Because this is a mini-semester, missing weekly discussions/activities can have a huge impact on your learning and will affect your final grade. It is expected that all students will be prepared for class and actively engaged in discussion and activities. Successful completion of the course depends on regular communication, interaction and participation with all learning experiences.

- **Critical Reflective Discussions (70 points total):** Each week you will turn in a critical reflection of the readings covered, synthesizing your understanding of them, and responding to discussion questions. See description and rubric below.

- **Community/School Board Meeting Paper (30 points)**
  You will attend a school board or community meeting in your district and connect what you see to curriculum and pedagogy grounded with a minimum of three readings from class. From your observations you will write a 2-3 page reflection of your experience and share with the class what you learned. See description and rubric below.
Curriculum Project (100 points total): For this assignment you will have a choice. It can be a common group focus project that emerges from the course, or it could consist of individually contracted projects such as (but not limited to) - (a) developing an in-service workshop for teachers or colleagues; (b) analyzing a curriculum project, a government policy, an educational program; (c) conducting a small research project such as studying the curriculum experiences of a single child; (d) doing a theoretical paper on some aspect of curriculum or pedagogy that we have dealt with in class; (e) develop/re-develop a curriculum unit. As not all of you may be in-service teachers currently - these are only ideas that you can further develop or you may choose a different project with my consent. See description and guidelines below.

Grading Scale
Your earned points divided by total points equals your grade percentage. Use the following scale for letter grade:

A: 90 – 100%, B: 80 – 89%, C: 70 – 79%, D: 60 – 69%, F: <60%

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Points</th>
<th><strong>Due Dates</strong></th>
<th>Everything by midnight</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Critical Reflective Discussions</strong></td>
<td>70</td>
<td>Response 1 by Mondays, Responses 2 &amp; 3 by Saturdays</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Community/School Board Meeting Paper</strong></td>
<td>30</td>
<td>Paper due 2/15, Presentation due 2/15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Curriculum Project</strong></td>
<td>100</td>
<td>Proposal due 2/1, Project due by 3/1, Presentation due 3/1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Points</strong></td>
<td>200</td>
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</table>
UTEP POLICIES

Standards of Academic Integrity
Students are expected to uphold the highest standards of academic integrity. Any form of scholastic dishonesty is an affront to the pursuit of knowledge and jeopardizes the quality of the degree awarded to all graduates of UTEP. Any student who commits an act of scholastic dishonesty is subject to discipline. Scholastic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to cheating, plagiarism, collusion, the submission for credit of any work or materials that are not attributable in whole or in part to another person, taking an examination for another person, any act designed to give unfair advantage to a student or the attempt to commit such acts. Proven violations of the detailed regulations, as printed in the Handbook of Operating Procedures (HOP) and available in the Office of the Dean of Students, may result in sanctions ranging from disciplinary probation, to failing grades on the work in question, to failing grades in the course, to suspension or dismissal among others.

Students with Disabilities
If you have or believe you have a disability, you may wish to self-identify. You can do so by providing documentation to the Office of Disabled Student Services located in Union E, Room 203. Students who have been designated as disabled must reactivate their standing with the Office of Disabled Student Services on a yearly basis. Failure to report to this office will place a student on the inactive list and nullify benefits received. If you have a condition which may affect your ability to exit safely from the premises in an emergency or which may cause an emergency during class, you are encouraged to discuss this in confidence with the instructor and/or the director of Disabled Student Services. You may call (915) 747-5148 for general information about the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

Disclaimer
The instructor reserves the right to adjust schedules and change topics in support of student and instructor needs.
Critical Reflective Discussions
Assignment
(70 points total, 10 points/week)

Each week you will submit a reflection on the readings and respond to two separate colleagues. These may be in response to a posted discussion question, or you may have the opportunity to share otherwise. For each reflection please be as explicit and detailed as possible. These discussions are meant to gauge your growth and understandings of curriculum, pedagogy and learning contexts so should be written from your own personal/professional perspective, with reference to each reading covered that week. APA is required for this assignment but for in-text citations only – you do not need to provide the full reference for in-class readings, only if you cite an outside reading.

Remember; do not tell us what the authors said (reflections are not reviews), integrate their work with your own words and understanding. Posted responses should be significant – helping our thinking about the topic and the discussion to move forward.

There is a variety of ways to do this, including;
• Providing concrete examples, perhaps from your own personal/professional experience
• Describing possible consequences or implications
• Using research, class readings and cited studies or lessons from your own experience
• Posing a clarifying question
• Suggesting a different perspective or interpretation
• Synthesizing ideas and pulling in related information from other sources – books, articles, websites, other courses, etc.

Discussion Responsibilities

1. Respect each other’s differences and do not make or take it personal.
2. Keep to the issues and not persons.
3. Keep conversations professional regarding other programs and colleagues.
4. Use “I” messages as much as possible when sharing.
5. Ask for understanding of another’s perspective if you are unclear.
6. Because the discussion board is text based, use Netiquette and check your writing from another person’s perspective before posting.
7. Ask for clarification if you feel offended, concerned, or do not understand.

Writing Prompts

The following are prompts to help you with the writing; they are optional.
• What did I already know about the content covered in the readings for this reflection?
• How did they engage and expand my understanding?
• Where does my understanding come from (prior research, experience, etc.)?
• How do you think the reading connects with the purpose of curriculum and pedagogy?
• What was the most challenging thing I read?
• What was the most inspiring?
• What questions do I still have about the readings?
## Critical Reflective Discussions Assignment Rubric

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria Engaged</th>
<th>Evolving</th>
<th>Beginning</th>
<th>Not Evident</th>
<th>Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Timeliness &amp; number of discussion responses.</td>
<td>3+ postings distributed throughout the week*</td>
<td>1-2 postings</td>
<td>0-1 postings</td>
<td>3 pts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responsiveness to discussion topic &amp; demonstration of knowledge &amp; understanding from assigned readings.</td>
<td>*Response suggests analysis, synthesis, &amp; evaluation of ideas. *Ideas respect &amp; include different perspectives. *Readings were understood &amp; incorporated into discussion as relates to topic.</td>
<td>*Response adds significantly to the discussions’ meaning, perspective taking, &amp; learning (e.g. identifying important relationships, offering a fresh perspective or critique of a point; offers supporting evidence). *Little use made of readings.</td>
<td>*Posting response supplements or adds moderately to the discussion &amp; learning. *Little or no use made of readings.</td>
<td>5 pts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APA Citations (Full reference not required for in-class readings.)</td>
<td>Sources are cited correctly in APA format.</td>
<td>Few sources are cited correctly in APA format.</td>
<td>No sources are cited correctly in APA format.</td>
<td>2 pts</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Total Points Possible** 10 pts

**NOTE:**

- Response 1 is due by midnight Mondays
- Responses 2 and 3 due by midnight Saturdays
Community Event/School Board Meeting
Assignment & Rubric
(30 points)

Consider what is happening in your community, and the surrounding school districts. For this assignment you have two options. You can find an educational community event to attend, or choose to attend a school board meeting. Choose carefully; you want to be able to connect what you are learning in class to what you learn from the event or meeting.

**SCHOOL BOARD MEETING — OR — COMMUNITY EVENT/MEETING**

**ATTENDANCE, REFLECTION AND PRESENTATION**

- Choose an event in your community or meeting in your district and connect what you see to curriculum and learning contexts.
- Write a 2-3 page critical reflection of what you learned (+ References). Include a description of the event (name, date, time, participants, presenters, location, language, etc.). Additional evaluation in rubric below.
- Ground your observations with a minimum of three (3) readings from class.
- Create a short (no more than 5 minute) presentation to share with the class.

**RUBRIC**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reflection of your Experience</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Your paper describes your visit and what you experienced in terms of the following points: what you saw, who you talked to, how you felt and what you thought about the meeting/event. What did you like, or not like? What did you learn from those you came in contact with? Why did you choose this event?</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Connections to Course Concepts &amp; Readings</th>
<th>15</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Especially important is for you to be specific about how you incorporate what you learned from the event into your understanding of curriculum and learning contexts. (5 pts)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Include at least one example of how the meeting/event informs/affects you and those you teach/will teach. (5 pts)</td>
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<tr>
<td>You were able to make a connection with a <em>minimum of three</em> course readings and elaborate upon such. You were also possibly able to connect personal experience, and discussions from class. (5 pts)</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>APA/Mechanics/Spelling/Grammar</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Smooth flow of ideas with excellent sentence structure; paper is cohesive; grammar is smooth; appropriate punctuation, sentence and paragraph formation; appropriate use of APA style for citations in text and reference list; no misspellings.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Presentation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Clear, brief and concise overview of event attended, why you chose it, what you learned, and how you connected the experience to the course concepts and readings. Creative multimedia use is encouraged (see Resources on Blackboard for options).</td>
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**Total Points** 30
For this assignment you have a choice, which should be based on whether or not you’re currently in the classroom. For example, if you are a pre-service teacher and/or have not taught before, then you may want to do a research paper to learn more about a curriculum topic you are interested in. If you are currently in-service and/or have taught before, then you may want to do a project that elaborates on your practice in the classroom.

The following are suggested ideas that you can further develop or you may choose a different project with my consent.

- A common group focus project that emerges from the course, or
- Individually contracted projects such as –
  - developing an in-service workshop for teachers or colleagues;
  - analyzing a curriculum project, a government policy, an educational program;
  - conducting a small research project such as studying the curriculum experiences of a single child;
  - researching a theoretical paper on some aspect of curriculum or pedagogy that we have dealt with in class;
  - develop/re-develop a curriculum unit;
  - your choice …

**PART I: PROSPECTUS (10 POINTS)**

After deep thoughts about what you want your final project to be, you will write up a 1-2 page prospectus of your curriculum project. Depending on your choice, you may modify the guidelines for the assignment as needed. If you choose an alternative, please include an adaptation of these guidelines for your project within your prospectus.

1. **Introduction** – 2 pts
   - Describe the project you have chose and the general area to be studied
   - Explain why this area is important to yourself and to the larger general area under study (*Curriculum & Pedagogy*)

2. **Background/Review of the Literature** – 2 pts
   - Describe what you already know about this area and what your research topics will include
   - Consider (at minimum) three questions that are guiding your interests. These may be narrowed down, expanded and/or changed over the course of your project.

3. **Research Questions/Methodology** – 2 pts
   - Describe the question(s) you are examining and a brief exploration of the claim(s)
   - List the specific question(s) and possible methodology
   - Explain how these research questions are related to the larger issues raised in the introduction

4. **Next Steps & Evaluation** – 2 pts
   - Describe how you will go about collecting research to answer the questions you are examining. What are the next steps to your project?
   - Consider the *General Project Evaluation and rubric (below)* for this assignment. How would you modify it to fit your project best? Provide example rubric.
5. Significance and Conclusion - 2 pts
   • Discuss, in general, how your proposed research may be significant to learning contexts in curriculum, and how your project may benefit the field. (In other words, why should someone care? If you were applying for money to do this, why would someone fund you? If you wanted to publish your results, why would they be interesting?)
   • Include all references (as applicable) in APA style.

PART II: PROJECT/PAPER (75 POINTS*)

Below are the general options available and the general evaluation rubric. Again - if you choose an alternative, please include an adaptation of these guidelines and evaluation rubric for your project within your prospectus.

A) Research Paper
If you have chosen to do a research paper, the following are your guidelines.

   • Introduction - Explain the issue you are examining and why it is significant to you and to main ideas within learning contexts in curriculum and pedagogy.
   • Literature Review - A description of your main focus in this area and discussion of your research topics in relation to the literature reviewed. 12 required references, 6 must be from in class readings, etc.
   • Research Exploration - An exploration of the claims found in response to your specific research questions. Explain how the research questions are related to the larger issues raised in the introduction.
   • Reflection - A description of how you went about collecting research to answer the questions you examined. What were the challenges and/or possibilities you found?
   • Conclusion - Discuss your final conclusions and significance of how your research informed your understanding of the topic specifically, and generally in relation to learning contexts of curriculum and pedagogy.
   • References - Include all references in paper and bibliography in APA style.

B) Research Study
If you have chosen to do a research study, the following are your guidelines.

   • Introduction - Explain the issue you examined and why it is significant to yourself and to the larger general area of Curriculum & Pedagogy. Include brief overview of study (Lit Review, Methods, etc.).
   • Literature Review - A description of your main research questions in this area and discussion of your research topics in relation to the literature reviewed. Explain how these questions relate to the larger issues raised in the study. 12 required references, 6 must be from in class readings, etc.
   • Methodology - A description of the method and theory used to examine your claims, and how you went about collecting research to answer them.
   • Analysis/Results - Discussion of your research data findings in relation to your initial questions.
   • Conclusion - Discuss the implications of your research, and its significance to learning contexts in curriculum and pedagogy. How does it would benefit the field (specifically, and in general)? (In other words, why should someone care? If you
were applying for money to do this, why would someone fund you? If you wanted
to publish your results, why would they be interesting?)
• **References** - Include all references in paper and bibliography in APA style.

**C) Curriculum Workshop**

*If you have chosen to do a curriculum workshop, the following are your guidelines.*

- Introduce and explain the issue you are examining, why it is significant, and according to whom? (Include references here)
- Identify target audience and expected outcomes
- What is the length of the workshop, materials and resources needed
- What is the essential question(s) guiding the workshop?
- Identify goals and objectives of workshop, aligned with professional development standards (as applicable to your field and state or national standards)
- Include detailed Workshop Agenda

**D) Curriculum Re-/Design**

*If you have chosen to create a curriculum unit or redesign one, the following are your guidelines.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unit Format</th>
<th>Individual Lesson Plan Format*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Unit Title</td>
<td>1. Overview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Rationale and Overview of unit*</td>
<td>2. Objectives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Unit Objectives</td>
<td>3. Materials and Resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Overview of Lessons</td>
<td>4. Planning and Preparation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Resources and Materials for the Unit</td>
<td>5. Background Info for Teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Reproducibles/Handouts</td>
<td>a. Vocabulary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Videos</td>
<td>b. Body of the Lesson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Publications</td>
<td>c. Summary and Closure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Technology</td>
<td>6. Assessment and Evaluation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. Audiovisual Equipment</td>
<td>7. Extensions / Interdisciplinary connections</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f. Consumables</td>
<td>8. Correlated local, state and national standards</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Introduce and explain the curriculum unit you are designing/re-designing, why it is significant, and according to whom? (Include references) Also include the length of the unit, and applicable grade level(s).

*If you use a different format/template than this, that is fine to use instead.

**General Project Evaluation**

In general, evaluation will be qualitative and in accordance with criteria appropriate to the subject matter. Evaluation criteria (where possible and appropriate for participation/projects and any of the above assignments) include:

- Evidence of knowledge of the course subject matter (references to readings, concepts, issues, use of language specific to discipline, use of APA, etc.).
- Understanding of the range of meanings and contexts of curriculum (e.g., curriculum commonplaces; curriculum concepts; historical themes; curriculum arguments).
- Understanding issues of pedagogy and method.
Knowledge of alternative forms of inquiry in curriculum (such as ethnography, phenomenology, hermeneutics, case study, narrative inquiry, action research, gender theory, autobiography, critical theory, deconstructionism, etc.)

- Competence in detecting assumptions and suppositions.
- Originality of argument, presentation.

**RUBRIC**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project Indicators</th>
<th>Possible points</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Provides evidence of knowledge of the course subject matter and the meanings of the concept of curriculum. References no less than 6 readings, concepts, issues, etc. discussed in class, in addition to outside research (minimum 12 references).</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demonstrates an understanding of the issues of pedagogy and method.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shows competence in detecting assumptions, biases, and/or pros and cons.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Incorporates a critical perspective, which addresses diverse and alternative forms of inquiry in curriculum.</td>
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**PART III: PRESENTATION (15 POINTS)**

Create a 5-7-minute presentation to share with the class. Be sure to include an abstract/introduction (max 250 words) of your project. **Structure the abstract in the same order as your project guidelines.** For example, if you did a research study, begin with a brief summary of the Introduction, and then continue on with a summary of the Method, Results, etc. of your paper.

**RUBRIC**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Presentation Indicators</th>
<th>Possible Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Content</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Provided concise coverage of topic, which contributed to the field of curriculum studies</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Delivery and Organization</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Creativity</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Presentation was creative and captured the audience’s attention, highlighting salient points of project</td>
<td>5</td>
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Tentative Schedule

WEEK 1 - January 20-25
Welcome!
Understanding Learning Contexts & Curriculum
Introduction to Curriculum Studies and Terms
Due – Critical Reflection 1
Required Readings

WEEK 2 - January 26-February 1
Understanding Learning Contexts & Curriculum
Historical Perspectives
Due – Prospectus (due 2/1)
Due – Critical Reflection 2
Required Readings
  • Video: Danger of a Single Story

WEEK 3 - February 2-8
Critiquing Learning Contexts & Curriculum
The Politics of Knowing
Due – Critical Reflection 3
Required Readings
  • Video: Conceptualizing Curriculum

WEEK 4 - February 9-15
Critiquing Learning Contexts & Curriculum
What Gets Left Out
Due – Community/School Board Paper (due 2/15)
Due – Critical Reflection 4
Required Readings
• Video: The Hidden Curricula of Education

WEEK 5 - February 16-22
Implications of Learning Contexts & Curriculum
How do Laws/Policies affect Classrooms?
Due - Critical Reflection 5
• Video: The Flat World and Education

WEEK 6 - February 23-March 1
Implications of Learning Contexts & Curriculum
What are some alternative approaches?
Due - Critical Reflection 6
Required Readings

WEEK 7 - March 2-7 MINI-MESTER FINALS WEEK
Moving Forward
Where do we go from here? Creating a philosophy or standpoint about curriculum/praxis...
Due - Critical Reflection 7
Due - Final Project (due 3/2)
Due - Project Presentation (3/2)