Urban Schools - Year 1

Course EDUC 5477
Thursday, 12:30-2:30, Room 1054

Instructor: Professor Goli Rezai-Rashti
grezaira@uwo.ca
Ext 88659

Teaching Assistant: Phillipa Myers
pmyers5@uwo.ca

Office location & hours: Room 1083, By Appointment

Calendar Copy:

An examination of social, political, economic, and educational factors that affect student achievement and engagement in urban schools. Issues of race, ethnicity, class, poverty, gender, sexuality, and other background factors are explored. Teacher Candidates acquire critical frameworks to assist in addressing inequities in urban schools.

Course Description:

This course introduces teacher candidates to teaching in urban contexts. The focus of the course is to enhance students’ knowledge of urban schooling, especially in relation to dynamics of race, poverty, gender, sexuality and other forms of inequities. The discussion will focus on the diversities and complexities of teaching in urban schools and provide participants with critical frameworks to address issues of social justice and equity in the classroom.

Learning Outcomes:

By the end of the course, students will be able to…

- understand equity issues in urban contexts, in relation to race, poverty, gender, sexuality, and other forms of inequities
- make connections between different forms of oppression in education
• demonstrate understanding of issues of social justice and equity in the classroom
• communicate thinking processes about the diversities and complexities of teaching in urban schools
• Transfer knowledge between theory and practice
• apply the skills of a critical and reflexive practitioner

Course Materials:

Required Reading:


Other required readings are listed below and will made available online for download. You are able to download journal articles through Western Library. Additional readings are at the end of the course outline and may be useful for writing your final paper.

Course Content:

First Term: 2016

1) Understanding Urban Education

Week 1 (September 8) - What is Urban Education?
Introduction, discussion of course outline and assignments.

Week 2 (September 15) - Critical Thinking and Urban Contexts
What does it mean to be a critical thinker/practitioner? What is critical in critical thinking?

Reading(s):

Week 3 (September 22) - The Urbanization of Suburbs
What could be done to address issues of marginalization and exclusion in inner-suburban schools and communities?

Readings:

**Recommended Reading:**

**Week 4 (September 29) - Key Concepts in Social Justice Education: Oppression, Power and Privilege**

How do we define oppression?
What is privilege? How do these issues have an impact on students in urban schools?

**Reading(s):**

**Week 5 (October 6) - Poverty and Schooling**

How do we prepare teachers to teach students from low socio-economic backgrounds?

**Readings:**

**Recommended Reading:**

**Reading Week: October 11–14 Happy Thanksgiving**

**2) Race, Racism and Antiracism Education**

**Week 6 (October 20) - Race, Racism, and the Education of Minority Students**

How do racial, cultural and language differences affect the education of minority students? Aboriginal students?

**Readings:**
Week 7 (October 27) - Multiculturalism and Antiracism Education
What is the difference between multiculturalism and antiracist education?

Readings:

Week 8 (November 3) - Anti-Muslim Racism and Islamophobia
What are the experiences Muslim Students in the context of increasing Islamophobia?

Readings:

Recommended Reading:

Week 9 (November 10) - Religious Diversity and School Holidays
How do we deal with religious diversity in the classroom?

Readings:

Second Term: 2017

Week 10 (January 12) – Immigrants and Refugees

Readings: TBA

3) Addressing Gender Issues in Urban Schools
Week 11 (January 19) - Gender Identity, Sexism & Homophobia
How do we understand sexism and homophobia?

Readings:

Recommended Reading: TBA

Week 12 (January 26) - Intersectionality, Connecting Racism and Sexism
A discussion of complexities of identities and the intersection of race, class and gender

Readings:

Recommended Readings: TBA

Week 13 (February 2) - Addressing Transgender and Gender Non-Conforming Students
Challenging assumptions about gender and gender non-conforming students

Readings:

Recommended Viewing:
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Lm4vyxZrAig

Fact Sheet: Transgender and Gender non-conforming Youth in School:
http://srlp.org/resources/fact-sheet-transgender-gender-nonconforming-youth-school/


Week 14 (February 9): Presentations, to be scheduled
Week 15 (February 16): Presentations, to be scheduled

Week 16 (February 23): Presentations, to be scheduled

Week 17 (March 2): Presentations, to be scheduled

Week 18: (March 9) - Teaching for Equity and Social Justice: Putting it all Together

- How should we teach social justice education in urban contexts?
- How do we apply what we learn into our professional practice?

Reading:

Assignments and Other Course Requirements:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Due Date(s)</th>
<th>Weighting</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Class Participation</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weekly Reflections</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Critical Autobiographical Essay</td>
<td>October 6, 2016</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Critical Reflection Paper</td>
<td>November 10, 2016</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group Presentation</td>
<td>To be Scheduled</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Research Paper</td>
<td>March 9, 2017</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1) Class Participation (10%) - Ongoing

1. Come to every class and complete required readings
2. Complete weekly reflection and post online
3. Come with an open mind and respect for the views of others
4. Participate but do not dominate the conversations

2) Weekly Reflections (15%) - Ongoing
Students will complete a one-page response paper. The response paper will consist of an initial response to the reading. You will post your response and other students will be able to read and write further comments in response to your reflections if they so wish. You will need to bring a paper copy of your response to class each week.

Questions to guide your weekly reflections:

1. Thesis: What is the author’s main argument or point?

2. Implications and conclusions: Summarize the author’s conclusions and the significance of the work. What significance does the reading have for understanding social justice education?

3. Comment/Reaction: What was your reaction to the reading? Were there themes with which you agreed or disagreed? Were there points or concepts you did not understand?

3) Critical Autobiographical Essay (20%) [1500 words]

This essay is about you. It provides you with the opportunity to reflect on your own experiences of school. What was school like for you? When you reflect back on your own life as a student at school can you identify any experience of social injustice or inequity? Or did you witness any such experience? Did you ever feel disempowered at school? Explain what teaching in urban schools means to you. How have the readings/set texts informed your understanding about what it means to teach in urban schools? Given that this is a personal and reflective essay you are able to use first person in writing this essay. Remember, this assignment is asking you to reflect on your own experiences, but it also asks you to use your engagement with the course readings to build deeper understandings about equity and social justice in schools. Use the course readings to further develop your reflections on your own experience and/or as a springboard for your personal reflections about school and what it means to teach for equity and social justice.

Note: Before beginning this assignment you should read the following chapter by Darling-Hammond in Learning to Teach for Social Justice, Chapter 22: ‘Educating a Profession for Equitable Practice’ (pp. 201–212).

Criteria for Assessment
- Clearly explains/outlines own understandings about teaching for equity and social justice
- Identifies specific experiences as a student at school and discusses their significance
- Uses both personal experiences and course readings to illustrate a deep understanding about teaching for equity and social justice
- Well-written and structured

4) Critical Reflection Paper (20%) – [1500 words]

In this paper you should outline your understanding of urban education. Outline your definition of urban education by drawing on both the course readings and your own experiences as a student/educator. You need to reflect on what it means to teach in urban schools, given both your
experiences and knowledge gleaned from the course readings. This essay is an opportunity for you to reflect on your own experiences and understandings, while engaging with the issues raised in the course readings. In this sense, it involves combining course content/knowledge with deep reflection on one’s own experience. How have the readings informed your understanding of teaching for equity and social justice? You might want to take issue with the writer(s) or raise some concerns. Alternatively, you might want to generate your own question or issue in response to any of the readings and to develop your ideas further. The aim of this essay is to provide you with the opportunity to reflect more deeply on issues that are of interest or relevant to you in light of the aims of this course and given your experience. You are able to use first person in writing this response paper. The paper should be typed and double-spaced.

Criteria for Assessment
- Clearly defines equity and social justice education
- Makes reference to the reading(s)
- Draws on personal experience in light of course reading
- Demonstrates deep, reflective analysis and insight into what it means to teach in urban schools in light of the issues raised by the course reading(s)

5) Group Presentation and Individual Research Paper: Building Knowledge and Understanding about Teaching in Urban Schools

This is a fairly open-ended project. The major purpose is to give students the opportunity to research or examine a particular urban school issue in greater depth. Once you have investigated the topic, you will need to plan in your groups how you are going to present what you have learned and what the implications are for teaching equity and social justice in schools.

Suggested topics/foci for your research projects:
- Anti-Racist Education in Schools
- Urban poverty and education
- Combating Islamaphobia or addressing Anti-Semitism in Schools
- Finding out more about the experiences of visible minority or First Nations’ students in schools
- What does addressing equity and social justice mean in your particular discipline or curriculum area? (You may choose to work with a group of students who are all training to be English teachers, for example)
- Examining/Evaluating a particular resource for teaching in urban schools (How effective or useful is it?)
- Using popular culture to teach about equity and social justice in schools
- How can learning about students’ backgrounds and outside of school lives make you a better teacher?
- Talking to recent graduates from visible/sexual minority groups about their lives at school.
- Finding out more about what teachers are doing in schools to address issues of equity and social justice
- Case study of social justice/equity program in a particular urban school
• Seeking out reliable background knowledge of the racial and ethnocultural make-up of a school community and its implications for practice
• Providing culturally-relevant pedagogy for children from diverse communities
• Addressing the Gender and Sex based dimensions of harassment in schools
• Straight/Gay Alliances in Schools
• Anti-Homophobic Education in Schools

5a) Component 1: Group Presentation (15%)
You will have 40–50 minutes to present to the class. You will need to decide in your groups how you are going to do this. Each person needs to make a contribution. In your group you need to discuss how you will coordinate the presentation. Groups should comprise of no more than 5 students. The main purpose of the presentation is to present to the rest of the class what you have learned about your topic and how it informs your understanding about teaching in urban schools. The best way to do this is to engage the class by involving them in some activity or task, i.e. use a resource or develop an activity to illustrate your point and what it means in relation to practice.

Criteria for Assessment
Introduction:
• Topic is outlined/explained
• Reasons for choosing the topic are made explicit
• Why is this topic important/significant to you?

Content:
• What have you gained from doing this research/analysis?
• What has been learned about the topic? How is this communicated?
• Are other media and/or activities used to engage the class?
• What attempt is made to actively involve the class?
• Are implications for practice made explicit?

General:
• Illustrates how in-depth knowledge about the topic informs policy and/or practice in schools

5b) Component 2: Individual Paper (20%)
Each individual group member will be responsible for writing on their chosen topic. Here you have the opportunity to develop certain aspects or dimensions of the presentation/topic as you see fit. However, this paper should deal with outlining what knowledge has been gained and what the implications are for practice in the classroom and/or schools. This component enables you to provide more detail and to engage with the issues raised throughout the course as they relate to your topic/focus in a more in-depth manner. Your paper should be between 8–10 pages (2500–3000 words), double-spaced and typed. You have to carefully edit your work and make sure it is presented without spelling and grammatical mistakes. The following criteria should help in writing up this paper:

Criteria for Assessment
Introduction:
• Outlines topic and its significance. Why is this focus important?
Background Information/Context:
- What sources did you use?
- Any other details about context or resources or literature that you have read to build your knowledge and understanding about the topic.
- What course readings have you found useful in helping you to think about what teaching for equity and social justice might look like in practice?

Framework:
- What framework informs your understanding of the topic?
- Draws on course readings and/or set texts to present an informed perspective on your chosen topic.

Implications for practice:
- Is your work able to translate theory into practice or demonstrates how practice is informed by course readings/set texts?
- What does this knowledge about the topic mean for you as a prospective teacher?
- How has it helped you to think through what teaching in urban schools entails?
- What does teaching for equity and social justice involve in relation to your chosen topic/focus?

Policy Statements:

Accessibility: The University of Western Ontario is committed to recognizing the dignity and independence of all students and seeks to ensure that persons with disabilities have genuine, open and unhindered access to academic services. Please contact the course instructor if you require course materials in an alternative format or if any other arrangements can make this course more accessible to you. You may also wish to contact Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) at 661-2111 x 82147 for information about requesting academic accommodation, or go to the following website: http://www.edu.uwo.ca/programs/preservice-education/documents/policies/Accessibility_Western.pdf

ATTENDANCE: The B.Ed. program is an intense and demanding programs of professional preparation. You are expected to demonstrate high levels of both academic and professional integrity. Such integrity is demonstrated in part by your commitment to and attendance at all classes, workshops, tutorials, and practicum activities. Read more about the Faculty’s attendance policy online: http://www.edu.uwo.ca/programs/preservice-education/Attendance%20Policy%202016.pdf

EXCUSED ABSENCES: If you are ill, require compassionate leave, or must miss classes for religious observance, your absence is excused; you will not be penalized but you are responsible for work missed.

UNEXCUSED ABSENCES: Any absence that is not a result of illness, bereavement, or religious observance is an unexcused absence. Three unexcused absences will result in you being referred to the Associate Dean and placed on academic probation. Any further unexcused absence will result in failure of the course and withdrawal from the program.

Language Proficiency: In accordance with regulations established by the Senate of the University, you must demonstrate the ability to write clearly and correctly. Work which lacks proficiency in the
language of instruction is unacceptable for academic credit, and will either be failed or, at the discretion of the instructor, returned to you for revision to an acceptable level.

**Late Penalties:** Normally, the only acceptable reasons for late or missed assignments are illness (which you must report to the Teacher Education Office) or extreme compassionate circumstances. Unexcused late assignments will be penalized at a rate of 10% per day, and will not be accepted more than 2 days after the due date unless prior arrangements have been made with the instructor.

**Academic Offences:** Scholastic offences are taken very seriously in this professional Faculty. You are, after all, going to be a teacher. Read about what constitutes a Scholastic Offence at the following Web site: [http://www.edu.uwo.ca/programs/preservice-education/documents/policies/WEB_ScholasticDiscipline.pdf](http://www.edu.uwo.ca/programs/preservice-education/documents/policies/WEB_ScholasticDiscipline.pdf)

**Plagiarism:** Plagiarism means presenting someone else’s words or ideas as your own. The concept applies to all assignments, including lesson and unit plans, laboratory reports, diagrams, and computer projects. For further information, consult your instructors, the Associate Dean’s Office, and current style manuals. *Advice about plagiarism and how to avoid it can also be found here:* [http://www.edu.uwo.ca/programs/preservice-education/documents/policies/WEB_PlagiarismPolicy.pdf](http://www.edu.uwo.ca/programs/preservice-education/documents/policies/WEB_PlagiarismPolicy.pdf)

**Plagiarism-Checking:**

a. All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com ([http://www.turnitin.com](http://www.turnitin.com))

b. Computer-marked multiple-choice tests and/or exams may be subject to submission for similarity review by software that will check for unusual coincidences in answer patterns that may indicate cheating.

**Use of Laptops & Notebooks in Class:** As a courtesy to members of the class, please put your cell phone on ‘vibrate’ or turn it off during class. Lap tops and other electronic devices may be used in a professional manner to facilitate your activities in the course, but out of courtesy to colleagues and the instructor, please do not engage in personal networking and non-course communication during class time – save it for before or after class, or for the break.
**SUPPORT SERVICES**

A variety of support services are available at Western. If you need advice or assistance, do not hesitate to get in touch with any of these services.

**FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE:** Registrarial Services ([http://www.registrar.uwo.ca](http://www.registrar.uwo.ca))

**WRITING SUPPORT:** Student Development Centre ([http://www.sdc.uwo.ca/](http://www.sdc.uwo.ca/))

**LEARNING SKILLS SUPPORT:** Student Development Centre ([http://www.sdc.uwo.ca/](http://www.sdc.uwo.ca/))

**INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS:** Student Development Centre ([http://www.sdc.uwo.ca/](http://www.sdc.uwo.ca/))

**ABORIGINAL STUDENTS:** Student Development Centre ([http://www.sdc.uwo.ca/](http://www.sdc.uwo.ca/))

**STUDENTS with DISABILITIES:** Student Development Centre ([http://www.sdc.uwo.ca/](http://www.sdc.uwo.ca/))

**SOCIAL & CULTURAL ISSUES:** University Students’ Council ([http://westernusc.ca/services/](http://westernusc.ca/services/)).

**EMOTIONAL or MENTAL DISTRESS:** Students who are in emotional or mental distress should refer to Mental Health @ Western [http://www.uwo.ca/uwocom/mentalhealth/](http://www.uwo.ca/uwocom/mentalhealth/) for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.

**B.Ed. PROGRAM ISSUES:** [zuber@uwo.ca](mailto:zuber@uwo.ca), Teacher Education Office, room 1166

**NEED HELP but not sure what to do:** [zuber@uwo.ca](mailto:zuber@uwo.ca), Teacher Education Office, room 1166

**Additional Readings and Resources:**


