Urban Schools - Year 1

Course EDUC 5477
Thursdays, 8:30-10:30 Room 2042

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Office location & hours: Room 1083, Thursdays 11:00-12:00 or 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, sexual orientation, 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:

- To learn the significance of being a critical and reflective practitioner
- To gain knowledge about teaching in urban schools
- To become a teacher who has developed a critical understanding of the multiple perspectives, key issues and current debates about urban education
- To understand the connections between different forms of oppression
• To understand the intersections between this knowledge and their professional practice as educators and to connect theory and practice

Course Materials:

Required Reading:


All required and recommended readings will be made available online via OWL for download.

Course Content:

First Term: 2017

1) Understanding Urban Education

Week 1 (September 7) – Introduction to the Course
Introduction, discussion of course outline and assignments

Week 2 (September 14) – What is Urban Education?

Reading:


Recommended Reading:


Week 3 (September 21) - The Urbanization, Poverty and Schooling

What could be done to address issues of marginalization and exclusion in inner-suburban schools and communities?

Readings:

**Recommended Reading:**

**Week 4 (September 28)- Critical Thinking and Urban Contexts**
What does it mean to be a critical thinker/practitioner? What is critical in critical thinking?

Reading(s):

**Week 5 (October 5) - 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):

**Recommended Reading:**

**Reading Week: October 9–13 Happy Thanksgiving**

**Week 6 (October 19) - Poverty and Schooling**
How do we prepare teachers to teach students from low socio-economic backgrounds?

Readings:

**Reading Week: October 9–13 Happy Thanksgiving**

2) **Race, Racism and Antiracism Education**
Week 7 (October 26) - Race, Racism, and the Education of Minority Students
How do racial, cultural and language differences affect the education of minority students?

Readings:

Recommended Reading:

Week 8 (November 2) - Multiculturalism and Antiracism Education
What is the difference between multiculturalism and antiracist education?

Readings:

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

Readings:
Second Term: 2018

Week 10 (January 11) – Islam, Muslim Students and Islamophobia
What are the experiences Muslim Students in the context of increasing Islamophobia?

Readings:

3) Addressing Gender Issues in Urban Schools

Week 11 (January 18) - Gender Identity, Sexism and Homophobia
How do we understand gender & sexism?

Readings:

Recommended Readings

Week 12 (January 25) – Intersectionality: Connecting Race, Class, Gender and Sexuality
A discussion of complexities of identities and the intersection of race, class and gender

Readings:

4) Immigrant Students and Student Achievement

Week 13 (February 2) – Experiences of Immigrant and Refugee Parents and Children
Issues of language diversity, immigration and refugee experiences

Readings:

Week 14 (February 8) - Achievement Gap and Urban Schools
Impact of Standardized testing and accountability on students’ achievement

Readings:

Recommend Reading:

Week 15 (February 15): Presentations, scheduled (2 groups)

Week 16 (February 22): Presentations, scheduled (2 groups)

Week 17 (March 1): Presentations, scheduled (2 groups)

Week 18: (March 8): 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:

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<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Due Date(s)</th>
<th>Weighting</th>
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<tr>
<td>Class Participation</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<td>Weekly Reflections</td>
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Critical Autobiographical Essay  October 5, 2016  20%
Critical Reflection Paper  November 9, 2016  20%
Group Presentation  To be Scheduled  15%
Final Research Paper  March 15, 2017  20%

1) Class Participation (10%) - Ongoing

1. Come to every class and complete required readings
2. Complete weekly reflection and post a copy 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 that include 2-3 questions as a reaction to weekly readings. 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 urban and 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 schooling experiences. What was school like for you? When you reflect back on your own life as a student, can you identify any experience of social injustice or inequity? Or did you witness any such experience? Did you ever feel disempowered at school? Moreover, 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 engage with 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 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 readings
- 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 with your group members 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 Islamophobia 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 lives outside of school make you a better teacher?
- Talking to recent graduates from visible/sexual minority groups about their experiences 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 during the presentation, and as a group you will 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 an activity or task, i.e. use a resource or develop an activity to illustrate your point and what it means in relation to practice. Feel free to be creative.

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 media sources 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 6-8 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/teacher-education/docs/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 on-line at http://www.edu.uwo.ca/teacher-education/docs/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, all teacher candidates must demonstrate the ability to write clearly and correctly. Work which shows a lack of 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 the teacher candidate for revision to a literate level.

Late Penalties: Normally, the only acceptable reasons for late or missed assignments are illness (for which a doctor’s statement may be required) 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/teacher-education/docs/policies/WEB_ScholasticDiscipline.pdf

Plagiarism: Plagiarism means presenting someone else’s words or ideas as one’s own. The concept applies to all assignments, including lesson and unit plans, laboratory reports, diagrams, and computer projects. For further information, teacher candidates may consult their instructors, the Associate Dean’s Office, and current style manuals. Advice about plagiarism and how to avoid it can also be found on the Preservice website: http://www.edu.uwo.ca/preservice/downloads/Plagiarism%20Policy.pdf

Plagiarism-Checking:
1. 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).
2. 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. Laptops 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 engage in personal networking and non-course communication only outside class time – before or after class, or at 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./Dip.Ed. PROGRAM ISSUES:** zuber@uwo.ca, Teacher Education Office, room 1131

**NEED HELP but not sure what to do:** zuber@uwo.ca, Teacher Education Office, room 1131
Additional Readings and Resources:


Young, E. (2010). Challenges to conceptualizing and actualizing culturally relevant pedagogy: How