

## **Individual and Cultural Diversity in the Classroom (3 credits)**

**05: 300: 401**

**Spring 2024**

### **INSTRUCTOR**

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**Prerequisites:** Admission to the GSE Teacher Education Programs or Designation as an Education Minor and 05:300:200 Introduction to Education

**Mode of Instruction:** Online- Asynchronous

**Course Description:** This course is designed to explore diversity within contemporary classroom and the range of related and intersecting topics. In this course we will focus on social identities, cultural, linguistic, and academic differences, and theorize ideas, practices, and methods of inclusion for the regular school setting that houses student diversity.

### **ABOUT THE COURSE**

This course is designed to provide an overview of the ways that individual identity, cultural practice, social power relationships, institutional norms, and curricular messages function in increasingly diverse U.S. educational settings. We will attend particularly to ways that individuals and groups are (and have been) marginalized in society and in educational settings. We will critically examine the impact of that marginalization explicitly in the areas of race, gender, sexuality, language, ability, class, ethnicity, and citizen status. Please note that this is not an exhaustive list of areas of marginality or diversity and that marginality and diversity occurs and exists at components and intersections beyond those explored in the course. Please use the skills and knowledge honed during this course to continue critical examination of diversity, issues of equity, and inclusion as it relates to U.S. classrooms.

Through ongoing personal (and for some, professional) reflections, critical readings and inquiry into human diversity, marginalization, and institutional and social power relationships, you will have the opportunity to theorize adequate and responsive ways of for you to create a socially just classroom serving diverse populations as scholars, problem-solvers, and partners.

It is my intention that through assignments and material we engage such issues as:

- What and whose knowledge is represented in classrooms?
- How are individuals and groups positioned in society largely and subsequently in schools?
- What are our underlying assumptions?
- How do the classroom and school “climate” and culture influence learning for students from historically marginalized groups?
- Whose view of the world is silenced or privileged within particular pedagogies?
- How do these issues relate to the over-all socio-political context AND the world of

“What should I teach this week?”

- How does who we are as teachers and in our personal life experience influence our approach to teaching students from historically marginalized groups?
- What are the relationships between culture, society, and education?
- What are the dynamics of daily life in schools as institutions in particular organizational and community contexts?
- In what ways are gender, language, culture, race, social class, and the relationship between school and culture important to our education?
- What can we, as teachers, do to educate students for democratic empowerment and social justice?

Anchoring each of these questions (and the larger implications of them) is the assumption that teachers, individually and collectively, have a great influence on their students and the world in which we live. This influence ought to be acted upon consciously and decisively, and presumably in the interest of educational equity and social justice. This course is designed to help inform that process of conscious decision-making. There will be many opportunities for you to develop your own interests and pursue them through individual and collective inquiry. As we move through the course I also encourage you to think, examine, and reflect on our covered topics and materials in relation to the standards listed in the following section.

## **New Jersey Professional Standards for Teachers Addressed in this Course:**

**Standard 2** - Teachers shall understand how children and adolescents develop and learn in a variety of school, family and community contexts and provide opportunities that support their intellectual, social, emotional and physical development.

*Teachers know and understand:*

- 2.2 How student learning is influenced by individual experiences, talents and prior learning, as well as language, culture, family, and community values; and
- 2.3 How to identify and teach to the developmental abilities of students, which may include learning differences, visual and perceptual differences, cultural and socio-emotional differences, special physical or emotional challenges and gifted and talented exceptionalities.

*Teachers value and are committed to:*

- 2.4 The educability of all children and adolescents;
- 2.5 The belief that all children and adolescents bring talents and strengths to learning;
- 2.6 Appreciation for multiple ways of knowing;
- 2.7 The diverse talents of all students and to helping them develop self-confidence and subject matter competence; and
- 2.8 The belief that all children and adolescents can learn at high levels and achieve success.

**Standard 3** - Teachers shall understand the practice of culturally responsive teaching.

*Teachers know and understand:*

- 3.1 How a person’s world view is profoundly shaped by his or her life experiences, as mediated by factors such as social class, gender, race, ethnicity, language, sexual orientation, age and special needs;
- 3.2 The supports for and barriers to culturally responsive teaching in school environments;
- 3.3 The process of second language acquisition and strategies to support the learning of students whose first language is not English; and
- 3.4 The negative impact of bias, prejudice, and discrimination on students and society.

*Teachers value and are committed to:*

3.5 Respect for individual and cultural differences, and appreciation of the basic worth of each individual and cultural group; and

3.6 The diversity of learning that takes place in the classroom, respect for the talents and perspectives of each student and sensitivity to community and cultural norms.

*Teachers engage in activities to:*

3.7 Create a learning community in which individual differences are respected;

3.8 Learn about the diverse students they teach, and the students' families and communities;

3.9 Use strategies to support the learning of students whose first language is not English; and

3.10 Use knowledge of students and their lives to design and carry out instruction that builds on students' strengths while meeting their needs and taking into account issues of social class, gender, race, ethnicity, language, sexual orientation, age and special needs.

**Standard 7** - Teachers shall adapt and modify instruction to accommodate the special learning needs of all students.

*Teachers know and understand:*

7.1 How to access information regarding applicable laws, rules, regulations and procedural safeguards regarding planning and implementing the individual education program; and

7.2 Available resources related to educational strategies to accommodate individual differences and to employ positive behavioral intervention techniques to students with special needs.

*Teachers value and are committed to:*

7.3 The belief that children and adolescents with special needs can learn at high levels and achieve success.

*Teachers engage in activities to:*

7.4 Apply knowledge of students' abilities/disabilities, experiences, talents and prior learning, as well as language, culture, economics, family and community values to positively impact student learning;

## GOALS OF THE COURSE

Through this course, you will work to **develop an understanding of issues of equity and diversity and how they are integrally related to successful teaching**. You will interrogate your own perspectives, beliefs, assumptions, rationale, and understandings about diversity (diversity of students in classrooms) as well as and your own position within institutional power relationships.

We will examine the political nature of education through an ongoing critical analysis of the taken-for-granted. **One goal of the class is for students to question, challenge, and even critique what schools and dominant society tell us is "normal" and "right."** Through critical questioning, we will examine notions of community, family, poverty, race, dysfunction, gender, sexuality, disability, religion, schooling, and education. This kind of analysis is designed to provide you with a framework to understand your critical roles as teachers and generate an understanding the context of schooling from a non-dominant perspective.

## GROUND RULES

*"To engage in learning always entails the risk that learning may have an impact on you, that learning may change you. This means that [learning and therefore] education only occurs when the learner is willing to take a risk."*

- G. Biesta

In this course we will be discussing and engaging topics about which many of us will feel passionate. Often people in the class will disagree with me and with each other. At times, you are likely feeling uncomfortable in this course – This is a GOOD thing. Discomfort has potential to lead to new understanding. In this course you will be challenged; you will also be asked to share your opinions – even if they are unpopular – and your opinions may be challenged. Through healthy, intellectual, debate, we can all learn something and come to new understandings. It is important to remember when we disagree about issues, we are engaging in intellectual debate, not personal attack. **The primary rule for this class is to enter each day with an open mind and be willing to question the taken-for-granted.**

As part of creating a community in which discomfort can be productive, I am asking you to embrace a stance of *humility*, *inquiry*, and *empathy*. By *humility*, I mean that we will all be open to considering new ideas—especially ideas that might conflict with our current worldview. By *inquiry*, I mean that we will be constantly seeking to ask questions and to learn from each other, from the readings, and ultimately, from our future students and their families. By *empathy*, I mean that we will attempt to step into other people’s shoes, and that we will treat one another with kindness and respect.

We will also be adhering to certain ground rules in our class. Though we will discuss these rules together, the following rules are those that I have found to be most helpful in the past:

- **Take risks.**  
*Ask questions, raise new perspectives, stay engaged—even when you are uncomfortable.*
- **Assume good intentions.**  
*If someone in the class says something you find hurtful or offensive, assume that they did not do so intentionally. Share your perspective—educate them.*
- **Try on new ideas.**  
*Push yourself to entertain new ideas—especially ones that you might want to reject right off the bat! Question things that are the taken-for-granted or just “common sense.”*
- **Respect confidentiality.**  
*For anyone to feel comfortable taking risks and sharing their thoughts and experiences, they need to feel reasonably secure that what they say is not going to end up as gossip once class is over.*
- **Take care of yourself.**  
*The topics we discuss in class often bring up strong emotions for people. Remember to take care of yourself, and please come talk to me or write me an email if ever something happens that makes you particularly uncomfortable.*

One final point regarding class expectations: I consider you all to be teachers now. As teachers—people who will be caring for children—you have a professional responsibility to take what we are learning seriously, to do your part by reading and participating, and to treat your classmates with kindness and respect.

## Course Expectations

- It is essential that you be actively engaged in online discussions and activities. Doing so not only significantly impacts your own learning, but also the learning of your peers, and of your future students.

- Reading is assigned **weekly**. Reading is a critical part of this course. All required readings have been carefully selected based upon their relevance to the topic at hand, the significance of the ideas they contain, and how accessible and (hopefully) interesting/enjoyable they are to read. None of the readings are expendable—please take this seriously.
- You are expected to turn in all work on time. If you need an extension, be sure to ask for it before the due date. Extensions will only be granted for legitimate reasons and will only be granted **24 hours before the due date**. Late papers for which you have not been granted an extension will be subject to a grade penalty. When an extension has not been granted, grades on assignments will be lowered one grade for each day they are late.
- Anyone with a learning difference needing accommodations of any kind should contact me as soon as possible.

Rutgers University welcomes students with disabilities into all the University's educational programs. In order to receive consideration for reasonable accommodations, a student with a disability must contact the appropriate disability services office at the campus where you are officially enrolled, participate in an intake interview, and provide documentation:  
<https://ods.rutgers.edu/students/documentation-guidelines>.

If the documentation supports your request for reasonable accommodations, your campus's disability services office will provide you with a Letter of Accommodations. Please share this letter with your instructors and discuss the accommodations with them as early in your courses as possible. To begin this process, please complete the Registration form on the ODS web site at:  
<https://ods.rutgers.edu/students/registration-form>.

## **REQUIRED TEXTS:**

All required articles will be available through the course Canvas Website (please see week by week).

## **COURSE ASSIGNMENTS**

### **Bi-Weekly Reflection Assignments Blogs (35%)**

All students will be responsible for completing bi-weekly reflection assignments (1-2 pages double-spaced). Each reflection assignment has a different topic and is available via the respective weekly module of the course canvas website. Reflections will be graded according to the following 5pt scale.

#### **Reflection Assignments Grading Rubric**

**Reflection assignments will be graded using a 5-point scale based on the following point allocation:**

5-Addresses prompt completely. Strong incorporation of weekly readings to support discussion. Assignment is submitted on time.

4-Addresses prompt completely. Incorporation of weekly readings to support discussion. Assignment is submitted on time.

3- Addresses prompt to some degree. Some incorporation of weekly readings.

2-Assignment is complete and submitted on time. Little reference to weekly readings or poor incorporation of weekly readings. Prompt is not fully addressed.

1-Assignment is incomplete.

0-Assignment is not submitted.

### **Additional Assignments (20%)**

See Weekly Course Website Modules

### **Midterm Paper (20%)– Friday, March 8<sup>th</sup>**

Details discussed closer to date.

### **Final Paper (25%) – Thursday, May 7<sup>th</sup>**

Details discussed closer to date.

**Academic Integrity:** I expect that you will comply with standards of academic integrity (that is, you will not even think about cheating) in this course. If you need assistance in understanding an assignment or course content, please seek assistance from other appropriate resources or me. Assignments, however, should be your own work, except in cases where I have required a group product. The consequence for violating policies of academic integrity and other elements of the student code of conduct are serious and can have a tremendous negative impact on your academic progress and future career. You should not turn in the same work in two separate classes without the specific written approval of the faculty members involved. Leaving work until the last minute can increase the temptation to plagiarize work from journals or “borrow” friends’ work. Any violation of academic honesty is a serious offense and is therefore subject to an appropriate penalty. Refer to <http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/integrity.shtml> for a full explanation of policies.

### **Letter Grade Equivalents:**

90-100	A
87-89	B+
80-86	B
77-79	C+
70-76	C
60-69	D
Below 60	F

## *Grading Summary*

A = Outstanding work

B = Good work

C = Satisfactory work

F = Failing work (also stopped attending without withdrawing)

## **Writing Guidelines**

- All papers should address fully the questions asked. Please refer to the grading rubric for each written assignment to be sure that you are addressing everything.
- Your writing should reflect a critical analysis – think of it as you are building a case, or an argument to support your point of view. Be sure you have a thesis statement to frame your paper.
- All headings, style, in text citations, and bibliography should be in APA format. You can go to the following website to get specific guidelines for APA:  
<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/>
- Please be sure to edit your work for spelling and grammar. You will lose points for these errors. Don't forget to use paragraphs!!!!

## SCHEDULE OF CLASSES<sup>1</sup>

Date/ Tentative Topics	Required Readings and Materials	Assignment Due
<p><b>Week 1</b> 1/16/24</p> <p><b>Starting with Self--How WE Show Up in the Classroom</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>READ</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Crenshaw. Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex.pdf</li> <li>● Ladson-billings-1995-toward-a-theory-of-culturally-relevant-pedagogy.pdf</li> <li>● The State of School Diversity in the United States.pdf</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>WATCH</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The Urgency of Intersectionality <a href="https://www.ted.com/talks/kimberle_crenshaw_the_urgency_of_intersectionality#t-112215">https://www.ted.com/talks/kimberle_crenshaw_the_urgency_of_intersectionality#t-112215</a></li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Reflection #1</b> <u>Due: Sunday 1/21/24</u></p>
<p><b>Week 2</b> 1/22/24</p> <p><b>Continuing with Self-- Interrogating Our Blind-spots and Areas of Support</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Understanding Implicit Bias What Educators Should Know.pdf</li> <li>● McIntosh.pdf</li> <li>● Bristol-martin-fernandez-2019-the-added-value-of-latinx-and-black-teachers-for-latinx-and-black-students-implications.pdf</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>OPTIONAL</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Implicit Bias Test</p>
<p><b>Week 3</b> 1/29/24</p> <p><b>Schooling Inequity Part 1-- Institutional and Structural Inequity</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Unequal Opportunity School and Neighborhood Segregation in the USA.pdf</li> <li>● Segregation: Desegregation Segregation Charter School Options as a Return to Separate and Unequal Schools for Urban Families.pdf</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Reflection #2</b> <u>Due: Sunday 02/04/24</u></p>

<sup>1</sup> Syllabus is subject to change. Check Canvas regularly for updates and materials.



<p><b>Week 4</b> 2/05/24</p> <p><b>Schooling Inequity Part 2: Schooling Inequity in the Classroom</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tatum, B. (2003). <i>Why are all the black kids sitting together in the cafeteria?: And other conversations about race</i>. New York: Basic Books. Read: chap. 6</li> <li>• Hoffman (2012)</li> <li>• Skiba (2008)</li> <li>• Model Minority Op-Ed I Tried to Fight Racism by Being a “model Minority” and Then it Backfired: <a href="https://www.teenvogue.com/story/fight-racism-model-minority-yassmin-abdel-magied">https://www.teenvogue.com/story/fight-racism-model-minority-yassmin-abdel-magied</a></li> </ul>	
<p><b>Week 5</b> 2/12/24</p> <p><b>Social Construction of Gender &amp; Sexuality</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kimmel, M. S. (2009). Masculinity as homophobia: Fear, shame, and silence in the construction of gender identity.</li> <li>• Bornstein, K. (2009). Naming all the parts.</li> </ul>	<p><b><i>Reflection #3</i></b> <u><i>Due: Sunday 02/018/24</i></u></p>
<p><b>Week 6</b> 2/19/24</p> <p><b>Understanding Immigrant Communities, ESL Communities, and Intersections of Classroom Inequity and Language</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Figueroa (2017) “Speech or Silence”</li> <li>• Rickford. Using the Vernacular to Teach the Standard</li> <li>• Baker-Bell (2020)</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Week 7</b> 2/26/24</p> <p><b>Gender and Sexuality in the Classroom</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ferguson, A. A. (2001). <i>Bad boys: Public schools in the making of Black masculinity</i>. Ann Arbor, MI: The University of Michigan Press. ch. 4: Naughty by Nature</li> <li>• Blaise (2009)</li> </ul>	<p><b><i>Reflection #4</i></b> <u><i>Optional Submission</i></u></p>

<p><b>Week 8</b> 03/04/24</p> <p><b>MIDTERM WEEK</b></p>		
<i>Rutgers Spring Break</i>		
<p><b>Week 9</b> 3/18/24</p> <p><b>Race and Equity in the Classroom</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Talking Race,” Howard &amp; Denning del Rosario</li> <li>● Dear White Teachers,” Bettina Love</li> <li>● Toward a Critical Pedagogy of Race,” de los Ríos, Lopez, &amp; Morrell</li> </ul>	<p><i>Reflection #5</i> <u>Due: 3/24/24</u></p>
<p><b>Week 10</b> 3/25/24</p> <p><b>Culturally Responsive Teaching Approaches</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Culturally Responsive Teaching in Special Education</li> <li>● Toward a Cultural Perspective,” Johnson &amp; McIntosh</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Week 11</b> 4/01/24</p> <p><b>School to Prison Pipeline</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ferguson, A. A. (2001). <i>Bad boys: Public schools in the making of Black masculinity</i>. Ann Arbor, MI: The University of Michigan Press. ch. 4: Naughty by Nature.</li> <li>• Carter, P. (2007). <i>Keepin' It Real: School Success Beyond Black and White (Transgressing Boundaries)</i>. New York: Oxford University Press. Chapter 1: Beyond Belief: Mainstreamers, Straddlers, and Noncompliant Believers, pp. 19 – 46.</li> <li>• School to Prison Pipeline starts in Preschool</li> </ul> <p><a href="https://www.thenation.com/article/archive/school-prison-pipeline-starts-preschool/">https://www.thenation.com/article/archive/school-prison-pipeline-starts-preschool/</a></p>	

<p><b>Week 12</b> 4/08/24</p> <p><b>Theories of School Achievement</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Loewen, J. W. (2007). <i>Lies My Teacher Told Me</i> (2nd. ed.). (Read Intro- chapter 5 and chapter 11-12)</li> <li>• Kohl, H. R. (1991). I won't learn from you: The role of assent in learning. Minneapolis, MN: Milkweed Editions. pp. 1- 32.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Week 13</b> 4/15/24</p> <p><b>Building transformative classrooms for social justice: Examining High Performing Schools that successfully serve students living in poverty.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ladson-Billings, G. (2008) Yes, but how do we do It?: Practicing culturally relevant pedagogy.</li> <li>• Ladson-Billings, G. (2006). From the achievement gap to the education debt: Understanding achievement in U. S. schools.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Week 14</b> 4/22/24</p> <p><b>FINALS WEEK</b></p>		