

Instructor

Matthew D. Laliberte
Associate Dean of Faculty & Curriculum; Teacher
The Hillside School
Doctoral Student - Curriculum & Instruction, Boston College
508-292-2246
matthew.laliberte@hotmail.com

Course Description

As the population of students in both K-12 schools and higher education become increasingly diverse, faculty members must be prepared to examine, confront, and manage the issues and challenges facing the education of all students regardless of ethnic, cultural, economic, gender-based, linguistic, or physical differences. This course is an attempt to ground the day-to-day experiences of being a faculty member in the larger political, economic, historical, and sociological contexts in which teaching and learning take place.

Teaching and Learning in a Diverse Classroom addresses several central questions: How do we, as faculty members, prepare ourselves to effectively reach and teach students whose race, ethnicity, culture, identity, language, and physical capabilities differ from our own experience? How can we implement culturally responsive pedagogy in our classrooms? How can we ensure that all students are actively involved in the educational process?

During this class we will discuss our own cultural experiences, gain insight into the cultural experiences and perspectives of others, and work collaboratively to analyze theories and methods of pedagogy that are responsive to the diverse needs of the students in our classrooms. We will discuss the ways in which we, as faculty members, can work through the wide range of diversity issues in K-12 and higher education, with an eye on creating and implementing plans of action that enhance educational opportunities and attainment for all students.

Course Purpose

This course will focus on faculty members' responsibilities to students of all backgrounds and dispositions. It will provide you with the knowledge and skills necessary to meet the needs of diverse student groups. The collaborative nature of this course will provide opportunities for you to work with other aspiring faculty members, and to learn about issues and programs, and develop plans of action to address issues that we identify throughout the course. Throughout this course you will be encouraged to recognize, examine, and challenge your assumptions about the groups to which you belong, as well as your assumptions about culturally different groups.

I truly believe that when we, as educational leaders, view the world through the multiple perspectives of the students and communities we serve, we have the opportunity to create settings for learning that enhance the educational success of all students.

Course Objectives

Through this course you will be expected to:

- Examine and challenge your assumptions about diverse groups (including the groups to which you belong)
- Articulate a personal vision of what diversity brings to the classroom, and explain how your vision will be put into practice in your classroom
- Analyze current theories and practices related to learning and diverse groups of students
- Analyze how mass media functions to promote certain attitudes about diverse groups of students
- Articulate how major challenges faced by oppressed groups might manifest themselves in your classrooms
- Define steps you might take in order to mitigate challenges faced by oppressed groups

Multiple Perspectives - Openness and Sensitivity

Many of our readings may be construed by some students to be somewhat controversial. My goal for this course is that you begin to see situations and issues as others might see them – that you look at the same situations through different lenses and understand them through different perspectives. You do not need to change your unique perspective – nor do you have to agree with the perspectives of others or me. I will, however, ask you to temporarily “adopt” the perspectives of some of the authors and case participants.

Diversity is a sensitive topic to discuss, which may present its own set of challenges in an online course. On one hand, participants have the opportunity to monitor their thoughts before “speaking” on the discussion boards. On the other hand, email and written communication lack visual cues and therefore can be easily misinterpreted. For each of us there are issues that may be highly sensitive. An issue that may be “no big deal” for one of us may be one that has impacted the personal and professional life of another. I ask you to keep this in mind as you think through the readings and discussions. Try to honestly share your views, and share them with sensitivity.

Naturally all of the etiquette rules that apply to face-to-face discussions apply to our online classroom discussions!

Course Schedule

This course is taught in an entirely online format using Clark University’s BlackBoard course management system. All our discussions will take place asynchronously using discussion boards, providing the maximum degree of flexibility possible to you in terms of reading, responding, and discussing.

Discussion Board or Email?

I log into the discussion board on a daily basis, though I may not respond to your questions and comments for up to 48 hours. I do this purposefully, as I do not want to quell any ongoing online conversations between students in the class. I *strongly* encourage students in the class to respond to one another – not only does it provide your fellow students with a timely answer, but it helps to build a tighter knit classroom community. *This is a discussion-oriented class, so you should be discussing the readings and prompts with each other, not just with me!* I assure you that I will read all your questions, comments, and responses, and will be actively engaged in your discussions throughout the course.

You should post all questions that are not private on the discussion board. This gives your classmates an opportunity to understand your questions, respond, or benefit from the response of others. Please always feel comfortable using email for questions that are more private in nature – I will do my best to respond as quickly as possible to these!

Students with Disabilities

If you are entitled to or believe that you may need an accommodation in this course, please contact Disability Services at Clark University (<http://www.clarku.edu/offices/aac/ada>; 508.793.7468) in order to begin the process.

Copyright Notice

The materials used on the course website are for use only by students enrolled in the course this term. Copyright to all discussion board postings and student work remains the sole possession of the author.

Course Assignments

Assignments in this course are meant to be discursive and reflective. As such, there is an expectation of frequent and thoughtful participation, as well as a fair amount of writing about course-related topics of interest to you.

There are four (4) assignments in this course. All assignments should be typed and double-spaced, with 1” margins and 11 or 12 pt. font (Times New Roman or Arial). Feel free to use a citation style your discipline commonly employs.

1. Discussion Board Participation (30%)

- You will engage in meaningful online discussions and interactions with others in the class. You will do this by frequently posting to the course discussion board as indicated on the weekly course schedule (pages 4-6 of the syllabus). Your participation accounts for 30% of your final grade, so you must be an *active* participant!

With respect to your discussion board postings, I would like to see both *substantive postings* and *responses* from everyone during each week. Please use the following definitions as general guides to your postings:

- What is a **substantive posting**? A substantive posting is an original posting that is based upon and integrates the readings, discussion prompts posted by the instructor, and/or your professional or personal

experience. It provides a springboard for discussion amongst your classmates...it should make us think and reflect.

- What is a **response**? A response is a thoughtful reaction or reply to a substantive posting. In a response, you are expected to reflect upon what the original posting contained, consider it in light of your own professional/personal experiences and the course readings, and post a response that supports, extends, and/or challenges the original posting.

2. Self-Reflection (20%)

- The purpose of the self-reflection is to get you to think about who you are as a teacher and learner, and how you came to be that individual through genetic, familial, cultural, social, educational, linguistic, and other frames that have shaped you over the years. These frames help us to not only better understand ourselves, but to better understand the complexity and nuance of experiences our students bring with them to the classroom. Your self-reflection should be no less than 4 pages, and may address any combination of the topics dealt with in class or which have helped to shape, and continue to shape, who you are. Your self-reflection should also address how these characteristics and traits are expressed through your instruction, and what role they play in shaping the classroom environment in which you teach. If you have not had an opportunity to teach as of yet, which may be case with many of you, think creatively about how you feel these traits and characteristics will or could inform your teaching and classroom activities.

3. Reflection Paper (20%)

- You will write a reaction paper of no less than 5 pages in length that integrates and reflects upon several of the readings and class discussions. Because we are such a small class, and I personally want this experience to be as relevant to your own work and interests as possible, you and I will email about and agree upon a topic of your choosing.

4. Field Experience (30%)

- You will conduct a field experience/observation, which will consist of approximately 3 hours in the field. You must receive permission from the gatekeeper (faculty member, department chair, principal, superintendent, etc.) in order to conduct this observation. Field experiences provide you with an opportunity to observe theoretical constructs, examine practical methods, and analyze what you are learning in authentic settings. You will select one equity issue (race, social class, gender, language, etc.), possibly two if you see them as particularly interconnected, and observe as much as you can about this issue. After the observation, you are to prepare a paper of no less than 5 pages that describes what you observed, how those observations connect to class readings and readings you complete on your own, and what your recommendations would be in order to improve the state of equity in the classroom/school you observed.

Assignments must be submitted on time. Assignments that are submitted late may lose up to half a grade per day. If there is an emergency and you must be late, please contact me as soon as possible.

Grading and Expectations

Grading Procedures

You will be graded on a traditional A-F scale, which will be awarded as follows:

- Participation & Discussion Boards: 30%
- Self-Reflection: 20%
- Reflection: 20%
- Field Experience: 30%

<i>Grade</i>	<i>Comment</i>
A	Excellent work demonstrating careful study, conscientious reflection, and in-depth analysis
A-	Very good work that has been carefully executed; requires somewhat deeper analysis
B+	Good work, indicating careful thought and attention to the task, yet requires several areas of improvement
B	Work of graduate standard, but omissions exist or careful analysis is somewhat lacking
B-	Effort is evident, but work indicates a lack of understanding of the demands of the task
C+	Poor quality work with little attention to detail and the demands of the task
C	Work of very poor quality, indicating no understanding of the depth of analysis required
F	Serious neglect or evidence of cheating

Course Schedule

I will grade your assignments within the week in which they are submitted. I try to provide meaningful feedback within 72 hours, but due to the length of each assignment and the comments I will include, I may return them piecemeal throughout the week.

Course Calendar: This calendar will serve as a guide and is subject to change. Changes may be made to meet the needs of the course participants as the course evolves.

Due Dates: These are also found on course calendar and are highlighted throughout the syllabus

Participation & Discussion Boards: Ongoing

Self-Reflection: February 22nd

Reflection Paper: March 22nd

Field Experience: April 19th

As you go through the readings for a given week, try to be cognizant of the issues being discussed within the context of your own classrooms. For example, when we read about Gender issues, make an effort to think specifically about how you (and those with whom you work) treat boys and girls differently.

Session One (Feb 2-8)	
Educational Philosophy	<p>Reading(s)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. J. Dewey (1897) 2. Counts (1932) 3. Selections from Freire (1970) 4. A Nation at Risk (1983) <p>Optional Readings:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Spring (2004) – Provides an historical look at the purposes of public education. Interesting stuff! 2. Sizer (1998) – Provides a brief overview of the 10 Common Principles of the Coalition of Essential Schools
	<p>Fundamental Issue</p> <p>How do our upbringing and life experiences play a role in who we are, how we see the world, how we teach, and what we expect of kids?</p> <p>Discussion Board Questions – RESPOND TO THESE</p> <p>Posting 1: Please introduce us to yourself using any and all means with which you feel comfortable. Feel free to tell us as much or as little about yourself as you like. In addition, please be sure to answer these questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why did you choose to enroll in this course? • What do you hope to learn in this course? <p>Posting 2: From the readings, identify which philosophy (or two) most closely aligns with your own personal philosophy of education, and discuss why you connect with it. If you do not identify with any of the philosophies, explain why.</p> <p>Posting 3: What principal role(s) do you see education playing in society? What are – or should be – the goals of education?</p>
Session Two (Feb 9-15)	
Social Class	<p>Reading(s) for Everyone</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Selections from Rothstein (2004) <p>Reading(s) for K-12</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Selections from Payne (2003) 2. Gorski (2006) & Payne (2006) <p>Reading(s) for Higher Education</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Walpole (2003) <p>Please read these selections in order</p>
	<p>Fundamental Issue</p> <p>In what ways does the social class we are a part of inform our teaching? In what ways does social class affect the learning of students in our classrooms?</p> <p>Discussion Board Questions – RESPOND TO THESE</p> <p>Posting 1: To what extent is money an issue at the school at which you work? How does this “money issue” manifest itself vis-à-vis your students, your classroom, your academic programs, and your institution’s overall well-being (if at all)?</p> <p>Posting 2: What is your sense of the dialogue between Payne (2003) and Gorski (2006)? Are there elements of truth in each, or does one “hold more water” for you? Why or why not?</p>
Session Three (Feb 16-22) – SELF-REFLECTION DUE 2/22	

Race/Culture/Ethnicity	<p><u>Reading(s) for Everyone</u> 1. Selections from Ladson-Billings (1999)</p> <p><u>Reading(s) for K-12</u> 1. Selections from Banks (1994)</p> <p><u>Reading(s) for Higher Education</u> 1. Lynn (1998)</p>	<p><u>Fundamental Issue</u> In what ways does race, ethnic background, and culture inform our teaching? In what ways does race, ethnic background, and culture affect the learning of students in our classrooms?</p> <p><u>Discussion Board Questions – RESPOND TO THESE</u> Posting 1: To what extent do you differentiate your instruction based on the racial/cultural/ethnic make-up of your classes? Has this proven successful? Why or why not?</p> <p>Posting 2: Which of Banks' perspectives on multicultural education most closely match your own? Why?</p> <p>Posting 3: What three points from the Ladson-Billings chapters resonated the most for you? Why?</p>
Session Four (Feb 23-Mar 1)		
Gender	<p><u>Reading(s) for Everyone</u> 1. Selections from Rich (1979)</p> <p><u>Reading(s) for K-12</u> 1. AAUW Report (1992) 2. Conlin (2003)</p> <p><u>Reading(s) for Higher Education</u> 1. Hall & Sandler (1982) 2. King (2000)</p>	<p><u>Fundamental Issue</u> In what ways does our gender inform our teaching? In what ways does gender affect the learning of students in our classrooms?</p> <p><u>Discussion Board Questions – RESPOND TO THESE</u> Posting 1: In what ways does Rich's essay still ring true today? In what ways doesn't it?</p> <p>Posting 2: Take a moment to look critically at your school and yourself. In what ways do you see boys and girls being treated differently in your schools? What about in your own classrooms?</p>
MARCH 2-8 CLARK UNIVERSITY BREAK		
Session Five (Mar 9-15)		
Language	<p><u>Reading(s) for K-12</u> 1. Selections from Brisk (2006) 2. SIOP Model Description</p> <p><u>Reading(s) for Higher Education</u> Tatar (2005)</p> <p>We may have a guest moderator this week – I'll let you know as we get closer to the week</p>	<p><u>Fundamental Issue</u> How does a student's home language and command of academic and social English impact their academic and social success?</p> <p><u>Discussion Board Questions – RESPOND TO THESE</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Postings to be determined by guest moderator
Session Six (Mar 16-22) – REFLECTION PAPER DUE 3/22		
Disabilities	<p><u>Reading(s) for Everyone</u> 1. Lavoie (2005)</p> <p><u>Reading(s) for K-12</u> 1. Selections from Oakes (2005)</p> <p><u>Reading(s) for Higher Education</u> 1. Scott (1997)</p>	<p><u>Fundamental Issue</u> What types of learning disabilities should I expect to see in my classrooms, how will they manifest themselves, and what are some effective means of reaching students with LDs?</p> <p><u>Discussion Board Questions – RESPOND TO THESE</u> Posting 1: Lavoie (2005) identifies a series of practical methods to use in your classrooms when working with students who have learning disabilities. In your experience, which of these 3 or 4 methods have proven the most successful for you? Why do you think that to be the case?</p> <p>Posting 2: What methods have you successfully with students with learning disabilities used that Lavoie (2005) either does not mention or which you have modified in some fashion?</p>
Session Seven (Mar 23-29)		

Social Capital	<p><u>Reading(s) for Everyone</u> 1. Selections from Putnam (2000)</p>	<p><u>Fundamental Issues</u> What role, if any, does social capital play in education? How might an increase or decrease in community connectedness affect your teaching and the success of your students?</p> <p><u>Discussion Board Questions – RESPOND TO THESE</u> Posting 1: In chapter 1 of the Putnam reading, we learn about social capital as a concept, and the differences between bonding and bridging capital (p. 22). What can teachers do to build and sustain both types of social capital in and beyond their classrooms?</p> <p>Posting 2: Eminent sociologist of education Jonathan Kozol, whose classic book <i>Savage Inequalities</i> traced the vast racial and socioeconomic disparities of our schools, has also written a text called <i>Shame of the Nation: The Restoration of Apartheid Schooling in America</i>. In the book, he details how schools in the US are more segregated today than they were immediately following the Brown vs. Board of Education decision that desegregated schools. Blacks, Whites, and Latinos, as well as the rich and poor, are attending schools whose student bodies are less and less diverse on both fronts. Poor kids attend schools with other poor kids. Latinos attend schools with predominantly Latino populations. Kozol expounds on the reasons for this phenomenon, of which there are many, but we're focusing on social capital this week. To that end, what are the implications of more racially and socio-economically segregated schools with respect to bonding and bridging capital?</p>
Session Eight (Mar 30-Apr 5)		
Open Topic	<p><u>Reading(s) for Everyone</u> We'll decide as a class which issue to explore this week. Some options include Media Literacy, Sexual Orientation, Transient Students, Differentiating Instruction in your Classroom, and others that the class feel are particularly relevant to their needs.</p> <p><u>Reading(s) for K-12</u></p> <p><u>Reading(s) for Higher Education</u></p>	TBD
Session Nine (Apr 6-12) FIELD EXPERIENCE DUE APRIL 19th by 5pm		
Political Influence	<p><u>Reading(s) for Everyone</u> 1. Spring (2005)</p>	<p><u>Fundamental Issue</u> In what ways do different forms of media re/present the values and perspectives of the dominant group in society?</p> <p><u>Discussion Board Questions – RESPOND TO THESE</u> Posting 1: In what ways is your view of school informed or influenced by the agendas of the major political parties? Do any aspects of the major party platforms run entirely contrary to your beliefs about education? How so?</p> <p>Posting 2: Reflect upon your discussion board postings from the first week of class. To what extent, if any, has your view of the purposes of schooling changed or been reinforced?</p>

COURSE READINGS

- American Association of University Women Educational Foundation. (1992). *How schools shortchange girls: Executive summary*. Annapolis Junction, MD: AAUW.
- Banks, J.E. (1994). *An introduction to multicultural education* (4th Ed.). New York: Allyn & Bacon.
- Brisk, M.E. (2006). *Bilingual Education: From compensatory to quality schooling* (2nd Ed.). Mahwah, N.J.: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Conlin, M. (2003, May 26). The new gender gap. *Business Week*. Available Online at http://www.businessweek.com/magazine/content/03_21/b3834001_mz001.htm
- Dewey, J. (1897). My pedagogic creed. *The school journal*, 54, 77-80. Available online at <http://www.infed.org/archives/e-texts/e-dew-pc.htm>
- Freire, P. (1970). *Pedagogy of the oppressed*. New York: Continuum.
- Gorski, P. (2006). The classist underpinnings of Ruby Payne's framework. *Teachers College Record*, ID Number: 12322. Retrieved on March 24, 2006.
- Hall, R.M., & Sandler, B.R. (1982). *The classroom climate: A chilly one for women?* Washington D.C.: Association of American Colleges - Project on the Status and Education of Women.
- Hirsch, E.D. (1987). *Cultural literacy: What every literate American needs to know*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin
- King, J. (2000). *Gender equity in higher education: Are males students at a disadvantage?* Washington: American Council on Education.
- Ladson-Billings, G. (1997). *The dreamkeepers: Successful teachers of African-American children*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Lavoie, R. (Director & Producer). (2005). *When the chips are down: Strategies for improving children's behavior* (film guide). Washington, D.C. PBS Broadcasting.
- Lynn, M. (1998). Teaching through diversity. *College Teaching*, 46, 123-127.
- Oakes, J. (2005) *Keeping track: How schools structure inequality* (4th Ed.). New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- Payne, R. (2003). *A framework for understanding poverty* (3rd Ed.). Highlands, TX: Aha! Process.
- Putnam, R.D. (2000). *Bowling alone: The Collapse and revival of American community*. New York: Simon & Schuster.
- Rich, A. (1979). *On lies, secrets and silence: Selected prose, 1966-1978*. New York: Norton.
- Rothstein, R. (2004). *Class and schools: Using social, economic, and educational reform to close the black-white achievement gap*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Scott, S.S. (1997). Accommodating college students with learning disabilities: How much is enough? *Innovative Higher Education*, 22(2), 85-99.
- Sizer, T. (1998). *The Ten Common Principles*. Oakland, CA: Coalition of Essential Schools. Available online at http://www.essentialschools.org/pub/ces_docs/about/phil/10cps/10cps.html
- Spring, J. (2004). *American education* (11th Ed.). Boston: McGraw-Hill.
- Spring, J. (2005). *Political agendas for education: From the religious right to the green party*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Tatar, S. (2005). Why keep silent? The classroom participation experiences of non-native-English-speaking students. *Language and Intercultural Communication*, 5(3&4), 284-293.
- The Commission on Excellence in Education. (1983). *A nation at risk: The imperative for educational reform*. Washington D.C.: The Commission on Excellence in Education. Available online at <http://www.ed.gov/pubs/NatAtRisk/risk.html>
- Thernstrom, A., & Thernstrom, S. (2004). *No excuses: Closing the racial gap in learning*. New York: Simon & Schuster.
- Walpole, M. (2003). Socioeconomic status and college: How SES affects college experiences and outcomes. *Review of Higher Education*, 27(1), 45-73.

Course and syllabus developed by Matthew D. Laliberte