EFR 506: Multicultural Education

“All of us in the academy and in the culture as a whole are called to renew our minds if we are to transform educational institutions--and society--so that the way we live, teach, and work can reflect our joy in cultural diversity, our passion for justice, and our love of freedom.”

– bell hooks, Teaching to Transgress

Summer 2007
Sec. 4, Class # 9831
6 weeks – June 25th through August 3rd

Instructor: Richard Kahn, Ph.D. [richard.kahn@und.nodak.edu, aim: sanfranphd]

Office Hours: Scheduled office hours will be held as opt-in group chats from 2-3 pm c.s.t. on Thursdays when our class is scheduled to meet. See Class Format below for more information on this.

Text(s):
- Various articles, made available via Blackboard online.

Credits: 3 credit hours

Rationale:
Educators are often uncertain about the place of multiculturalism in the American education system, its history, and aims. To address these concerns, our course will explore how history, politics, economics, culture and societal “difference” inform multicultural education practices, policy, and research. A special emphasis will be placed on gaining insight into the role multicultural education is currently playing in articulating the oppressive role mainstream education has had in attempting to assimilate, marginalize, and destroy American Indian culture and society. The course also hopes to develop educators’ ability to critically examine how their own personal beliefs about cultural pluralism and diversity can influence their educational philosophy and pedagogy. As class participants engage with this knowledge base, they will concretize their knowledge with a professional statement of multicultural philosophy of education.

Course Aims and Objectives:

There overall objectives for the course are interrelated:
- To develop awareness of important multicultural issues in education (and other fields) today,
- To increase knowledge of the goals, history, and philosophy of multicultural education,
To become literate in the role education has played in the historical oppression of American Indian (and other) peoples, and to understand the progressive role it might play towards advancing democratic diversity and overcoming the historical inequities foisted upon them, and

To develop skills and sensibilities that will allow educators (and others involved in education) to better meet the needs of marginalized populations.

This course is not a methods course per se, nor is it a "how-to" on multicultural education. As such, the focus is not primarily on developing skills, however, in developing awareness and knowledge we will have moved in the direction of developing the competencies we need to work with diverse populations in changing societies.

Course projects are designed to develop students' professional skills in research and/or practice.

Specific Course Objectives

- To link our personal and professional experiences to the content of the course and to directions for research if applicable.
- To develop awareness of how we are embedded in a personal, social, cultural, historical context that has bearing on our beliefs about others and on our actions.
- To increase knowledge of the ways diverse populations of students (and parents) experience the world, inside and outside the classroom, the school and the community.
- To increase knowledge of specific multicultural issues of importance to individuals in their work (e.g. language, gender, class, disability), and to begin to think of these issues in a holistic and critical manner.
- To develop our empathetic imagination, and to develop understandings of ourselves as world citizens (or earthlings).
- To develop a sound philosophical, theoretical, and personal rationale for multicultural education.
- To produce an academic-styled book review.
- To produce a professional personal statement of multicultural philosophy of education.

Format and Procedures:

Due to the online nature of our class, I have decided to forego mandatory class meetings (even though such meetings are officially scheduled). Instead, what I would like to propose is that unless I notify you otherwise you can login during that time each week and be guaranteed to find me online then. This time, consequently, will take the form of an open chat which can be used as group office hours, discussion time, or what have you.

Private chats (either textual or video) or phone calls can generally be arranged with me as well for those who desire more personal feedback and/or privacy in their meetings.

So when is our class time? Class posting and discussion will be on an ongoing basis each week and posting, etc., in response to the readings can take place at your convenience. If your schedule prevents you from attending weekly chats, or you simply care not to do so, you will not be penalized for skipping them altogether. That is: they are there if you need them, that simple!

What I will expect, however, is that you complete each week’s assigned reading and post your requisite writing by the Wednesday prior to the following class, save for the final assignment which will be due by the morning of August 6, as grades must be posted the following day by noon. For example, our first class is scheduled to meet on June 28th when you
will receive your first assignment. You then have through July 4th to post your assigned responses and you have the option of logging in on July 5th. Your next responses would be due July 11th, etc.

In general, though I will specify each week exactly what is required, you will be asked to post a thoughtful response to the reading (e.g., How does it connect up with your experiences, link up with other reading you have done, or broaden your understanding of pedagogy, schooling, or society? Do you have critiques to make? Questions to ask the class for clarification?). This response should be based in the reading, citing page numbers for quotes whenever possible, but should also extend beyond the reading and synthesize your own ideas, feelings, and history. A solid paragraph to a page is probably a good length, though I leave it to you to determine what you need to say and how long it takes to do it. You will also generally be expected each week to reply to at least one other person’s response, in order to generate dialogue, and I think you will see that we will all be better served by the maximum amount of dialogue we can generate as part of the online course. Still, I understand you have other time constraints and there is the reading to do, so I do not expect or require that you will spend the next 6 weeks constantly posting to the class site, etc.

Lastly, to the degree that we can generate some debate online (always a hope) and share some of our personal experiences, I would like to emphasize a need to show respect and tolerance for each other’s thoughts. We should feel free to disagree and challenge one another, but this should always be done with civility and sensitivity to the feelings of our classmates. This being said, let me put my cards on the table that I do not believe, nor will I be facilitating this course from a perspective of, “all things are relative and everyone is entitled to their opinion.” Some opinions are better than others and one needs to argue for and achieve an opinion, not just have one. In closing let me leave you with the words of historian Howard Zinn, in *Failure to Quit*, which serve as my general pedagogical ethos:

This is not an “objective” course. I will not lie to you, or conceal information from you because it is embarrassing to my beliefs. But I am not a “neutral” teacher. I have a point of view about war, about racial and sexual inequality, about economic injustice--and this point of view will affect my choice of subject, and the way I discuss it. I ask you to listen to my point of view, but I don't expect you to adopt it. You have a right to argue with me about anything, because, on the truly important issues of human life there are no “experts.” I will express myself strongly, as honestly as I can, and I expect you to do the same. I am not your only source of information, of ideas. Points of view different from mine are all around, in the library, in the press. Read as much as you can. All I ask is that you examine my information, my ideas and make up your own mind.

**Course Requirements:**

1. Class attendance and participation policy: As adult learners I leave it to you to determine your attendance in this course (see above), though a minimum amount of weekly discussion board participation will be required and there may be something to the idea that more participation on your part results in more learning and a better educational experience overall.

2. Assignments:
   (a) Most weeks will involve your completing the assigned reading for that week, posting a thoughtful response to the reading, and at least one other response to another student’s
post (this can be a response to a response to a response, etc., as part of an evolving discussion.)

(b) First week: As part of our first class, I would like you to take the time to write an autobiographical introduction of approximately 700-800 words (due by the end of the day). In this initial posting, please address the following three criteria:

i. Who you are and your professional goals (I for one know you only as a series of information bits assembled on a monitor at this point!),

ii. Your background in multicultural education, if any, and

iii. What does multiculturalism mean to you? An example?

(c) Though it will not be due until the 6th week, you will have an ongoing assignment to complete a 1000 to 1500-word book review of Lomawaima and McCarty’s To Remain an Indian. This can be done as a two-person group (see Blackboard assignment for details on this). A good place to review academic book review styles is:

(d) Your final project will be to complete a 2-page statement of your multicultural philosophy of education. This will be due by the morning of August 6th. Here is a link to a useful archive page on how statements might be written (w/ samples, etc.):
http://ftad.osu.edu/portfolio/philosophy/Philosophy.html.

Grading Procedures:

Online Participation: 50%
Book Review: 25%
Multicultural Statement: 25%

There are no late submissions of material without consent of the instructor. Participation online beyond the required minimum (sharing links, current events, etc.) will be factored into the final grade evaluation certainly.

Assigned Reading Schedule (postings due the following week):

Week 1 (June 28th) – Intro to Multicultural Education Issues & Concepts:
- Multicultural Education: Characteristics and Goals by James Banks
- Culture in Society and in Educational Practices by Frederick Erickson
- Race, Class, Gender and Disability in the Classroom by Carl Grant and Christine Sleeter from Multicultural Education: Issues and Perspectives, Banks & Banks (eds.)

Week 2 (July 5th) – Multicultural Ed and the Urban/Rural Divide:
- Barriers of Diversity: Multicultural Education & Rural Schools by Fred Yeo from Multicultural Education, Fall 1999
- Why is Rural Education Missing from Multicultural Education Textbooks by Aram Ayalon from The Educational Forum, Fall 2003

Week 3 (July 12th) – Class and Gender Issues
• Social Class and Educational Equality by Caroline Hodges Persell
• Gender Bias: From Colonial America to Today’s Classrooms by David Sadker and Karen Zittleman
• Transforming the Curriculum: Teaching about Women of Color by Johnnella Butler and Dierdre Raynor
  from *Multicultural Education: Issues and Perspectives* Banks & Banks (eds.)

Week 4 (July 19th) – Race, Ethnicity, and Language
• Culturally Responsive Teaching: Theory and Practice by Gloria Ladson-Billings
• Approaches to Multicultural Curriculum Reform by James Banks
• Language Diversity and Schooling by Tom Stritikus and Manka Varghese
  from *Multicultural Education: Issues and Perspectives*, Banks & Banks (eds.)
• Effect of Children's Ethnicity on Teachers' Referral and Recommendation Decisions in Gifted and Talented Programs by Halo Elheweris, et. al., *Remedial and Special Education*, Jan 2005

Week 5 (July 26th) – Tribal Mascots: Are “Fighting Sioux” Fightin’ Words?
• “You Know, We Are All Indian”: Exploring White Power and Privilege in Reactions to the NCAA Native American Mascot Policy by Ellen Staurowsky, *Journal of Sport and Social Issues*, 2007
• School Reform and Student Learning: A Multicultural Perspective by Sonia Nieto
  from *Multicultural Education: Issues and Perspectives*, Banks & Banks (eds.)

Week 6 (August 2nd) – No Reading Assigned

**Accommodations for students with disabilities**
In compliance with the University of North Dakota policy and equal access laws, I am available to discuss appropriate academic accommodations that may be required for any student with disabilities. Requests for academic accommodations are to be made during the first week of the semester, except for unusual circumstances, so arrangements can be made in a timely manner.

**Questions, Problems, Concerns?**
Please, please, please feel free to contact me about any and everything related to this course. Sometimes communications get crossed in an online environment – without the added context of facial expressions, nuance, face-to-face contact, misunderstandings can and do occur. If you are unsure of something that takes place during the course of our class, or alternatively are bothered by something said, or have ideas or hopes for the course that you feel are not being met, please
speak with me at your earliest convenience. I think you will find me committed to trying my best to resolve any and all issues to your satisfaction if at all possible.