Race, Class, and Social Justice

This course will lead students to examine the diverse cultural backgrounds of students and teachers. We will analyze the ways in which these factors affect the practice of schooling. Assignments, readings, and discussions will explore issues of economic conditions, politics and law, school and community cultures, educational policy, community relations, and curriculum. The focus of the course will be on the dynamics of race, class, gender, religion, ethnicity, disability and sexual orientation interact with schooling.
LIST OF REQUIRED BOOKS

1. Theresa Perry, Claude Steele, Asa Hilliard III, Young, Gifted, and Black: Promoting High Achievement among African American Students
2. Philip Jackson, What is Education?
3. Larry Cuban and David Tyack, Tinkering Toward Utopia: A Century of Public School Reform

I. CLASS MEETINGS

The class meets on two “bookend” weekend workshops, April 20-21 and June 22-23 and electronically every Wednesday evening between 6-8 PM. Wednesday evening meetings will start on April 4, 2012 and run through June 20, 2012.

III. STUDENT REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING

Class participation: 10% of the course grade:

This is a discussion-based course. The assigned readings are the basis for the discussions, and students are expected to carry the bulk of our conversations. Students should come to class prepared to critique the readings assigned for that evening’s meeting. A high level of participation is expected. The goals of each discussion are to challenge our ideas about the reading and about the topic at hand.

Fishbowl discussion: 20% of the course grade:

Every seminar participant will participate in a graded research ‘fishbowl’ discussion during our last in-person workshop. Participants are expected to use our assigned readings and at least three other outside sources for information in this discussion. See appendix for details.

Policy Paper(s): 35% of the course grade

Students will write a short research paper (c. 2500-6000 words) -OR- three to five op- pieces (<750 words each) analyzing one prominent policy issue, such as the effectiveness of charter schools, the effect of race and class on educational outcomes, the “education gap,” or other policy question. Students are expected to draw from assigned readings as well as outside sources. These outside sources may also be used for the fishbowl discussion. See appendix for details.

Philosophy Paper: 35% of the course grade

Students will write a short paper (c. 2500-6000 words) describing their philosophy of education. This is not meant to be a “teaching philosophy.” Nor is it meant to be part of a job application. Rather, in this statement students should briefly and cogently articulate their ideas about the nature of education. They must include specific ideas and references to the assigned readings. They do not need to include other sources. They should address one basic question such as: What are schools for? -or- What is the purpose of education? See appendix for details.
IV. CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT
The faculty and staff in the School of Education are committed to serving all enrolled students. The intention is to create an intellectually stimulating, safe, and respectful class atmosphere. In return it is expected that each of you will honor and respect the opinions and feelings of others.

V. ACCOMMODATIONS
If you are a student with a disability and wish to request accommodations, please notify the instructor by the second week of class. You are also encouraged to contact the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) AT 777-2686. Their office is in LH-B51. The SSD office makes formal recommendations regarding necessary and appropriate accommodations based on specifically diagnosed disabilities. Information regarding disabilities is treated in a confidential manner.

VI. ACADEMIC HONESTY
"All members of the university community have the responsibility to maintain and foster a condition and an atmosphere of academic integrity. Specifically, this requires that all classroom, laboratory, and written work for which a person claims credit is in fact that person's own work." The annual university Student Handbook publication has detailed information on academic integrity. Binghamton University has obtained a license with Turnitin.com to facilitate faculty review for potential plagiarism of papers and projects in their courses, which they are encouraged to do. "Students assume responsibility of the content and integrity of the academic work they submit. Students are in violation of academic honesty if they incorporate into their written or oral reports any unacknowledged published or unpublished or oral material from the work of another (plagiarism); or if they use, request, or give unauthorized assistance in any academic work (cheating)." (SOE Academic Honesty Policies) Neither plagiarism nor cheating will be tolerated in this class. Incidents of either will result in a failing grade for the assignment in question, at the minimum. If you have any questions about what constitutes plagiarism or cheating, PLEASE ASK ME! See also
http://www2.binghamton.edu:8080/exist6/rest/lists2010-11/2_academic_policies_and_procedures_all_students/academicPoliciesAndProcedureAllStudents.xml?_xsl=/db/xsl/compose.xsl
SCHEDULE OF CLASS MEETINGS

Wednesday, April 4, 7-9 PM, (via telephone)
Assigned reading: None
Activities:
- Pre-introductions
- Questions about the course, format, first meeting
- Discussion of assignments, assignment of first reading, Perry, et al.

Weekend Workshop #1: Friday April 20, 5-9; Saturday April 21, 8-4; Location TBD (likely Batiste Cultural Arts Academy).
Assigned reading (Please have this reading completed BY THE TIME WE MEET ON FRIDAY): Perry et al., Young, Gifted, and Black
Activities:
- Introductions
- Review of course structure, assignments, etc.
- “Colorblind Ideology” reading break and discussion
- Preliminary composition: philosophy of education
- Fishbowl practice
- Discussion of assigned reading
- Research workshop
- School/Student/Teacher analysis workshop

Wednesday, April 25, 6-8 PM, (via Google +)
Assigned reading:
- One additional research article for fishbowl or statements
Activities:

Wednesday, May 2, 6-8 PM, (via Google +)
Assigned reading: Jackson, What Is Education?
Activities:
- Discussion of Jackson
- Classrooms update

Wednesday, May 9, 6-8 PM, (via Google +)
Assigned reading:
Activities:
Wednesday, May 16, 6-8 PM, (via Google +)
Assigned reading:
- One additional research article for fishbowl or statements

Wednesday, May 23, 6-8 PM, (via Google +) RESCHEDULED: Discussion will be INCLUDED ON MAY 16.
Assigned reading:
- One additional research article for fishbowl or statements
Activities:

Wednesday, May 30, 6-8 PM, (via Google +)
Assigned reading:
- “Beyond the Schoolhouse Door,” and “Removing the Barriers,” Finn. Available on Blackboard Content Page.
- One additional research article for fishbowl or statements
Activities:
- Check-in: Fishbowl preparation

Wednesday, June 6, 6-8 PM, (via Google +)
Assigned reading:
- One additional research article for fishbowl or statements
Activities:
- Check-in: Policy statements

Wednesday, June 13, 6-8 PM, (via Google +)
Assigned reading: Tyack and Cuban, *Tinkering Toward Utopia*
Activities:
- Check-in: Philosophy statements
- Discussion of Tyack and Cuban: what is the “Grammar of Schooling?”

Weekend Workshop #2: Friday June 22, 5-9; Saturday June 23, 8-4; Location TBD
This weekend will be in NOLA or via Google +.
Assigned reading: None
Assignments due:
- Fishbowl discussion preparation
- Policy Statement
- Philosophy Statement
Activities:
- Fishbowl discussion
- Policy Statements: presentation & discussion
- Philosophy Statements: presentation & discussion
APPENDIX: FISHBOWL DISCUSSION

This discussion will give students a chance to engage in informed discussion about a topic in education. Each member will be responsible for preparing and co-leading this discussion. Students may use any materials they like during the discussion; they may bring any materials they wish to the table.

Students are expected to use assigned readings and at least three outside readings they have found in preparation for this discussion.

The goal of this exercise is not to win a debate. Rather, each member should plan to encourage the other participants to demonstrate their knowledge and insight into the question under discussion.

The main question for this semester’s fishbowl discussion is as follows:

**Are charter schools the best way to improve public education?**

Some guide questions that might help direct the discussion follow:
- How do charter schools differentially impact low SES/ethnic minority students?
- How have they worked in comparison to public schools?
- Who backs them and why?
- Who opposes them and why?

Students are NOT LIMITED TO THESE GUIDE QUESTIONS. They can and should incorporate other relevant topics into their discussion of the main question.

Students will be graded on three categories:
1.) their content knowledge as demonstrated in the discussion;
2.) their leadership of the small-group discussion;
3.) their speaking skills.

I will use the rubric I used in my former high-school fishbowl discussions as a grading guide; see below.
### LAATS’ FISHBOWL RUBRIC

#### 50%: Content/Facts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Description</th>
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| **A** | Discusses the topic in depth.  
Demonstrates great understanding of the material.  
Supports ALL arguments with evidence and examples that are important and true.  
 Shows originality. |
| **B** | Evidence is well developed.  
Discusses the topic in some depth  
Supports MOST arguments with evidence and examples. |
| **C** | Discusses assigned topic in an adequate way.  
Has supporting evidence, at least some of which is relevant to the topic.  
Evidence may not be developed in sufficient detail. |
| **D** | Ideas are vague, irrelevant, or poorly developed.  
Arguments are repeated rather than developed. |
| **F** | There are no examples, or the ones used are irrelevant. |

#### 25%: Discussion Skills

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<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Description</th>
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| **A** | Leads discussion by asking relevant questions, suggesting new topics, and encouraging others to participate.  
Suggests framework for discussion.  
Synthesizes opposing viewpoints. |
| **B** | Helps discussion by asking relevant questions and inviting others to participate. |
| **C** | Participates in the group discussion.  
Does not include others’ ideas in statements. |
| **D** | Makes only irrelevant, off-topic statements. |
| **F** | Will not allow others to participate  
Does not participate. |

#### 25%: Speaking Skills

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Description</th>
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| **A** | Demonstrates excellent speaking skills.  
The speaker’s dynamism and charisma are evident. |
| **B** | Demonstrates good speaking skills; speaks loudly, clearly, and slowly. |
| **C** | Adequately displays most speaking skills.  
Minor speaking flaws are evident, but they do not disrupt the presentation. |
| **D** | Major speaking flaws disrupt the presentation.  
Speaker uses inappropriate tone. |
| **F** | Poor speaking skills are evident  
Speaker is difficult to understand. |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>50%: Content/Facts</th>
<th>other</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ORIGINAL IDEA</td>
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<tr>
<td>TEXT ANALYSIS</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>MADE HELPFUL ORIGINAL ANALOGY</td>
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<tr>
<td>POINT PROVEN WITH CITATION</td>
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<tr>
<td>POSITION TAKEN</td>
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<tr>
<td>NO EVIDENCE GIVEN</td>
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<tr>
<td>MADE UNTURE STATEMENT</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>25%: Discussion Skills</th>
<th>other</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>REACHED CONCLUSION FROM TWO OPPOSING VIEWPOINTS</td>
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<tr>
<td>GAVE FRAMEWORK FOR DISCUSSION</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>DREW OTHER INTO DISCUSSION</td>
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<tr>
<td>INTRODUCED NEW TOPIC</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>ASKED QUESTION {specific}</td>
<td>{general}</td>
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<tr>
<td>CHANGED MIND</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>MADE OFF-TOPIC STATEMENT</td>
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<tr>
<td>INTERRUPTED</td>
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<tr>
<td>MONOPOLIZED DISCUSSION</td>
<td>other</td>
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<table>
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<th>25% Speaking Skills</th>
<th>other</th>
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<tr>
<td>EMPHASIZED POINT WITH GESTURE</td>
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<td>EMPHASIZED POINT WITH VOICE TONE</td>
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<tr>
<td>INAPPROPRIATE TONE, GESTURE, OR VOLUME</td>
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<tr>
<td>PERSONAL ATTACK</td>
<td>other</td>
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Option 1: Students will be responsible for a short (2500-6000 word) analysis of any major current issue in American education.
Option 2: Students will write a handful (3-5) of op-ed style essays. Each essay must be less than 750 words. Each must discuss a different policy topic.

Possible topics include, but are not limited to, the following:
- Are charters schools more efficient than traditional public schools?
- How can the school achievement gap be diminished between white and non-white students?
- How can schools in low-SES areas recruit and retain high-quality teachers?
- What role should teachers’ union play in school reform?
- What role should high-stakes testing play in student assessment?
  - …in teacher assessment?
  - …in school/district assessment?
- How can schools encourage high-quality teaching of writing?
- Etc…………..

SOURCES: This essay should be based on an analysis of relevant academic studies of the policy under review. Students may use assigned readings and must also include outside sources. These outside sources may be the same ones used for the fishbowl discussion, if relevant.

FORMAT: Students may use any commonly used academic format, such as MLA, APA, or Chicago/Turabian to cite their sources. They should include a list of references as well as specific parenthetical citations, footnotes, or endnotes.

PRESENTATION: Students should be prepared to present their policy statements at our last class meeting, Saturday, June 23. They should turn in a draft of their essay at that time. Email submission is fine, no hard copies are necessary.

EVALUATION: Essays will be evaluated in three main categories: content (50%), organization (30%), and style (20%).
APPENDIX: PHILOSOPHY STATEMENT

Students will be responsible for a short (2500-6000 word) exposition of a central question of educational philosophy. These statements are NOT intended as descriptions of teaching philosophy. That is, this is NOT meant to be an essay in which students describe what they hope to do as a classroom teacher and how they hope to achieve that. This is also NOT meant to be part of any job application. The essay, in other words, should not seek to fit in with perceived notions about the role of teachers and schools. Rather, this essay should explore a central question of educational philosophy, including but not limited to the following:

- What are schools for?
- What is the purpose of education?
- Are schools primarily institutions that reproduce social and racial hierarchies, or are they transformative?
- Can schools improve society?
- What is the relationship between youth and education?
- What is the relationship between schooling and education?
- What is the relationship between race and education?
- What is the relationship between social class and education?
- Etc…………..

SOURCES: This essay does not need to include any outside research. However, it should refer to assigned readings, such as Philip Jackson’s *What is Education*?

FORMAT: Students may use any commonly used academic format, such as MLA, APA, or Chicago/Turabian to cite their sources. They should include a list of references as well as specific parenthetical citations, footnotes, or endnotes.

PRESENTATION: Students should be prepared to present their policy statements at our last class meeting, Saturday, June 23. They should turn in a draft of their essay at that time. Email submission is fine, no hard copies are necessary.

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