

Urban Education
Department of Education, Culture & Society
ECS 5715/6715

Dr. Clayton Pierce
Office: SAEC 3286
Phone: 801-587-7814
Email: clayton.pierce@utah.edu

Meets Monday 12:25-3:35 pm
SAEC 3155
Office Hours: Mondays 11:00-12:00

Note: Please turn off all cell phones and all other electronic devices when entering the classroom

I also reserve the right to adjust, change, or modify the syllabus if necessary. In the event of a change to the syllabus ample warning will be given.

COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES

Issues confronting K-12 urban schools are bound to the social, economic, and political conditions of the urban environments in which schools reside. This course is designed to enhance students' knowledge of urban schooling through an examination of historical, social, economic, political and socio-cultural frameworks that emphasize how issues of race, class, gender, and immigration status have affected the distribution of equal educational opportunities in urban schools in the U.S. Connected to the historical and cultural analysis of urban schools, this course also examines teaching practices and programs that have demonstrated success with urban students. In this sense students not only have an opportunity to engage with the research literature on inequities in urban schools but also investigate the complexity and challenges of providing excellent education in K-12 urban school contexts.

One of the primary objectives of this course is to contribute to the development of students' (and future teachers) critical and reflective thinking about theoretical and practical issues and problems in U.S. urban schools. Specifically, the various themes of this course will provide a comprehensive overview of the historical and contemporary facets of urban education while also focusing on current research strategies that offer

real-world models for teaching for social equality and at a high level of academic excellence. Specific objectives this course focuses on are:

- Engage in critical inquiry and reflection on how urban schools can be transformed so that they can be just and equitable places of academic excellence.
- Engage in productive dialogue with one another on school and classroom practices oriented toward achieving equity, access, and social justice in urban educational contexts.
- Assess current research on complex problems facing urban schools with the goal of looking for ways to apply the solutions presented by researchers, educators, families, and communities.

REQUIRED READINGS

The required readings for this course are on the e-reserve. The readings are accessible through the course Canvas page.

GRADING, ASSIGNMENTS, AND EVALUATIONS

Grading distribution for the course is as follows:

| | |
|--------------------------------------|-----|
| Attendance and Participation: | 20% |
| School and District Research project | 20% |
| Lesson Plan | 20% |
| Final Paper/Take home exam | 40% |

Attendance and Participation:

Your attendance and participation in the course is a large part of not only your grade but also what you will take away from it. As aspiring professionals in the field of education, it is assumed that every student will take seriously the subject matter of the course and take the opportunity to participate in discussions that will take place each and every class to develop further as teachers soon to be in the classroom. Being physically present will only give you partial credit for your attendance and participation grade in the course. *Participation means actively engaging in discussions and lecture in a thoughtful and critical manner.* To earn the full percentage of attendance and participation students need to engage themselves in classroom discussion and with the readings. I encourage each student to take advantage of this opportunity to discuss real world problems facing the educational system in the U.S. with a group of colleagues who share the goal of being future effective educators.

School/District Research Project:

As educators who will be teaching in urban and/or suburban schools in the Salt Lake Valley it is important to know and understand both the students and community your school serves. To this end, students will choose a school they would either like to teach in, one where they are already doing preservice work, or a school that you would like to know more about the demographic makeup and the community surrounding it. The goal of this exercise is to create a working data map of each group's school using demographic data on the school, information on the district the school resides (boundaries, when it was created, any recent controversies on redrawing district lines, etc.), and the community in which it is located. Groups should also consider whether or not the school you are researching fits the characterization of "urban" and explain your reasoning for why or why not. Groups need to use school district data available from district websites as well as 2010 U.S. census data to create the school/district data study. Also make sure to include these parameters for your research:

- History of the school, i.e., when was it built and what district does it belong(ed) to
- Demographic data of the school (what is the racial and ethnic make up of the school)
- Graduation Rate, AYP status, number of students, faculty to student ratio, how many languages are spoken at the school
- Is your school a Title 1 or Title VII school; how many students qualify for free/reduced lunch?
- What are the drop out/retention rate of your school/district?
- Other important information you think is helpful for being a prepared and culturally responsive educator

School and district research will be done in groups of no more than five. Each member of the group is required to contribute equally to the research project and each group member will be asked to return to me an evaluation on each member's contribution to the project. Some time will be given in class to work on the project in the first part of the semester. Each group will have approximately 15 minutes to present on their findings to the rest of the class. *Each group will turn in their presentation to me on the day you present. I would only like one copy of the research presentation per group which can be a print out of your power point, Prezi, or any other format you choose to present your research.*

Lesson Plan Project:

One of the primary objectives of this course is to identify ways teachers can integrate research on teaching effectively in diverse classrooms with practice. Working in research groups (dividing into groups by subject area and grade level is suggested but not mandatory) students will construct lesson plans applicable in the classroom and that follow these guidelines:

- Clearly uses and applies knowledge from the students' cultural background as foundational to the lesson plan
- Uses and fulfills the common core or Utah state standards for a subject area
- Demonstrates a high degree of relevance for students *and* maintains high academic expectations and rigor
- Culturally relevant teaching strategies should NOT be treated as an add-on or supplemental aspect—it should frame the entire construction of your lesson plan

At the end of the semester groups will present their lesson plan to the rest of the class and discuss how it is an example of a culturally relevant method of teaching. Lesson plans will be graded on how well the above criteria are followed as well as each individual's effort put into making the lesson plan both useful and realistic for teachers to use in classrooms. Time will also be given in class throughout the semester for groups to collaboratively work on lesson plans. Each group will have approximately 15-20 minutes to present on their findings to the rest of the class. Each individual student is responsible for turning in their portion/section of the lesson plan on the day your group presents via Canvas.

Final Paper (graduate students only):

Graduate students will write a final paper on a topic derived from the course. The final paper will be a 12-15 page, double spaced essay that examines and explores in greater detail an issue, question, or controversy pertaining to urban education in the U.S. that we have evaluated over the semester. **Graduate students must discuss the topic of their paper with me no later than October 18th.** Final papers will be graded (1) on the relevance to your topic to the themes and concepts we studied over the semester; (2) use of relevant and appropriate scholarly sources to support your claims and analysis; and (3) how well you utilize the authors, lectures, films, *and* outside scholarly sources to create and support your argument. Students need to submit their papers to the course's Canvas page no later than **6:00 p.m. December, 12th.**

Final for Undergraduate Students:

Undergraduate students will be given a final essay take home exam. The final essay exam will consist of three questions the last of which students will chose a topic or issue from the class to answer. Each question should be answered using the readings, films, and lectures from the course. The essay exams should follow APA citation format and include a list of references at the end of the essay. Each question should be typed, double-spaced and in the range of 3-5 pages. The essay exams will be graded on (1) how well you utilized authors, films, lectures, and classroom exercises to formulate a reasoned and well supported response; (2) the answers demonstrate a deep and critical level of engagement with the ideas, concepts, and practices that we have covered over the semester; and (3) relevant evidence is provided to support your answer and not opinions that cannot be validated by scholarly sources. Students need to submit their completed take-home exams to the course's Canvas page no later than **6:00 p.m. December, 12th.**

COURSE POLICIES

Classroom Pedagogy and Behavior

In this class, we will have lectures, group discussions, and group activities. Learning involves more than simply the dissemination of factual information, and this is especially true when we are discussing complex social and political questions currently facing schools in the U.S. If we are to engage this material completely, we will need to build a classroom space that is grounded in mutual respect and an ethic of critical thinking. This entails, at a minimum, we all come to class ready to engage with each other in a respectful and thoughtful manner. Our conversation should be informed; all perspectives are necessary. At the same time, the classroom is not a space of opinion, but of carefully considered thoughtful contributions based on the material we are reading.

Students at the University of Utah are encouraged to exercise personal responsibility, self-discipline and engage in the rigors of discovery and scholarship. Your ideas are very important, respected and valued. As a member of a shared community, even as temporary as this class, we must take responsibility for creating a collaborative learning space where we can be open and honest in our discussions. Avoid personal insults and confrontations when you disagree with your instructor, classmates, and/or guest speakers.

Disruptive behaviors, such as talking while others are speaking (particularly during group presentations and guest lectures) reading the newspaper, napping, working on your laptop, wearing headphones, or reading materials from another class, will result in class participation point deductions. Disrespectful behavior towards the instructor and/or any of our guest speakers will also adversely affect your participation grade and can lead to formal disciplinary action.

Disability Statement

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requires that reasonable accommodations be provided for students with physical, sensory, cognitive, systemic, learning, and psychiatric disabilities. If you need accommodations in this class, reasonable prior notice needs to be given to the professor and to the Center for Disability Services, <http://disability.utah.edu/> 162 Olpin Union Building, 581-5020 (VT/TDD) to make arrangements for accommodations.

Accommodation Policy

Readings and materials assigned for this class have been carefully selected. As we study issues of urban education in various forms and contexts, we will apply the concepts we engage to a variety of examples, including those that occur in the venue of popular culture. This class incorporates social and political issues that intersect with race, class, gender, and sexual orientation, thus there will likely be times when you disagree with the

ideas and perspectives of the readings. Although class discussions, readings, films, lectures, course content and subject may disagree with your personal position and “everyday” understandings—this should not prevent you or the entire class from critically engaging with new ideas and from asking questions. Some students may find some of the materials, presentations, lectures, or audio/visual materials controversial or in conflict with their core values. While such disagreement may be uncomfortable, it is in the sharing of different ideas and perspectives that we come to a better understanding of our diverse society and ourselves. Please be assured that all the material that we present, assign, or require you to encounter and address have been selected for its overall value and its operationalization of concepts we are engaging. **We will not make content accommodations for any course material. It is your responsibility** to review the syllabus, readings, assignments, and materials to be sure that this is a course you wish to take. Should you have questions or concerns, please see me immediately. Details on the university’s accommodation policy are available at this link: <http://www.admin.utah.edu/facdev/accommodations-policy.pdf>.

Academic Misconduct

Academic misconduct includes cheating, fabrication of information, and plagiarism. Examples of acts that constitute cheating include looking at another student’s exam, allowing another student to look at your exam, giving cues to other students on answers, referencing a “cheat sheet,” making arrangements to have another student take your exam in your place, gaining unauthorized access to an exam, working with other students on assignments or exams without express permission from your instructor, and submitting the same paper or substantial portions of the same paper for multiple classes without express permission of the instructors. Examples of fabrication include creating data and/or quotations and inventing references. Examples of plagiarism include failing to cite any major idea created by some other person or entity, failing to cite and/or enclose in quotation marks all words, phrases, and sentences copied from another source, failing to cite paraphrased work of others, and acquiring a paper or project from a research service or another source and submitting it as your work for academic evaluation.

Academic honesty is expected of all students. Each student has an obligation to act with honesty and integrity, and to respect the rights of others in carrying out all academic assignments. All instances of academic misconduct will be penalized.

If, at any time, you are not sure if your actions constitute academic misconduct **please** see me. For the University policy on academic misconduct, see the following link: <http://www.admin.utah.edu/ppmanual/8/8-10.html>

Drop/Withdrawal Policy

See the University’s Drop/Withdrawal Policy website: <http://www.acs.utha.edu/sched/handbook/wddeadlines.htm>

COURSE CALENDAR

8/24/15 **Introduction/discussion of course goals and expectations**

8/31/15 **Theme: What is Urban Education & How is it different from Rural & Suburban?**

Assigned readings: 1.) "Teacher Preparation for Urban Schools" by Tyrone C. Howard & Richard Milner IV (In Handbook of Urban Education Handbook)
2.) "Urban, but not Too Urban': Unpacking Teachers' Desires to Teach Urban Students" by Dyan Watson
3.) "Using Popular Films to Challenge Preservice Teachers' Beliefs about Teaching in Urban Schools" by Peggy A. Grant
Films: *Dangerous Minds, 187*

9/7/15 **LABOR DAY HOLIDAY NO CLASS*******

9/14/15 **Theme: Confronting the Stereotypes and Myths of the "at risk" Urban Student.**

Assigned readings: 1.) "Who are our urban students and what makes them different?" by Rebecca Goldstein
2.) "The politics of who's 'at risk'" by Michelle Fine
Film: *War on Kids*

9/21/15 **Theme: *Urban Schools in Urban Environments***

Assigned readings: 1.) "Racial Politics of Mixed-Income Schools and Housing: Moralizing Poverty, Building the Neoliberal City" by Pauline Lipman
2.) "A room of one's own...Housing and educational stratification" by C. Dalton
Film: *Race: The power of an illusion part III*

9/28/15 **Theme: *Teaching & Urban Schooling***

Assigned readings: 1.) "Ordering Regime" by J. Kozol
2.) "Classroom Management in Diverse Classrooms" by H. Richard Milner and F. Blake Tenore
3.) "Lessons from Teachers" by L. Delpit (In City Kids City Schools Book)

10/5/15

Theme: *Urban Schooling and Inequity*

Assigned readings:

- 1.) "Are we Segregated and Satisfied? Segregation and Inequality in Southern California Schools" by John V. Kucsera, Genevieve Siegel-Hawley, and Gary Orfield.
- 2.) "From the Achievement Gap to the Education Debt: Understanding Achievement in U.S. Schools" by Gloria Ladson-Billings

10/12/15

FALL BREAK NO CLASS*****

****10/19/15

Research Day at School/District Site (CLASS DOES NOT MEET)

10/26/15

Theme: *Educational Policy and Urban Schooling*

Assigned readings:

- 1.) "Race to the Top Leaves Children and Future Citizens Behind: The Devastating Effects of Centralization, Standardization, and High Stakes Accountability" by Joe Onosko
- 2.) "School Reform and School Choice" by Adrienne D. Dixon, Camika Royal & Kevin Lawrence Henry, Jr. (In Handbook of Urban Education book)
- 3.) Read this article from the Desert Sun on the Ogden School District:

<http://www.deseretnews.com/article/705375896/Ogden-teachers-mull-sweeping-contract-changes-will-rally-next-week.html>

School/District Research Presentations (First five groups)

11/2/15

Theme: *Immigrant & Refugee students in U.S. Schools*

Assigned readings:

- 1.) "The production of margin and center: Welcoming-Unwelcoming of immigrant students" by Andrew Gitlin & Edward Buendia
- 2.) "More than 'Model Minorities' or 'Delinquents': A Look at Hmong American High School Students" by Stacey J. Lee

School/District Research Presentations (Second Five Groups)

11/9/15

Theme: *Constructing Relevant Teaching Practices for Urban School Settings*

Assigned readings:

- 1.) "Yes, but how do we do it? Practicing cultural relevant pedagogy" by Gloria Ladson-Billings (In City Kids, City Schools book)

- 2.) "A Visibility Project: Learning to See How Preservice Teachers Take up Culturally Responsive Pedagogy" by A.R. Gere, J. Buehler, C. Dallavis, and V.S. Haviland
- 3.) "Participatory Democratic Education..." by Gandin & Fischman
In Class work on Lesson Plan Projects

11/16/15

Theme: Constructing Relevant Teaching Practices for Urban School Settings (Cont'd)

Assigned readings:

- 1.) "Beyond Awareness: Preparing Culturally Responsive Preservice Teachers" by S.D. Lenski, T.P. Crumpler, C. Stallworth, & K.M. Crawford
- 2.) "Learning to become a racially and culturally competent ally" by C. Sleeter
- 3.) "Urban teacher development that changes classrooms, curriculum and achievement" by Jeff Duncan-Andrade

11/23/15

Theme: Constructing Relevant Teaching Practices for Urban School Settings (Cont'd)

Assigned readings:

- 1.) "Learning Gardens and Life's Lessons" by Dilafruz R. Williams and Jonathan D. Brown.
- 2.) "Multicultural School Gardens: Creating Engaging Garden Spaces in Learning about Language, Culture, and Environment" by Amy Cutter-Mackenzie
- 3.) "Culturally Responsive Teaching Principles, Practices, and Effects" by Geneva Gay

12/30/15

Lesson Plan Presentations

12/7/15

Lesson Plan Presentations

Final paper/essay exams are due December 11th no later than 6:00 p.m. Papers must be submitted online to my email or via Canvas. No late papers will be accepted. Extenuating circumstances will be considered.