

CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, NORTHRIDGE
College of Education
Educational Leadership and Policy Studies

COURSE OUTLINE

ELPS 303: Urban Education in American Society

PREAMBLE

The Michael B. Eisner College of Education as a professional school is committed to advancing learning, teaching and student success. This is accomplished using a developmental approach to promote reflection, critical thinking, and excellent in an inclusive learning community. Its graduates are well educated, highly skilled and caring persons who are lifelong learners prepared to practice in an ever changing, multicultural world. They are committed to promoting achievement of all students as a primary measure of successful educational practice. Graduates assume service and leadership roles in public and private educational, health, and social programs and institutions. The College establishes and maintains productive partnerships throughout campus and with community schools and agencies. The faculty is committed to excellence in teaching, scholarship, service and collaboration with the community and professionals. The values for faculty and students that form the foundation of this Conceptual Framework include the following:

Guiding Values for all Activities in this Course:

1. We value high standards in the acquisition and application of professional knowledge and skills in subject matter, pedagogy, and technology.
2. We value the achievement of students at all levels and advance their success in accordance with national, state, and national standards.
3. We value an inclusive learning community.
4. We value creative, critical and reflective thinking and practice.
5. We value ethical practice by caring professionals.

Theme: **Advancing learning, teaching, and student success**

I. CATALOG DESCRIPTION

This introductory foundation course is designed to provide students with the fundamental knowledge of the understanding of the American educational enterprise, especially problems in urban multicultural schools. Concepts and methods from the fields of sociology, philosophy and the politics of education are used to gain knowledge of, understand and analyze the current conditions of American schools and to evaluate selected proposals/models for reform. A minimum of 20 hours of observation and participation in a multicultural setting is required.

Prerequisite: Admission to a basic teaching credential program.

II. COURSE OBJECTIVES

The major purpose of this course is to help students formulate an introductory foundation for critical and reflective thinking about both theoretical and practical issues and challenges in American education, schooling and the teaching profession. High priority is given to student development of logical reasoning, clear writing and analytical skills in order to facilitate their study of any educational issues with an open, informed and critical eye. Students will engage in critical inquiry as a way of clarifying and addressing the pressing challenges that face American public schools. More specific objectives are as follows:

1. Use knowledge of educational philosophy, sociology and politics of education:
 - a. to understand the nature and role of education and schooling in a democratic, multicultural society.
 - b. to perceive the moral dimensions of teaching as essential in the educative process.
 - c. to explore curriculum and instruction in a multicultural/multiracial classroom.
 - d. to examine the process of educational decision-making and educational change and reform in public schools.
2. Examine how political, economic, and demographic changes affect schools as public institutions, their curricula and teacher practice.
3. Reflect on how schools reproduce class, race and gender inequity and the conflicting demands of equity and excellence.
4. Understand the knowledge and skills essential to the development of an educated person.
5. Become aware of the status of the teaching profession, the existing conditions and circumstances of teacher work and the new challenges to teachers.
6. Examine significant issues on diversity, multicultural, multiethnic and multilingual education and crises in urban education.
7. Acquire information about the major theoretical models and approaches in curriculum and instruction.
8. Become familiar with the policies and strategies regarding parent involvement in education and schooling.
9. Understand the relationship between the school and community, and explore the future of an educative society.

10. Evaluate alternatives and change models in the local, national and international educational reform contexts.

III. COURSE CONTENT

1. Introduction to observation: educational culture
 - a. elements of observation
 - b. family
 - c. community
 - d. school
 - e. classroom
2. Introduction to the Teaching Profession
 - a. entry perspectives: reasons to become a teacher
 - b. status of the teaching profession and teacher work
 - c. moral and ethical responsibilities of teachers
3. Purpose of Education and Goals of Schooling
 - a. a critical and systematic evaluation of the major schools of thought
 - b. role of education and schooling in a multicultural/multiracial society
 - c. reflections on personal beliefs, attitudes and values
4. Equality of educational opportunity
 - a. conflicting demands of equity and excellence
 - b. diversity and inequality in schools and society
 - c. access to schools and access to knowledge in a multiracial/multicultural society
5. Issues in urban education
 - a. political, economic and demographic changes and diversity
 - b. students at risk: retention and attainment
 - c. teacher and student concerns in urban schools
6. Introduction to curriculum and instruction
 - a. survey of multicultural curriculum
 - b. survey of instructional strategies for diverse learners
7. Parent and community involvement in education
 - a. policies and strategies on parent involvement
 - b. parents as learning partners
 - c. beyond parents—building an educative community
8. Restructuring schools and the teaching profession: immigration, urbanization and discrimination
 - a. local and national models of reform

- b. introduction to assessment and accountability implications to teaching and learning
- c. proposals for reforming teacher education and the teaching profession

IV. OBSERVATION/PARTICIPATION REQUIREMENT

A minimum of 20-hour field observation and participation (O/P) in a multicultural school setting is required. The purpose of this requirement is to help students relate the topics covered in this course to reality, become aware of the increasing diversity in American schooling, understand the culture of the school and the challenge of change, and draw comparisons between the mission of schooling and what schools are providing to schools. Students need to supply instructors with a letter (typed on school stationery) verifying the completion of 20 hours of O/P, signed by the teacher or administrator. No passing grade will be assigned without providing material evidence, as prescribed above, for having met this requirement.

V. COURSE FORMAT

Class meetings will take the form of lecture and small group discussions, both focused primarily on the concepts in the assigned topics and readings, and school-related observations. *It is imperative, therefore, that the students read the assigned material and prepare for participation in class discussion before each class meeting.* Students will be expected to engage in critical discussion that does not take for granted anything said or read and that challenges in constructive fashion their own concepts, assumptions and perceptions.

VI. STUDENT ASSIGNMENT AND EVALUATION

1. Attendance and participation: Since the purpose of learning lies in the process of learning itself, students are expected to attend all class sessions and to participate in both small group and large class discussions on the assigned readings. Each student should also have the opportunity to lead small group discussions by turn. The instructor will prepare some guides/questions for reading and discussion. The students should also form their own questions and search for answers.
2. Writing of action research papers, self-assessment or project papers. The purpose of the writing assignment is for students to have an opportunity to address one or more of the topics/issues covered in the course (including field observation/participation) in a coherent, logical and critical manner.
3. Tests and exams. The instructor may use tests and exams related to the key topics/issues covered in the course as a method of evaluation. Test/exam items will be designed to encourage critical thinking, problem solving and creative writing.

RECOMMENDED TEXTBOOKS

No single book adequately addresses all of the objectives of this course. A selection of readings from the following recommended textbooks should provide students with an integrated view and understanding of the social, philosophical and political aspects of American education and schooling.

Banks, James A. (ed) *Multicultural Education, Transformative Knowledge and Action*. New York: Teachers College Press, 1996.

Cuban, Larry. *How Teachers Taught*. New York: Teachers College Press, 1993.

De La Torre, William and C.U. Ayala-Alcantar. *Education in American Society*. Dubuque, Iowa: Kendall-Hunt Publishing Company, 2003.

DeMarrais, K.B. and LeCompte. *The Way Schools Work: A Sociological Analysis of Education*. New York: Longman Press, 1995.

Goodlad, John. *A Place Called School*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1984.

Goodlad, John, Roger Soder and Kenneth A. Sirotnik (eds.) *The Moral Dimension of Teaching*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1990.

Kanpol, Barry. *Critical Pedagogy: An Introduction*. Westport, CT: Bergan Books, 1994.

McLaren, Peter. *Life in Schools*. New York: Longman Press, 1994.

Spring, Joel. *American Education*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1996.

Stevenson, Harold and James Stigler. *The Learning Gap*. New York: Summit Books, 1992.