

Sociocultural Influences on Learning (ALD 327/AFR 372D)
Spring, 2019

Unique Numbers: 09410/30559
University of Texas at Austin
Dept. of Curriculum and Instruction

Tuesdays, 4-7pm
SZB 424

Instructor: Dr. Noah De Lissovoy
Pronouns: he/him/his
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REQUIRED TEXTS

- Gloria Ladson-Billings, *The Dreamkeepers: Successful Teachers of African American Students*, 2nd Edition
- Angela Valenzuela, *Subtractive Schooling: U.S. Mexican Youth and the Politics of Caring*
- Course Reader (available from Jenn's Copies, 2518 Guadalupe St.)

COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES

This course is devoted to exploring the relationships between education, culture, and society. It will focus on: structures of social and educational inequality, in particular as they relate to race, class and gender; processes of power and control in education, as they are expressed in curriculum, policy, and pedagogy; education as a process of social and cultural reproduction; and teaching as a form of intervention in these processes. The course will give special attention to the experiences and educational conditions of those who have been marginalized within U.S. schools. It is expected that in this course students will become familiar with the sociological, cultural, and political contexts and dimensions of education in U.S. society, will come to understand relationships of power within society and as they are expressed in schooling, and will develop the foundational knowledge necessary for working with children and youth from diverse backgrounds.

TEACHING PHILOSOPHY

I believe that it is important for educators to engage intellectually with central questions in their discipline in order to be effective in their work. I also believe that intellectual and practical issues in education cannot be separated from political and ethical issues: to think

honestly about education means confronting injustices. I encourage everyone to express their ideas on issues we take up, and also to think critically about the limits of our own perspectives in order to enlarge and transform them. It is important for all students to feel comfortable sharing their ideas and engaging with the contributions of others. I am committed to the learning of all, and expect students also to be committed to the course. Please do not hesitate to approach me with any questions you may have during the course.

POLICIES

Attendance: After the first absence, for each additional absence (with the exception of documented illnesses or medical emergencies) students will lose 3 points from their final course grade.

Academic Integrity: All work must be your own. If referring to ideas or information from others, make sure that you cite the source. No credit will be given for work that violates this principle.

Late Work: Reading Responses will not be accepted if turned in after the deadline. All other written assignments will lose two points if turned in past the deadline.

Personal Pronoun Use (She / He / They / Ze / Etc): I will gladly honor your request to address you by an alternate name or gender pronoun. Please advise me of this preference early in the semester so that I may make appropriate changes to my records.

REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING BASIS

Note: Extended guidelines for the following assignments are provided at the end of this syllabus.

Reading Responses

Each week for which reading is assigned (except for January 29) you will turn in a response starting from a prompt that I provide. This assignment asks you to engage rigorously with key ideas in the readings. The response should make specific reference to the text while developing your own analysis. It must address the prompt explicitly. (Enter your response in the submissions field under Assignments on Canvas.) *The reading responses are due the Monday before class by 11:59pm. No late assignments will be accepted.*

Autobiographical Essay

In this essay you will reflect on your life experience as it relates to the topics and ideas covered in class. You will describe how your own identity and development have been influenced by the social and cultural processes in education we are studying, and you will analyze your experiences to explain their importance and meanings. *The Autobiographical Essay (in hard copy) is due on February 26.*

Service Learning

This course includes a **15-20 hour service learning component** which you must complete in order to receive credit for the class. It is your responsibility to contact one of the sites on the Service Learning Opportunities list (or an equivalent site) to complete your volunteer service learning. The supervising staff member at your site will be asked to sign off on a form certifying that you have completed your required hours.

Service Learning Analysis

This assignment consists of five brief reflections on your experiences at your service learning site. Each of the reflections will focus on a different topic, and in each you will combine close observation with careful interpretation and analysis. The reflections will be turned in in two installments. *Service Learning Analysis (Part I) is due on Mar. 26; Service Learning Analysis (Part II) is due on Apr. 23.*

Group Presentation

In small groups, you will undertake an oral presentation at the beginning of one class session. This presentation should be related to the topic and reading of the day, but should bring a new perspective or direction to it. This is an open-ended and creative assignment, which asks you to take initiative in analyzing the topic and opening the discussion of it.

Final Reflective Essay

In this essay you will reflect on what you have learned during the course, and how it has affected your thinking about teaching, learning, and/or schooling. While you will engage with specific course concepts and readings that have made a difference to you, the assignment is subjective in nature, and asks you to describe, from your own perspective, your intellectual and emotional growth in relation to this material. *The Final Reflective Essay (in hard copy) is due on May 9.*

Participation

Attendance and participation in class is important to facilitate your own learning and that of others. Our discussion depends on all voices being shared and heard. In order to engage in an informed way in class discussions, it is important that you carefully read all assigned readings prior to class, and that you bring the readings with you to class.

<u>Assignment</u>	<u>Points</u>
Reading Responses	20
Autobiographical Essay	15
Service Learning Analysis	20
Group Presentation	10
Final Reflective Essay	20
Participation	15

93-100 points: A

90-92.9 points: A-

87-89.9 points: B+

83-86.9 points: B

80-82.9 points: B-
77-79.9 points: C+
73-76.9 points: C
70-72.9 points: C-
60-69.9 points: D
Below 60 points: F

UNIVERSITY NOTICES AND POLICIES

Academic Integrity

Each student in the course is expected to abide by the University of Texas Honor Code: “As a student of The University of Texas at Austin, I shall abide by the core values of the University and uphold academic integrity.” Plagiarism is taken very seriously at UT. Therefore, if you use words or ideas that are not your own (or that you have used in previous class), you must cite your sources. Otherwise you will be guilty of plagiarism and subject to academic disciplinary action, including failure of the course. You are responsible for understanding UT’s Academic Honesty and the University Honor Code which can be found at the following web address:

http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/sjs/acint_student.php

Q Drop Policy

If you want to drop a class after the 12th class day, you’ll need to execute a Q drop before the Q-drop deadline, which typically occurs near the middle of the semester. Under Texas law, you are only allowed six Q drops while you are in college at any public Texas institution. For more information, see:

<http://www.utexas.edu/ugs/csacc/academic/adddrop/qdrop>

University Resources for Students

Your success in this class is important to me. We will all need accommodations because we all learn differently. If there are aspects of this course that prevent you from learning or exclude you, please let me know as soon as possible. Together we’ll develop strategies to meet both your needs and the requirements of the course. There are also a range of resources on campus:

Services for Students with Disabilities

This class respects and welcomes students of all backgrounds, identities, and abilities. If there are circumstances that make our learning environment and activities difficult, if you have medical information that you need to share with me, or if you need specific arrangements in case the building needs to be evacuated, please let me know. I am committed to creating an effective learning environment for all students, but I can only do so if you discuss your needs with me as early as possible. I promise to maintain the confidentiality of these discussions. If appropriate, also contact

Services for Students with Disabilities, 512-471-6259 (voice) or 1-866-329- 3986 (video phone). <http://ddce.utexas.edu/disability/about/>

Counseling and Mental Health Center

All of us benefit from support during times of struggle. You are not alone. There are many helpful resources available on campus and an important part of the college experience is learning how to ask for help. Asking for support sooner rather than later is often helpful. If you or anyone you know experiences any academic stress, difficult life events, or feelings like anxiety or depression, we strongly encourage you to seek support. <http://www.cmhc.utexas.edu/individualcounseling.html>

The Sanger Learning Center

All students are welcome to take advantage of Sanger Center's classes and workshops, private learning specialist appointments, peer academic coaching, and tutoring for more than 70 courses in 15 different subject areas. For more information, please visit <http://www.utexas.edu/ugs/slc> or call 512-471-3614 (JES A332).

Undergraduate Writing Center: <http://uwc.utexas.edu/>

Libraries: <http://www.lib.utexas.edu/>

ITS: <http://www.utexas.edu/its/>

Student Emergency Services: <http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/emergency/>

Important Safety Information

If you have concerns about the safety or behavior of fellow students, TAs or Professors, call BCAL (the Behavior Concerns Advice Line): 512-232-5050. Your call can be anonymous. If something doesn't feel right – it probably isn't. Trust your instincts and share your concerns.

The following recommendations regarding emergency evacuation come from the Office of Campus Safety and Security, 512-471-5767, <http://www.utexas.edu/safety/>. Occupants of buildings on The University of Texas at Austin campus are required to evacuate buildings when a fire alarm is activated. Alarm activation or announcement requires exiting and assembling outside.

- Familiarize yourself with all exit doors of each classroom and building you may occupy. Remember that the nearest exit door may not be the one you used when entering the building.
- Students requiring assistance in evacuation shall inform their instructor in writing during the first week of class.
- In the event of an evacuation, follow the instruction of faculty or class instructors. Do not re-enter a building unless given instructions by the following: Austin Fire Department, The University of Texas at Austin Police Department, or Fire Prevention Services office.
- Link to information regarding emergency evacuation routes and emergency procedures can be found at: www.utexas.edu/emergency

Title IX Reporting

Title IX is a federal law that protects against sex and gender based discrimination, sexual harassment, sexual assault, sexual misconduct, dating/domestic violence and stalking at federally funded educational institutions. UT Austin is committed to fostering a learning

and working environment free from discrimination in all its forms. When sexual misconduct occurs in our community, the university can:

1. Intervene to prevent harmful behavior from continuing or escalating.
2. Provide support and remedies to students and employees who have experienced harm or have become involved in a Title IX investigation.
3. Investigate and discipline violations of the university's [relevant policies](#).

Faculty members and certain staff members are considered “Responsible Employees” or “Mandatory Reporters,” which means that they are required to report violations of Title IX to the Title IX Coordinator. I am a Responsible Employee and must report any Title IX related incidents that are disclosed in writing, discussion, or one-on-one. Before talking with me, or with any faculty or staff member about a Title IX related incident, be sure to ask whether they are a responsible employee. If you want to speak with someone for support or remedies without making an official report to the university, email advocate@austin.utexas.edu For more information about reporting options and resources, visit titleix.utexas.edu or contact the Title IX Office at titleix@austin.utexas.edu.

SCHEDULE

Date	Topic	Reading	Due
Jan. 22	Introduction to Course		
Jan. 29	Race, Racism, and Deficit Thinking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tara Yosso: “Whose Culture Has Capital?” (1-24) • Lois Weiner: “Challenging Deficit Thinking” (25-28) 	
Feb. 5	Race, Poverty, and Social Reproduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pedro Noguera: selection from <i>City Schools and the American Dream</i> (29-59) • Adrienne Dixson, Kristen Buras, & Elizabeth Jeffers: “The Color of Reform” (61-72) 	<i>Service Learning Site Selection</i>
Feb. 12	Power and Ideology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peter McLaren: Selection from <i>Life in Schools</i> (73-88) 	
Feb. 19	Class, Corporatization, and Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jean Anyon: “Social Class and the Hidden Curriculum of Work” (89-114) • David Hursh: “Assessing No Child Left Behind and the Rise of Neoliberal Education Policies” (115-140) 	
Feb. 26	Gender, Separation, and School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Barrie Thorne: selection from <i>Gender Play</i> (141-172) 	<i>Autobiographical Essay</i>
Mar. 5	Service Learning De-Briefing		
Mar. 12	Gender, Sexuality, and Discrimination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • American Association of University Women (AAUW): “How Schools Shortchange Girls” (173-195) • Claudia Cervantes-Soon: “<i>Mujeres Truchas</i>: Urban Girls Redefining Smartness in a Dystopic Global South” (197-210) • Cris Mayo: “The Tolerance that 	

		Dare Not Speak Its Name” (211-224)	
Mar. 19	NO CLASS (Spring Break)		
Mar. 26	Culture, Language, and Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Valenzuela, Chapter 2: pp. 33-60; Chapter 3 (partial): pp. 61-75 	<i>Service Learning Analysis I</i>
Apr. 2	Cultural Difference and Marginalization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Valenzuela, Chapter 3 (partial): pp. 75-113; Chapter 5 (partial) pp. 161-181 	
Apr. 9	Service Learning Debriefing		
Apr. 16	Culture and Resistance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Valenzuela, Chapter 6 (partial): pp. 227-245 • Daniel Solórzano & Dolores Delgado Bernal: “Examining transformational resistance” (225-230) 	
Apr. 23	Teaching, Curriculum and Social Context	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ladson-Billings, Chapters 2-4: pp. 17-84 	<i>Service Learning Analysis II</i>
Apr. 30	Culturally Relevant Teaching	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ladson-Billings, Chapters 5-7: pp. 85-156 	
May 7	Revising Final Essay and Summing Up		<i>Service Learning Comp. Form;</i> <i>Final Reflective Essay Due May 9</i>

Reading Responses

Each week for which reading is assigned (except for January 29) you will turn in a response starting from a prompt that I provide. This assignment asks you to engage rigorously with key ideas in the readings. The response should make specific reference to the text while developing your own analysis. It must address the prompt explicitly. (Enter your response in the submissions field under Assignments on Canvas.) *The reading responses are due on the Monday before class by 11:59pm. No late assignments will be accepted.*

Additional Notes:

- Responses should be approximately 300 words.
- If you are having technical difficulties with Canvas, email your response directly. Responses must be posted or received by 11:59pm on Monday to receive credit.
- The response should directly address the prompt; it asks you to develop your own analysis, with close reference to the reading.
- Your response should focus on key ideas in the text, rather than on general speculations. Be specific in your writing.
- Ten reading responses will be due during the course; each is worth 2 points.

Autobiographical Essay

In this essay (**4-5 typed double-spaced pages**), you will reflect on your own life experience as it relates to the topics and ideas we have been considering in class. The question for you to respond to in this assignment is:

- **Who are you, and how has your identity been influenced by, and constructed in relationship to your educational experiences?**

“Educational experiences” includes school, but can also include other educational experiences in your family, with peers, or in other contexts. This essay is concerned with how your development is connected to the educational, social, and cultural context you have come from. Along the way you should consider how some of the **racial, class, cultural, and gender understandings, differences, and processes** that we have discussed have affected you (and also, if you want, how you have responded). You should provide **specific descriptions of experiences** to make your essay more vivid, and should **analyze these experiences to explain their importance and meanings**. (You do not need to tell your whole life story.)

For this assignment, it is important to connect your description to the topics and ideas we have been concerned with in class; however, you do not have to cite specific pages in the texts or lectures.

The Autobiographical Essay (in hard copy) is due on February 26 at the beginning of class.

Evaluation

This essay will be evaluated according to the following criteria: 1) specific discussion of personal experience and identity, 2) depth of analysis and insights, 3) connections drawn to ideas and topics considered in the course.

Group Presentation

In small groups, you will undertake an oral presentation at the beginning of one class session. This presentation should be related to the topic and reading of the day, but should bring a new perspective or direction to it. This is an open-ended and creative assignment, which asks you to take initiative in analyzing the topic and opening the discussion of it.

The presentation must relate to topic for the day; it may or may not deal with specific parts of the text or texts. It is great to engage with the text, but do not summarize it. This is not a report, but rather an analysis and discussion. Plan your presentation carefully for about **15 minutes**; if you reach 20 minutes you will be stopped.

Key guidelines: 1) do not summarize the text; 2) plan for 15 minutes.

Some ways to approach the presentation (there are other possibilities):

- Identification of a key idea or two from the reading and discussion of its meaning and implications
- Consideration of a possible application of one of the ideas in a school or other context
- Description of a particular context, event, organization, or institution for which the topic of the day is relevant or dramatized
- Discussion of current event and how it can be understood with reference to the topic/reading
- Contextualization of reading/author in broader tradition, social movement, school of thought, etc.

Notes:

- You will come up to the front of the class for the presentation.
- Powerpoint/Prezi is good, but not required; however, it helps to have some kind of visual aid.
- Do not leave time in your presentation for discussion, since I have already planned discussion time after each presentation.
- If you invite interaction from the class, make sure it is for no more than 5 minutes (it should be well-structured and relevant).
- If you show a video clip, it should be no more than a few minutes so that you have time to present your own analysis.

Evaluation

Presentations will be evaluated on: 1) depth of analysis and creativity of presentation; 2) quality of planning and collaboration among presenters; 3) insights offered on topic and/or reading of the day.

Service Learning Analysis

This assignment consists of five brief reflections (**1 full typed single-spaced page for each**) on your experiences at your service learning site, in which you will explore aspects of the work you are involved in, the organization itself, and your own responses and accomplishments. Each of the reflections will focus on a different topic, and in each you should include the following two elements:

- 1) **Description:** Provide specific and detailed description of what you see, hear, and learn. Try to create a vivid picture in the reader's mind of the place or actions you are observing.
- 2) **Interpretation:** Reflect upon the meanings of the events and processes you have described. Using the questions provided as a guide, suggest what you think might be some of the reasons for what you have described, as well as its effects and significance. Your descriptive and interpretive comments do not necessarily have to be separated in different sections, but both should be present in each reflection.

Service Learning Analysis Part I (reflections 1-3) is due on Mar. 26; Service Learning Analysis Part II (reflections 4-5) is due on Apr. 23.

Reflection 1: Organization Context

Describe the context and mission of the organization you are working with, and your own thoughts about it. Consider the communities served by the site, the range of participants, the needs it aims to address, the mission or values of the organization, and its structure and setup. You can draw from conversations with staff, observations, organization literature, etc.

- Interpretation questions: Why has this organization chosen to focus on their particular mission? What are some of the key challenges associated with the central projects that this organization has taken on? What are your initial impressions of the structure and relationships at the site?

Reflection 2: Your Role and Relationships

Document the specific role and tasks you have at the organization, your relationship to participants and staff, and your feelings about your service learning at this early stage. Describe specific responsibilities, interactions, events, or projects that give texture to your individual experience as a volunteer, rather than focusing on the organization as a whole.

- Interpretation questions: How does it feel to you so far to be engaged in this project? What is exciting about your experience? What is difficult? How are you negotiating the relationships you are involved in with participants?

Reflection 3: Asset-Based Description

In class we have emphasized the importance of an asset-based perspective on students and communities (as opposed to a deficit perspective). Focusing on the students/participants you have been working with, describe the strengths and resources

that they bring from their experience, families, and/or communities, including the specific interactions that demonstrate these assets.

- Interpretation questions: What strengths and resources allow this person(s) to persist and progress in their lives and/or learning? What understandings have you gained from working with them? How can the assets they bring with them from their family/community help to challenge deficit perspectives that might be applied to them or to their community?

Reflection 4: An Accomplishment

Describe one accomplishment or achievement, however large or small, that you were either responsible for yourself, or that you have been involved in, with regard to serving participants of the organization. (This could be a student making progress in one area, leading a dialogue or conversation, establishing a curriculum or plan of action, etc.)

- Interpretation questions: What were the essential factors that made this accomplishment possible? How can this achievement be sustained and deepened? What can be learned from this experience that could be applied to other similar situations?

Reflection 5: Social Justice Commitment

Consider in what ways the site at which you are participating is committed to a project of social justice that aims to broadly transform social conditions for the communities it serves. Describe whether the staff and participants see the work they are involved in as reaching beyond the amelioration of individual cases to broader change, and the ways in which they enact this commitment.

- Interpretation questions: What does social justice mean to this organization? In your view, does the work of this site move toward this goal? Has your participation altered your own understandings and views of social justice?

Evaluation

The Service Learning Analysis will be evaluated according to the following criteria: 1) carefulness and specificity of descriptions of site and experiences, 2) depth and interest of interpretive comments, 3) evidence provided of engagement with service learning organization, 4) clarity and coherence of writing.

Final Reflective Essay

In this essay (**5-7 typed double-spaced pages**), you will reflect on what you have learned during the course and its various assignments, and how it has affected your thinking about teaching, learning, and/or schooling. In the course of your discussion, you should **engage specifically with course concepts and readings** that have made a difference to you. The assignment is subjective in nature; in this essay, you should coherently describe, from your own perspective, **your intellectual and emotional growth** in relation to this material. (Some questions that might spur your thinking for this assignment: How did the course, and connected field experiences, challenge or change your thinking? How did it confirm or extend your own insights or experiences? How did it feel to you to work through the arguments presented? What remains as an important problem or gap for you?)

In referring to course texts, **make sure you use specific references, including quotations** (provide page numbers). Do not summarize the texts; instead, they will serve as tools to help you work through your ideas. You can also refer to your own life experience to help you develop your narrative if you wish; however, this is not an autobiographical essay but rather a narrative of your own response to the course content.

The Final Reflective Essay (in hard copy) is due May 9 in SZB 528. (Assignments turned in late will be lowered two points.)

Evaluation

The final reflective essay will be evaluated according to the following criteria: 1) depth and interest of reflections, analysis, and ideas, 2) specific engagement with course readings and concepts, and 3) organization and coherence of overall argument/narrative.