

**GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT
Graduate School of Education**

**EDUC 892 001
Social Justice and Equity in International Education
Spring 2012
7:20 – 10:00 PM/Mondays
Thompson Hall L028**

PROFESSOR

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COURSE DESCRIPTION:

A. Prerequisites

EDUC 880

B. Course description from the university catalog

Examines ideological, cultural, and systemic structural inequities in various educational settings at national and international levels. Focuses on educational practices that promote equity and social change throughout the world.

What is social justice and how it is relevant to international education? Social justice, as a construct, evolved over time to encompass issues of justice, fairness, equity and law becoming centered on ideas of how a society engages in the “division and distributions of rewards and burdens” (Zadja, Majhanovich, Rust, & Sabina, 2006). Beyond that, social justice is also a call to action, engaging people to seek out their rights and learn to speak truth to power.

When social justice is linked to education, the complexity grows becoming even more nuanced as one enters the international arena. Geopolitical engagements, economic stratification, religious divisions, gender inequities, and marginalization of cultural groups are just some of the themes impacting the content, delivery and outcomes of education. Learners in almost every country of the world are being educated in systems that have deep-rooted legacies framed around inequitable resources, marginal success, and sustained disempowerment in terms of their path to achieving a high-quality education. This course will seek to untangle the issues surrounding social justice and international education, allowing for a better understanding of how education can be a tool to shape a fairer and more just world for all learners.

The course will not seek to provide students with answers, but to assist them in asking their own questions. As an advanced course in the international education series, the course offers

students a chance to take a critical look at the role of education and their own place as scholars in the field of international education.

NATURE OF COURSE DELIVERY:

This course includes a variety of learning activities: discussions in seminar format, text-based/multi-media presentation of course materials, experiential learning activities including interactive assignments, cooperative learning group activities, online discussions and activities, and lecture.

LEARNER OUTCOMES:

This course is designed to enable students to:

1. Understand the fundamental ideals and principles of social justice from an international perspective.
2. Speak to the critical components of social injustice and how it affects international education.
3. Demonstrate how economic, social and political development is connected to issues of social injustice in the field of education.
4. Build a base of knowledge around the various factors hindering the equitable delivery of education in certain cultural, national, religious and economic contexts.
5. Explore the nature of hope in narratives of programs, policies and people who are actively seeking to create a more socially just field of education from an international perspective.
6. Collaborate to develop personal principles of social justice as an international educator.
7. Engage with learning to be both an activist and a scholar through deeper understanding of social justice in international education through the preparation of a research paper.

RELATIONSHIP TO PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS

International and comparative education is a growing and important field within education and as a result there are a growing number of organizations that are oriented to specific international education audiences, such as the NAFSA: The Association of International Educators, the Association for the Advancement of International Education (AAIE), which serves international schools; the Institute of International Education (IIE), The Alliance for International Education (AIE) focused on developing partnerships between higher education institutions and international schools; the Comparative and International Education Society

(CIES), who's purpose is to promote cross-cultural understanding and social development through international education research, policy and practices, and many others. This course addresses some of the aims and goals of the above international education organizations and is intended for policymakers, practitioners and researchers who are interested in international education.

This course is also aligned with the following vision statements: GSE Priorities--Diversity and Equity, and Children, Families and Communities, CEHD's Center for Language and Culture (CLC) and the National Association for Multicultural Education.

In addition, this course engages with the American Educational Research Association's (AERA) foci on social justice to "to disseminate and promote the use of research knowledge and stimulate interest in research on social justice issues related to education" (AERA website, 2009).

REQUIRED TEXTS:

Ayers, W., Quinn, T., & Stovall, D. (Eds.). (2009). *Handbook of Social Justice in Education*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Sen, A (1999). *Development as Freedom*. New York, NY: Anchor Books.

Selected readings from:

1. International Review of Education, Volume 52, Nos. 1-2, 2006.
2. Comparative Education Review
3. Comparative Education
4. International Journal of Educational Research
5. Other readings as assigned

COURSE REQUIREMENTS, PERFORMANCE-BASED ASSESSMENT, AND EVALUATION CRITERIA:

A. Requirements

- a. Participation:** This is defined as full attendance, active informed involvement in class discussions and activities, demonstration of positive and collaborative disposition towards colleagues, and satisfactory completion of all project work on time. A major part of course participation is reading, presentation and facilitation of assigned course material.
- b. Social Justice definition:** The development of your own definition of social justice is an integral part of this course. Your definition, your rationale as to why you have defined it the way you have, and your willingness to articulate your reasons must be thought through and this course will offer students a chance to do that.
- c. Discussion questions:** As advanced doctoral students and to facilitate their professional development, students will be empowered to direct their own learning, where each student will be expected to provide 2 discussion questions

to engage their colleagues in class for at least 8 sessions. These questions will be sent to the professor by 5:00 PM on the day before class is held for dissemination starting on February 13th.

- d. **Book review:** Students will be expected to choose a scholarly book and prepare an academically oriented review where the critical learnings will be shared with peers in class as well as prepare for a collaborative presentation in class (More details on the assignment below).
- e. **Geographic issue profile:** Students will select a particular social justice issue and set it in the context of a country of their choice, or students will choose a country and select a social justice issue pertinent to that country to explore. Papers will explore the nature of the problem, it's history in the country, the policies that alleviate or sustain the injustice, and it's impact on education (More details on the assignment below).
- f. **Final Research Paper:** Students will prepare a scholarly paper that addresses a specific issue addressing the content of the course (More details on the assignment below).

Final Grades will be determined by:

1. Participation	15%	15 points
2. Social Justice definition	4%	4 points
3. Discussion questions 2 points per questions	16%	16 points
4. Book review	15%	15 points
5. Geographic Issue Paper	15%	15 points
6. Research paper	30%	30 points
Total	100%	100 points

B. Performance-based assessments

The book review and the geographic issue profile will be the performance-based assessments.

C. Criteria for evaluation

Since this is a doctoral level course, high quality work is expected of all participants. Attendance at all classes for the entire class is a course expectation. In order to qualify for a final grade of A+, a participant enrolled in EDUC 895 must (in addition to scoring the maximum possible points) participate in all class discussions, activities and projects. When absent from class, participants are responsible for obtaining the material covered in class and handing in any work that is due. All papers will follow APA guidelines.

All course requirements will be assessed using a scoring rubrics and/or specific guidelines. All required coursework are due at the beginning of class on the day they are due.

Coursework submitted late will automatically receive a one third reduction in total points earned (one full letter grade lower). The grades in this course will be distributed as follows.

D. Grading scale

A+ = 100 points

A = 95-99 points

A- = 90-94 points

B+ = 85-89 points

B = 80-84

C and below – Not acceptable for graduate credit

COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

Student Expectations

- Students must adhere to the guidelines of the George Mason University Honor Code [See <http://academicintegrity.gmu.edu/honorcode/>].
- Students with disabilities who seek accommodations in a course must be registered with the George Mason University Office of Disability Services (ODS) and inform their instructor, in writing, at the beginning of the semester [See <http://ods.gmu.edu/>].
- Students must follow the university policy for Responsible Use of Computing [See <http://universitypolicy.gmu.edu/1301gen.html>].
- Students are responsible for the content of university communications sent to their George Mason University email account and are required to activate their account and check it regularly. All communication from the university, college, school, and program will be sent to students solely through their Mason email account.
- Students must follow the university policy stating that all sound emitting devices shall be turned off during class unless otherwise authorized by the instructor.
- Students are expected to exhibit professional behaviors and dispositions at all times.

Campus Resources

- The George Mason University Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) staff consists of professional counseling and clinical psychologists, social workers, and counselors who offer a wide range of services (e.g., individual and group counseling, workshops and outreach programs) to enhance students' personal experience and academic performance [See <http://caps.gmu.edu/>].

- The George Mason University Writing Center staff provides a variety of resources and services (e.g., tutoring, workshops, writing guides, handbooks) intended to support students as they work to construct and share knowledge through writing [See <http://writingcenter.gmu.edu/>].
- For additional information on the College of Education and Human Development, Graduate School of Education, please visit our website [See <http://gse.gmu.edu/>].

Assignment Guidelines

The following assignments are meant to build upon each other to further your knowledge of the topic of the course while also engaging in meaningful scholarship as would be articulated in a final capstone course. Think about the whole course and how one book and one region can help crystallize the work you will do for your final paper.

Book Review

The purpose of this book review is to engage you to take on a social justice issue from the perspective of how an author presents the information and how the information builds your understanding around the topic in a more thoughtful way. For this review you will be asked to select a book of your choice that is written for an academic, policy, or activist audience, explore a few key ideas and respond in a way that mimics the books reviews in a scholarly journal.

The review will be worth 15 points and should be between 1,500-2,000 words and will be graded on five 3-point categories:

- a. Relevance to the field and succinct details of highlights of the book;
- b. Understanding of author's perspective and intent in authoring the book;
- c. Analysis in context of other literature and knowledge in the field; and
- d. Critique of style as resulted in learning and to the intended audience;
- e. Critical reflection on your learning as a result of both reading the book and writing the review.

Geographic Issue Paper

You may initiate this project in one of two ways – by selecting a social justice issue and placing it in the context of a specific country, or by selecting a country and highlighting a specific social justice issue within the country.

Either way, you will be expected to prepare a paper (between 3,000-4,000 words) that will be graded on five key elements each worth 3 points:

- a. Provide a clear and thoughtful analysis of the issue.
- b. Explore the nature of the issue in the chosen country.
- c. Delve into the critiques, constraints, and scope of the issue in your chosen country through the lens of education as well as other relevant lenses.
- d. Present policies, programs, and practices that might be evident in working to dismantle or elevate the issue – especially through the lens of education.

- e. Offer creative solutions and/or understandings on the nature of the issue and how you might reflect on the future of the issue in the context of your own interest.

Final Research Paper and Presentation

The final requirement is a research paper that is broadly defined here as to give each student an opportunity to conduct an in depth examination of specific issues or topics related to international education and social justice.

As doctoral students, the project remains open to your interpretation to be helpful in your dissertation development, and students may propose a major project of their own choosing. These papers should be 15-20 pages in length, and topics must be approved by the instructor in advance. Students will be expected to present the paper at the end of the semester.

The presentation will be conducted in the manner of an international conference panel. Three panels will be created and each person will be responsible for a 10-minute presentation that addresses the most salient and critical information that would be of interest based on your audience. Time will be monitored, and a moderator will be randomly selected for each panel from the audience. Use of “props,” strong presentation skills, and audience engagement are STRONGLY encouraged.

PROPOSED CLASS SCHEDULE

Date	Topic/Learning Experiences	Readings and Assignments
January 23	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Introduction 2. Syllabus 3. Generating discussion questions 	No readings assigned for this class. Initial Assessment
January 30	<p>Online class – Blackboard Discussion.</p> <p>By Monday, January 30 – each one of you should have posted a 200-word post on the Blackboard discussion page on your definition and rationale to the question “What is social justice?”</p> <p>Over the next week – please respond to each of your colleague’s definitions with critical questions/comments that will help further articulate and synthesize their definitions. Based on these discussions – how would you change/expand/elaborate your own definition. Make your edits and bring the “final” version to class the following week.</p>	Readings <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Zanja et al (2006) (see Blackboard) • Gewirtz (2009)(see Blackboard) • United Nations (2006) Section 1 (See Blackboard) Assignments <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generating a social justice definition
February 6	Understanding the ideologies and perspectives of social justice without and within education.	Sen, Chapters 1, 2, and 3 Ayers et al, Chapter 3 & 4, 34

	PLEASE NOTE WE WILL BE MEETING IN ROOM F IN THE JOHNSON CENTER TODAY	
February 13	Social justice and political and economic systems PLEASE NOTE WE WILL BE MEETING IN ROOM G IN THE JOHNSON CENTER TODAY	Ayers Chapters 2 and 12, Part 7 Introduction Sen, Chapters 4 and 5 United Nations (2006) Section 3 (See Blackboard) Levin (1984) (See Blackboard) Chan Tibergien (2006) (See Blackboard) BOOK REVIEW TITLE SELECTED
February 20	The facets of injustice – gender PLEASE NOTE WE WILL BE MEETING IN ROOM F IN THE JOHNSON CENTER TODAY	Ayers, 9 and 23 Sen, Chapter 8 Stromquist (1996) (See Blackboard) GEOGRAPHIC ISSUE TOPIC SELECTED – PLEASE PLAN ON SHARING THE IDEA IN CLASS.
February 27	The facets of injustice – language, culture and religion WORKING TIME INCLUDED FOR SMALL GROUP SHARING OF IDEAS FOR FINAL RESEARCH PAPER.	Ayers et al, Chapter 13 Sen, Chapter 10 Petherbridge-Hernandez & Latiner Raby (1993) (See Blackboard) Halstead (2004) (See Blackboard) McCarty (2003) (See Blackboard)
March 5	The facets of injustice – ability and sexuality Midpoint Assessment	Ayers et al, Chapter 18, 20, 24, 25 Sefa Dei (2005) (See Blackboard) BOOK REVIEW DUE Book review sharing RESEARCH TOPIC PAPER SELECTED
March 12	SPRING BREAK	NO CLASS
March 19	The facets of injustice – ability and sexuality	Ayers et al, Chapter 18, 20, 24, 25 Sefa Dei (2005) (See Blackboard) Midpoint assessment Discussion Question evaluations
March 26	The facets of injustice – communities in conflict	Ayers et al, Chapter 11, 30, Kraak (1991) (See Blackboard)

		Sen, Chapter 7
April 2	The facets of injustice – ethnicity, race, and caste	Ayers et al, Chapter 8 and 10 Freeman (2006) (See Blackboard) Psacharopoulos (1992) (See Blackboard) GEOGRAPHIC ISSUE PROFILE DUE
April 9	The role of youth in social justice – where idealism and powerlessness meet. Guest speaker – Dr. Deepa Srikantaiah, Education Specialist, Global Partnership for Education c/o The World Bank	Articles TBD
April 16	Structural injustice – role of teachers and schools	Ayers et al, Chapter 39, 41, 50, 51 and Response to Part 8. LAST DAY TO SUBMIT DRAFT OF RESEARCH PAPER FOR FEEDBACK
April 23	Social justice in practice – policy and practice Returning to our definitions – can we stand by our words?	Ayers et al, Chapter 36, Sen, Chapters 11 and 12 Research presentations Part 1
April 30	NO CLASS MEETING TODAY	FINAL RESEARCH PAPER DUE VIA EMAIL
May 6	Future directions – curriculum, content, pedagogy, and epistemology.	Geo-Jana (2006) (see Blackboard), Mundy (2006) (See Blackboard) Research presentations Part 2 Course evaluations Final assessment

RESEARCH PAPER ASSESSMENT RUBRIC

Grade Points	Quality of Written Work	Completeness of Work	Class Presentation
A+ 100	Exceptional quality and insight; a rare & valuable contribution to the field.	100% complete	Clear description of the topic and its importance; strong evidence of critical reflection; delivery is engaging and interactive; strong evidence of preparation & organization; extensive resources provided.
A 99-95	Convincingly on target; demonstrates evidence of understanding and application; clear and concise writing; the reader is not distracted by grammar and/or spelling and citation errors.	Accurate & seamless writing; virtually a complete product	Clear description and importance; critical reflection apparent; delivery is good and somewhat engaging; evidence of preparation & organization; some resources provided.
A- 94-90	On target with evidence of understanding; additional need for clarification; more than four errors in grammar, spelling or citations	Some shortcomings, none that distract from overall work	Description of topic; little evidence of reflection; delivery is okay; little engagement; some evidence of organization & preparation; limited resources provided.
B+ 89 –85	Competent; provides credible evidence of understanding and application; some lapses in organization, citations and/or writing clarity.	Moderate shortcomings; minor elements missing that distract the instructor’s ability to see the product as a whole.	Student states the topic but fails to describe importance. No apparent critical reflection; Delivery is understandable but not enthusiastic or engaging; evidence of preparation is not clear; very limited resources provided.
B 80 – 84	Evidence of understanding presented but incomplete; writing indicates gaps in logic; grammar and/or spelling errors distract the reader. Weak or insufficient citations.	Evidence of effort but one or more significant and important points are missed or not addressed.	Student makes a presentation without sufficient planning or preparation; topic is unclear; importance is not identified; delivery is difficult to follow; no indication of preparation; few if any resources presented.
C 79 and below	Undergraduate level and quality; unsophisticated; assignments show little or not connection to course content or concepts.	Insufficient evidence of understanding and application; important elements missing or difficult to find.	No presentation is attempted.
F	Unacceptable	Difficult to recognize as the assigned task.	No constructive participation; destructive; demeaning toward other points of view.