# George Mason University College of Education and Human Development Graduate School of Education

**ELS Division** 

EDUC 301 Section 1: Educationally Diverse Populations—Handicapped, Gifted and Multicultural
3 Credits, Fall 2016
Wednesday, 7:20pm - 10:00pm West Building Room # 1001

#### Instructor

Name: Mainlehwon Ebenezer Vonhm Office hours: Tuesdays, 12pm – 5pm

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#### **Prerequisites/Corequisites**

None

#### **University Catalog Course Description**

Introduction to educational issues; not applicable in graduate-level teacher education programs. Introduces psychological, sociological, educational, and physical aspects of diverse populations in today's schools for early and middle education. Emphasizes litigation and legislation pertaining to education of diverse populations.

#### **Course Overview**

This course introduces the psychological, sociological, educational, and physical aspects of diverse populations in today's schools for elementary and secondary education. It will cover litigation and legislation pertaining to the education of diverse populations, as well as effective strategies for meeting the educational needs of diverse populations.

#### **Course Delivery Method**

A variety of instructional methods will be used in class. These methods include large and small group discussions, guest speakers, individual/group presentations and individual research, all of which will be structured around the readings. Active participation and engagement—self-questioning, critical thinking, and problem solving—are important elements of this course. Students are expected to complete all class readings prior to each session in order to engage in active listening, dialogue, and the sharing of ideas. Attendance is required for all classes in order to fully engage in the learning activities during class.

## **Learner Outcomes or Objectives**

This course is designed to enable students to do the following:

- 1. Understand aspects of diverse populations regarding the educational setting including legislation and litigation.
- 2. Examine the broader educational and social context, which impacts the work of the public school teacher;
- 3. Analyze how social structures of race, class, gender, (dis)ability, and sexual orientation create relations that privilege some and deny opportunity to others.
- 4. Create a safe, challenging and enriching environment for all students.
- 5. Understand how cultural groups and students' cultural identities affect language learning and school achievement.
- 6. Be able to access additional information about diverse populations so they can meet the needs of the students in their classes.

#### **Professional Standards**

This course relates to the standards of multiple professional organizations. Students are expected to exhibit professional behaviors and dispositions at all times.

#### **Required Texts**

Cushner, K. McClelland, A., Safford, P. (2014). *Human diversity in education: An intercultural approach* (8<sup>th</sup> ed.). New York, NY: McGraw Hill.

Gorski, P.C. (2013). Reaching and teaching students in poverty: Strategies for erasing the opportunity gap. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

Schwarz, P. (2006). From disability to possibility: The power of inclusive classrooms. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

#### **Course Performance Evaluation**

Students are expected to submit all assignments on time on Blackboard as directed.

#### • Assignments and Examinations

This course will be graded on a point system, with a total of 100 possible points. All assignments will be turned in electronically <mvonhm@gmu.edu > (in which case

they must be submitted by 7 pm on the due date or no credit is given). Late papers and projects will not be accepted without penalty (5% each day late).

#### Class Participation (10 points)

Dialogue and interaction are essential aspects of this course. Students are expected to actively participate in in-class activities, be supportive of their classmates and conduct themselves in a professional manner throughout the program. Further, students are expected to arrive to class on time and be mindful of arrival, breaks and departure times from class. If you are absent from class, or a passive participant, your colleagues will not benefit from your insights. Successful completion of this course requires your attendance of all class sessions. Please email me (mvonhm@gmu.edu / mevonhmpeaceedu.org) if you must miss a class. And if you do miss a class, you are responsible for completing the readings, turning in your reading reflection, and asking a study buddy for class notes and handouts. Any departure from the above expectations will result in a deduction of points in the participation grade – simply 'being' in class is insufficient to obtain full participation points.

#### Education Diversity (20 points)

I divided this assignment into two sections. These two assignments are meant to have you critically reflect on the experiences of others as well as your own as it relates to diversity and inclusion within the school system. The following are the list of tasks:

#### Bridging the Divide (BtD) Project (10 points):

This assignment involves culturally diverse students, families, schools, and communities. The goal of the assignment is to better understand the role of culture in student learning and engagement. Based on the readings and your knowledge about diversity and inclusion, you will engage in a constructive dialogue with a first or second-generation immigrant family or a family that is of a non-majority culture within the school, country, or context in which you work. You will learn about their lives, backgrounds, values and dreams with a particular emphasis on their experiences with the school system in which their children are enrolled. You will analyze your findings and reflect in writing on what you learned from this experience. This paper should be between 4-6 pages excluding references. You may present this to the class. You are required to notify instructor about the immigrant family you have chosen to interview by September 7<sup>th</sup> by 7pm. This paper is due electronically on September 18<sup>th</sup> at 7pm.

Cultural Autobiography/Reflective Personal Development Paper (10 points): First, please write down everything about your experience with the education system from when you began school until entering GMU. Then start to look at your life and begin to articulate your beliefs about the education system. In this autobiographical narrative, you will explore your own personal history, including the formation of your identity, beliefs and perspectives on education. This is a critical analysis of your educational biography including significant reflection on the course experiences and course readings. You should answer, "How do I

understand my own experiences differently after reading the course materials? This paper should be between 4-6 pages excluding references. You may present this to the class. This paper is due electronically on October 9<sup>th</sup> at 7pm.

### Field Experience Journal (55 points)

The purpose of the school-based experience is to provide you with the opportunity to (1) connect the goals of the course to classroom/school practice, (2) gain exposure to a variety of classroom/school communities, and (3) promote critical, self-reflection about the practice of teaching and the culture of schools.

#### Field Observation (20 points):

You will be required to complete 5 hours of field observation at an accredited school(s) in the area. Approximately 3 hours should consist of teaching experience (roughly three-four classes; each at least 45 minutes) to observe different teaching styles and settings (e.g., male/female; Hispanic/African-American). You must also complete 2 hours of observation of non-teaching experience (e.g., a faculty meeting, curriculum meeting and/or an afterschool program/activity).

To begin the field experience you must <u>register online</u> no later than September 9<sup>th</sup> by 7pm. The Field Placement Specialist can answer any questions or concerns you may have about your field placement.

When you conducted your field observations consider the following questions: Were there elements of multicultural education, social justice education, culturally responsive pedagogy, differentiation, sheltered instruction, or other pedagogies?

How did the teacher incorporate these pedagogies into their teaching approach/methods? Were certain methods more (or less) conducive to specific pedagogies?

What strategies did you see the teacher use? How did the students respond? How did the teacher interact with students?

What connections did you make to the readings or our class discussions? What did you wish you saw? Why?

During your school-based experience, you are required to keep a reflective journal. The journal will include field notes and reflections on the field observation. The journal must be typed, double-spaced, and submitted electronically. The observation write-up will be roughly 6-8 pages long—double spaced— and you will be required to present it to the class. The observation paper is due October 23<sup>rd</sup> at 7pm. Each student will be given 5 minutes to discuss his or her observations in class on October 26<sup>th</sup>. You must include a reflection on the following in APA format:

Briefly describe the lessons.

What did you learn from this observation?

How will you use what you learned in your future practice as a teacher?

Make connection of what you saw and heard in the classroom with our class discussions, activities, and readings.

Be sure to have your field supervisors sign the Educator Letter (on Blackboard) and <u>Field Experience Documentation Form</u> and digitally attach the form for each teacher you observe to your field experience journal or physically turn in the forms to me in class.

#### Diversity Interview (20 points)

Teachers and/or Coordinators Interviews: The purpose of this assignment is to help you better understand different approaches teachers/coordinators may use for diverse students. Based on the readings and your observations, you will explore the following: how the teacher defines diversity, his/her approach to culturally responsive teaching, exceptional learners, and more. You will find out about the teacher's background and explore how this impacts her/his approach to teaching. You may interview the same teachers/coordinators or completely different teachers and/or coordinators. There is no time limit (length) to the interviews nor numbers of people you are allowed to interview; however, the interview must be comprehensive so that you grasp the teacher's and/or coordinator's rationale for diversity and inclusion.

On October 26—before conducting the interviews—we will develop an interview guide, as a class, to help you prepare for the interview. The interview is not meant to be a highly structured or standardized conversation, but instead a semiformal, guided conversation. The interview will help you direct the conversation toward the topics and issues you want to learn about, diversity and inclusion, based on the readings and observations. The interview write-up will be roughly 6-8 pages long—double spaced— and you will be required to present it to the class. The interview paper is due November 27<sup>th</sup> at 7pm. Each student will be given 5 minutes to discuss his or her interview in class on December 7<sup>th</sup>. You must include a reflection on the following in APA format.

Briefly describe the interview.

What did you learn from this interview?

How will you use what you learned in your future practice as a teacher? Make connection of what you saw and heard in the interview with our class discussions, activities, and readings.

#### Diversity Experience – (15 points)

This assignment gives you an opportunity to spend 1 to 3 hours in a setting where you have never been before in which you will encounter people who are different from you in at least one of the following ways: SES, religion, sexual orientation, language, race, cultural background, or physical ability. You may have someone accompany you who is familiar with the site (to act as a guide) or someone who is also unfamiliar with the area but will make you feel more comfortable. You may also visit the place you choose alone. The *DE* paper is worth 15 points and it will be due December 11<sup>th</sup> at 7pm. You will write a 4-6 page narrative reflection on your experience and will be

given 5 minutes to discuss in class on December 14<sup>th</sup>. Detailed instructions and assignment guidelines will be provided on Blackboard.

Possible Diversity Experiences include, but are not limited to, the following:

Category	Possible Experiences
Social class	✓ Attend a soup kitchen, standing in line and eating with
	those at the kitchen
	✓ Visit a social security office.
	✓ Visit a homeless shelter
	✓ Visit a Salvation Army or Goodwill thrift shop
Religion	✓ Attend a service not of your predominant faith
	✓ Visit a house of worship (e.g., Mosque, Church, Temple)
	and participate in a religious studies class (e.g., Sunday
	School)
Gender/Sexuality	✓ Volunteer at a rape crisis center or battered women's
	center
	✓ Visit a gay bar (students aged 21 and older)
Race/Ethnicity	✓ Visit a minority house of worship
	✓ Shop in an ethnic neighborhood different than you own
	✓ Take part in an ethnic pride day event
Language	✓ Attend an activity, class or service not in your own
	language
Exceptionality	✓ Volunteer at a program for adults with disabilities
	✓ Volunteer with the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society
	✓ Visit and/or volunteer at a Special Olympics event

#### Reading Journal (15 points)

There is a good deal of thought provoking reading in this course. Just completing the readings, however, is not enough to maximize your learning opportunities. It is therefore expected that you will complete a written response to the readings from the eight topics discussed this semester (race, ethnicity, globalization, language, gender, religion, socioeconomic, special education). Before beginning the readings for a particular week, I suggest that you ask yourself what *your* questions and concerns are about the topics for that week, and that you list these. After finishing a reading, jot down the author's main points. Then, ask yourself how these relate to your questions or concerns. Did the reading answer your questions? Did it give you new ideas or ways of approaching the topic? This reflection process is a means for you to connect to the readings at a personal level, but also critically analyze the authors' perspectives. Reflections should be thoughtful, clear, and relevant to readings and discussions we've had in class. Journal posts are due 7pm on the day of class.

#### Final Reflection (5 bonus points)

The final reflection is an opportunity for you to synthesize, analyze, and reflect on the course work, readings, and discussions. The reflection should be thoughtful and clear

and incorporate readings, class discussions, and activities throughout the semester that influenced your thinking. Explain specific ways you believe you've changed and how you will use what you've learned and experienced in the future as a teacher.

### Other Requirements

Also, as you complete the course assignments, please know that I am not "pushing" any particular perspective or approach in this class. I will not require or expect you to adopt a specific educational, political, or philosophical perspective or approach. In fact, I would prefer that you disagree—with me, each other, and the authors we read—as often as possible. The last thing we need is groupthink!

I respect your right to choose to see things from your own perspective. We all should, however, help each other to consider things through different lenses, and we can do this respectfully through dynamic and meaningful dialogue. I do not expect or hope that we will all leave this class sharing the same views. We can all use a little practice existing in a space populated by multiple perspectives, and I hope this class gives us such an opportunity. I also hope we can all feel comfortable sharing our personal experiences through our discussions and writing. The texts we will read are one-dimensional and lifeless unless we share our interpretations and evaluations through our past experiences.

Please, please, please take the time to read all the instructions for each assignment. That's the only way you will be able to know what I am asking you to do. I have had one or two very unhappy students in the past at other institutions. Almost always the problem was caused by misunderstandings about expectations. Read all the instructions, and if you still have questions, ask! Don't "assume." Email me, stop by the office hours, or post a question on the open discussion board!

Lastly, if you have questions or problems, please get in touch with me quickly. Don't let problems build until they are irreversible!

#### • Course Performance Evaluation Weighting

Assignment	<b>Due Dates</b>	Points
Class Participation		10
Bridging the Divide	09/18	10
Cultural Autobiography	10/09	10
Field Experience – Observation	10/23	20
Field Experience – Diversity Interview	11/27	20
Field Experience – Diversity Experience	12/11	15
Reading Journal	09/07 -12/14	15
Total		100

#### **Grading Scale**

Letter	Percentage
Grade	
A+	98-100
A	93-96
A-	90-92
B+	88-89
В	83-87
B-	80-82
C+	78-79
С	73-77
C-	70-72
D	60-69

# • Grading Policies

Grades will be based on the completion of course requirements and on the scope, quality, and creativity of the assignments. Assignments will be awarded points as stated above.

#### **Professional Dispositions**

Students are expected to exhibit professional behaviors and dispositions at all times.

#### **Core Values Commitment**

The College of Education & Human Development is committed to collaboration, ethical leadership, innovation, research-based practice, and social justice. Students are expected to adhere to these principles: <a href="http://cehd.gmu.edu/values/">http://cehd.gmu.edu/values/</a>

#### **GMU Policies and Resources for Students**

#### **Policies**

- Students must adhere to the guidelines of the Mason Honor Code (see <a href="http://oai.gmu.edu/the-mason-honor-code/">http://oai.gmu.edu/the-mason-honor-code/</a>).
- Students must follow the university policy for Responsible Use of Computing (see <a href="http://universitypolicy.gmu.edu/policies/responsible-use-of-computing/">http://universitypolicy.gmu.edu/policies/responsible-use-of-computing/</a>).
- Students are responsible for the content of university communications sent to their Mason 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 with disabilities who seek accommodations in a course must be registered with George Mason University Disability Services. Approved accommodations will

begin at the time the written letter from Disability Services is received by the instructor (see <a href="http://ods.gmu.edu/">http://ods.gmu.edu/</a>).

• Students must follow the university policy stating that all sound emitting devices shall be silenced during class unless otherwise authorized by the instructor.

#### Campus Resources

- Support for submission of assignments to Tk20 should be directed to <u>tk20help@gmu.edu</u> or <u>https://cehd.gmu.edu/api/tk20</u>. Questions or concerns regarding use of Blackboard should be directed to <u>http://coursessupport.gmu.edu/.</u>
- 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 <a href="http://writingcenter.gmu.edu/">http://writingcenter.gmu.edu/</a>).
- 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 <a href="http://caps.gmu.edu/">http://caps.gmu.edu/</a>).
- The George Mason University Office of Student Support staff helps students negotiate life situations by connecting them with appropriate campus and off-campus resources. Students in need of these services may contact the office by phone (703-993-5376). Concerned students, faculty and staff may also make a referral to express concern for the safety or well-being of a Mason student or the community by going to <a href="http://studentsupport.gmu.edu/">http://studentsupport.gmu.edu/</a>, and the OSS staff will follow up with the student.

For additional information on the College of Education and Human Development, please visit our website <a href="https://cehd.gmu.edu/">https://cehd.gmu.edu/</a>.

#### **Class Schedule**

Wednesday, 7:20pm - 10:00pm West Building Room # 1001

Note: Faculty reserves the right to alter the schedule as necessary, with notification to students.

		Unit 1—Theme: Foundations and History
	August 31	Topic: Introductions and course overview
		Required reading:
1		• Cushner (2015), Chapter 1
1		
		Recommended reading:
		• Wheatley, M.J. (2002), "Willing to be disturbed" Selected reading (Blackboard)
	Sept 7	Topic: Race in America
	_	•
		Required reading:
		• Cushner (2015), Chapter 2
		Recommended reading:
		<ul> <li>McIntosh (1989), "White privilege: Unpacking the invisible</li> </ul>
		knapsack" Selected reading (Blackboard)
2		• Chang & Au (2013), "You're Asian How Can You Fail Math?
		Unmasking the myth of the model minority". Click on the link
		<a href="http://www.rethinkingschools.org/archive/22_02/math222.shtml">http://www.rethinkingschools.org/archive/22_02/math222.shtml</a>
		Assignments due:
		• Reading Journal # 1 – due by 7pm
		<ul> <li>Notify instructor about the immigrant family by 7pm today.</li> </ul>
		<ul> <li>Field experience online registration September 9<sup>th</sup> by 7pm.</li> </ul>
	0 . 1.4	Comprehensive draft of BtD is due by 7pm—optional  This is the state of BtD is due by 7pm—optional  This is the state of BtD is due by 7pm—optional.
	Sept 14	Topic: Theory behind Multicultural Education
		Required reading:
		• Cushner (2015), Chapter 3 and 4
		Recommended reading:
3		Defining Multicultural Education (from Multicultural Supersite):
		http://www.edchange.org/multicultural/initial.html>
		Assignments due:
		• Reading Journal # 2 - by 7pm
		<ul> <li>Bridging the Divide due September 18<sup>th</sup> by 7pm.</li> </ul>
	0 24	Unit 2—Theme: Ethnicity
	Sept 21	Topic: The role of identity and ethnicity
		Required reading:
4		• Cushner (2015), Chapter 6
		Recommended reading:
		• Tatum (1997), "The Complexity of Identity: Who am I?" Selected

		mandima (Dlaglih agud)
		reading (Blackboard)
		Assignments due:
		• Reading Journal # 3 - by 7pm
		Unit 3—Theme: Globalization
	Sept 28	Topic: The rise of McWorld—It's a small world
		Required reading:
		• Cushner (2015), Chapter 5 & 7
		Recommended reading:
_		• Chang, H. (2003). Multicultural education for global citizenship: A
5		textbook analysis. Electronic Magazine of Multicultural Education
		Selected reading (Blackboard)
		Assignments due
		<ul><li>Assignments due:</li><li>Reading Journal # 4 - by 7pm</li></ul>
		<ul> <li>Comprehensive draft of CA is due on October 1<sup>st</sup> by 7pm—</li> </ul>
		optional
		Unit 4—Theme: Language
	October 5	Topic: What does it mean to be an immigrant student?
		Bilingual policies, reform, and strategies
		Required reading:
6		• Cushner (2015), Chapter 8
		Assignments due:
		• Reading Journal # 5 - by 7pm
	0 + 1 12	• Cultural Autobiography/ Paper due October 9 <sup>th</sup> by 7pm.
	October 12	<i>Topic:</i> Linguistic equity in education: Learning communities and language
		language
		No Physical Meeting on Campus—BUT—class will meet on
		Blackboard.
		There will be a <b>''mini-lecture</b> " which will be about 25-30 minutes
		long on the topic(s) posted online. I will also provide two thought
		provoking discussion questions to try to get you to think about and
7		apply the readings and lecture material to the "real world" in some
		way. You will be asked to post your own answer on the discussion
		board by October 15 <sup>th</sup> at 7pm. You will then be asked to read the
		answers of your classmates and respond to at least three people by
		7pm on October 19 <sup>th</sup> .
		You are welcome (even encouraged) to respond earlier—giving
		more time for a real discussion. You are also welcome to respond
		to more than three people.

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		• Cushner (2015), Chapter 9
		Recommended reading:
		<ul> <li>Project on Religious Freedom: 2009 Report on International</li> </ul>
		Religious Freedom
		< http://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/irf/2009/index.htm>
		Assignments due:
		<ul> <li>Reading Journal # 9 - by 7pm</li> </ul>
		Unit 7—Theme: Socioeconomic equity in education
1	Nov 9 <sup>th</sup>	Topic: Impact of students' socioeconomic status (SES) in education:
		Social class and social status in education
		Required reading:
		• Cushner (2015), Chapter 13
		Cusimer (2015), Chapter 15
11		Recommended reading:
		• Hartas, D. (2011) "Families' social backgrounds matter: Socio-
		economic factors, home learning and young children's language,
		literacy and social outcomes" (Blackboard)
		Assignments due:
		• Reading Journal # 10 - by 7pm
1	Nov 16 <sup>th</sup>	Topic: How do you reach students living in poverty?
		Do all children have an equal access to a quality education?
		Required reading:
12		• Gorski (2013) All
12		GOISKI (2013) THI
		Assignments due:
		<ul> <li>Reading Journal # 11 - by 7pm</li> </ul>
		• Field Experience Interview due <b>November 27</b> th <b>by 7pm</b> .
13	Nov 23 <sup>rd</sup>	Thanksgiving recess—No Class Meeting
		Unit 8—Theme: Special education
1	Nov 30 <sup>th</sup>	Topic: Special education history and laws
		Required reading:
		• Cushner (2015), Chapter 12
14		A •
		Assignments due:
		<ul> <li>Reading Journal # 12 - by 7pm</li> <li>Comprehensive draft of DE is due on December 3<sup>rd</sup> by 7pm—</li> </ul>
		optional
I	Dec 7 <sup>th</sup>	Topic: Exceptionality and educational equity
15		· Francisco Francisco
		Required reading:

	• Cushner (2015), Chapter 13
	Assignments due:
	<ul> <li>Reading Journal # 13 - by 7pm</li> </ul>
	• Final Reflection (5 bonus points) due now or by 7pm Dec 14 <sup>th</sup>
	<ul> <li>Diversity Experience due December 11<sup>th</sup> by 7pm.</li> </ul>
	Unit 9—Theme: Social justice education
Dec 14	<i>Topic:</i> Transformative Multicultural Education: Practical
	Applications to further equity and social justice /Final thoughts
	Required reading:
	• Johnson (2013), "What can we do?" Selected reading (Blackboard)
16	
	Assignments due:
	<ul> <li>Reading Journal # 14 - by 7pm.</li> </ul>
	• Final Reflection (5 bonus points)
	• Wrap up-Final Thoughts, Next Steps,
	Course Evaluation

# **Assessment Rubric(s)**

All rubrics are on Blackboard