

George Mason University
College of Education and Human Development
Ph.D. in Education Program

EDUC 896: Special Topics in Education – Section DL2
Curriculum Theory & Design
3 Credits, Spring 2021
4:30 to 7:10 pm, Tuesdays, on Zoom

Faculty

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Prerequisites/Corequisites

Admission to the Ph.D. in Education program, or permission of instructor.

University Catalog Course Description

Examines theories and practices of the design, deliberation, and analysis of curricula across subject matters and learning contexts. Surveys key concepts, principles, methods, and theories of curriculum thought in both U.S. and international contexts. Analyzes philosophical perspectives underlying curriculum theory and practice. Explores the consequences of curriculum decisions for educators and learners.

Course Overview

As a survey of the fields of curriculum studies and curriculum theory, this course is designed to familiarize students with various concepts, principles, methods, and theories of curriculum as enacted in formal and informal spaces of learning (i.e. schools, museums). Course topics, readings, and assignments will enable students to synthesize different conceptions and approaches to curriculum across diverse social and cultural contexts and schooling practices. Students have opportunities to design, develop, evaluate, and/or critique different examples of curriculum.

Course Delivery Method

This course will be delivered using a seminar format. As a doctoral seminar, the course will be taught using approaches that require whole class and small group discussions and activities. Relevant texts, media and data sources will be reviewed. Discussions will be facilitated by both the professor and course participants. All materials should be read prior to the class date in order to engage in a meaningful discussion. Some course content may be delivered, accessed, and produced in online spaces (e.g. Blackboard).

Learner Outcomes or Objectives

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

1. Interpret the history of competing movements, theories, & scholars across different paradigms of curriculum thought in the United States
2. Differentiate and deconstruct the cultural and institutional contexts shaping how curriculum is designed, deliberated, and transmitted in places of learning
3. Recognize and evaluate various factors influencing curriculum development across local, national, and international systems of education, learning, and teaching
4. Apply contemporary conceptual lenses from curriculum theories to specific examples of curriculum practice
5. Identify and analyze curriculum discourses and practices applicable to specific school subject areas and disciplinary knowledges across curriculum
6. Demonstrate and narrate a significant curriculum controversy within a specific curricular area, school subject matter, or discipline of knowledge
7. Design and construct an applied curriculum inquiry, such as a proposal for an academic conference, a topic for professional development, or a curricular recommendation for a school board

Required texts

Links to these readings (i.e. peer-reviewed journal articles, reports, and chapters from books) will be made available online adhering to all copyright guidelines through George Mason University's University Libraries.

Anyon, J. (1981). Social class and school knowledge. *Curriculum Inquiry*, 11(1), 3-42.

Apple, M. W. (2019). *Ideology and curriculum* (4th ed.). Routledge.

Apple, M. W. (2014). *Official knowledge: Democratic education in a conservative age* (3rd ed.). Routledge.

Asher, N. (2005). At the interstices: Engaging postcolonial and feminist perspectives for a multicultural education pedagogy in the South. *The Teachers College Record*, 107(5), 1079-1106.

Askins, A. D. (1926). Trends in the high-school curriculum. *Educational Research Bulletin*, 5(7), 146-148.

Au, W., Brown, A.L., & Calderón, D. (2016). *Reclaiming the multicultural roots of U.S. curriculum: Communities of color and official knowledge in education*. Teachers College Press.

Burke, K. J., & Segall, A. (2011). Christianity and its legacy in education. *Journal of Curriculum Studies*, 43(5), 631-658.

- Carlson, D. (2004). Narrating the multicultural nation: Rosa Parks and the white mythology of the civil rights movement. In M. Fine, L. Weis, L.P. Pruitt, & A. Burns (Eds.). *Off white: Readings on power, privilege, and resistance*, (pp. 302-14). Routledge.
- Deng, Z., & Luke, A. (2008). Subject matter: Defining and theorizing school subjects. In F.M. Connelly, M.F. He, & J.I. Phillion (Eds.), *The SAGE Handbook of Curriculum and Instruction* (pp. 7-24). Sage Publications.
- Eisner, E. W. (2002). *The educational imagination: On the design and evaluation of school programs* (3rd ed.). Prentice Hall.
- Flinders, D. J., & Thornton, S.J. (1986). The null curriculum: Its theoretical basis and practical implications. *Curriculum Inquiry*, 16(1), 33-42.
- Gallagher, K. (2000). The everyday classroom as problematic: A feminist pedagogy. *Curriculum Inquiry*, 30(1), 71-81.
- Gaztambide-Fernández, R. (2006). Regarding race: The necessary browning of our curriculum and pedagogy public project. *Journal of Curriculum and Pedagogy*, 3(1), 60-65.
- Gilbert, A., & Byers, C. (2020). Enacting wonder-infused pedagogy in an elementary science methods course. *Innovations in Science Teacher Education*, 5(1), 60-65.
- Grumet, M. (1988). *Bitter milk: Women and teaching*. The University of Massachusetts Press.
- Hicks, J. R., & Stewart, W.P. (2020). Learning from wildlife-inspired awe. *The Journal of Environmental Education*, 51(1), 44-54.
- Kissling, M. T., & Bell, J. T. (2020). Teaching social studies amid ecological crisis. *Theory & Research in Social Education*, 48(1), 1-31.
- Kliebard, H. (2004). *The struggle for the American curriculum, 1893-1958*, (3rd ed.). Routledge.
- Kridel, C. (Ed.) (2010). *Encyclopedia of curriculum studies*. Sage Publications **[some entries will be posted from this digital encyclopedia; please cite/reference accordingly]**
- Krueger, J. (2019). To challenge the settler colonial narrative of Native Americans in social studies curriculum: A new way forward for teachers. *The History Teacher*, 52(2), 291-318.
- Ladson-Billings, G., & Brown, K. D. (2008). Curriculum and cultural diversity. In F.M. Connelly, M.F. He, & J.I. Phillion (Eds.), *The SAGE Handbook of Curriculum and Instruction* (pp. 117-224). Sage Publications.
- Levin, B. (2008). Curriculum policy and the politics of what should be learned in schools. In F.M. Connelly, M. F. He, & J. I. Phillion (Eds.), *The SAGE Handbook of Curriculum and Instruction* (pp. 7-24). Sage Publications.
- Martino, W. J. (2008). Male teachers as role models: Addressing issues of masculinity, pedagogy, and the re-masculinization of schooling. *Curriculum Inquiry*, 38(2), 189-223.

- Noddings, N. (2008). *Critical lessons: What should our schools teach?* Cambridge University Press.
- Popkewitz, T. S. (2018). What is ‘really’ taught as the content of school subjects? Teaching school subjects as an alchemy. *The High School Journal*, 101(2), 77-89.
- Saathoff, S. (2019). Radical literacy: Building curriculum on Mexican American youths’ lived experiences. In T. R. Berry, C. A. Kalinec-Craig, & M. A. Rodríguez (Eds.), *Latinx curriculum theorizing* (pp. 77-96). Lexington Books.
- Sandlin, J. A., Stearns, J., Garlen Maudlin, J., & Burdick, J. (2011). “Now I ain’t sayin’ she a gold digger”: Wal-Mart shoppers, welfare queens, and other gendered stereotypes of poor women in the big curriculum of consumption. *Cultural Studies ↔ Critical Methodologies*, 11(5), 464-482.
- Shelton, S. A. (2018). Ripping back the veil: Examining how trans visibility shapes understandings of gender and instruction. *Journal of Curriculum & Pedagogy*, 15(3), 297-311.
- Stapleton, S. R. (2020). Toward critical environmental education: A standpoint analysis of race in the American environmental context. *Environmental Education Research*, 26(2), 155-170.
- Tuck, E., & Gaztambide-Fernández, R. (2013). Curriculum, replacement, and settler futurity. *Journal of Curriculum Theorizing*, 29(1), 72-89.
- Tuck, E., & Yang, K. W. (2012). Decolonization is not a metaphor. *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education and Society*, 1(1), 1-40.
- Xiang, X. (2018). My future, my family, my freedom: Meanings of schooling for poor, rural Chinese youth. *Harvard Educational Review*, 88(1), 81-136.

Recommended Texts

Morris, M. (2016). *Curriculum studies guidebooks: Concepts and theoretical frameworks* (Volumes 1 & 2). Peter Lang.

Course Performance Evaluation

Students are expected to submit all assignments on time through digital submissions on Blackboard.

- **Assignments (100 pts/100 pts)**

“From Where Do I Know?” Introductory Video [not scored]

Post a short 5-10 minute video for the instructor and classmates to view on Blackboard responding to the prompts on the “From Where Do I Know?” talking points sheet.

Curriculum Archaeology [10 points]

Select a curriculum object or “artifact” with personal significance to you (e.g. a textbook, novel, film, curriculum standards, an assessment/project, an event/program, a report or document) and write a one-page “museum gallery label” describing this object or “artifact”

and its perceived significance and purpose as if educational historians 100 years from now are explaining this significance of this piece of curriculum. Present the artifact in a Gallery Walk during Class Session 3.

Proposed Curriculum Deliberation [10 points]

Work with your partner to read and summarize your assigned chapter from the Noddings (2008) reading on “critical lessons.” Prepare a 15-minute presentation summarizing what Noddings proposes schools should teach with your assigned curriculum example and deliberate the affordances and constraints and strengths and limitations of her proposal.

Curriculum Perspective Analysis [20 points]

Choose one of the three perspectives studied in Class Sessions 6, 7, 8 (race, class, gender) from which to analyze a curriculum topic of your choice. Write a 4-6 page double-spaced paper in which you analyze your selected curriculum topic through a raced, classed, gendered, or intersectional lens. Discuss ideas from the assigned readings to support your claims.

Curriculum Controversy Paper & Presentation [30 points]

Select a historical or contemporary controversy within a selected disciplinary area or school subject area of your choice (e.g. the California “math wars,” the Kanawha County textbook controversy, MACOS controversy). Write a 6-8 page double-spaced paper in which you present the historical, cultural, and political context of this controversy, discussing how it has affected scholarly thought and/or educator practice within your field, and incorporate ideas and references from course readings as applicable. Prepare a 12-minute presentation of your research to present in class during Class Sessions 11 and 12.

Applied Curriculum Inquiry [30 points]

With guidance from course instructor, apply some aspect of ideas, theories, or concepts from the course in a curriculum inquiry you design to meet your own needs. Examples of a curriculum inquiry could include writing a proposal for an academic conference on a curriculum-related topic; designing a presentation to present as a professional development session to educators; writing a white paper or working paper discussing some aspect of curriculum policy; drafting a proposal for a school board to take action on a particular aspect of curriculum; conducting a curriculum audit and analysis for a school. The final product for evaluation will be a written document of around 2,000 words (e.g. a proposal, paper, etc.)

- **Other Requirements**

Attendance is expected for each class session. Students should notify instructor in advance, when possible, of any expected absence. Students are expected to arrive to each class session prepared to engage with the assigned course materials for that session and to actively partake in class discussions, participate in small group activities, and fully engage with all class content.

- **Grading**

| 95-100=A | 90-94=A- | 86-89=B+ | 83-85=B | 80-82=B- | 70-79=C | Below 70=F |

Professional Dispositions

See <https://cehd.gmu.edu/students/polices-procedures/>

Class Schedule

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

CLASS SESSION & TOPICS	TO COMPLETE BEFORE CLASS	TASK DUE
Jan 26: What is curriculum? <i>How do we define curriculum?</i>	1. Read syllabus on Blackboard course	Read syllabus and browse materials on Blackboard
Feb 2: Who is curriculum for? <i>Whose interests does the curriculum serve?</i>	1. Read Eisner (2002) 2. Read Flinders & Thornton (1986) 3. Levin (2008) 4. Ladson-Billings & Brown (2008)	Post "From Where Do I Know?" Introduction Video (not scored)
Feb 9: What do schools teach? <i>How do schools, teachers, and other stakeholders negotiate and deliberate on what is included and excluded in curricula?</i>	1. Read Popkewitz (2018) 2. Read Askins (1926) 3. Read Kliebard (2004) 4. Read Deng & Luke (2008)	Submit Curriculum Archaeology & Present Artifact for Gallery Walk During Class
Feb 16: What could or should schools teach? <i>How can schools prepare students for real life? What should students learn in schools that is rarely addressed today?</i>	1. With your partner(s), read your assigned chapter from Noddings (2008) and prepare a 15-minute presentation that summarizes the proposed curriculum in the chapter and facilitate the class in deliberating the strengths and limitations of the curriculum	Present Proposed Curriculum Deliberation with Partner(s)
Feb 23: Curriculum & ideology <i>How do diverse ideological perspectives influence the theory and design of curriculum?</i>	1. Read Apple (2014) 2. Read Apple (2019) 3. Read Burke & Segall (2011)	Complete Curriculum Ideology Inventory (with results ready to discuss in class)
March 2: Curriculum & race <i>How do race and racialized ways of knowing influence the theory and design of curriculum?</i>	1. Read Au, Brown, & Calderón (2016) 2. Read Carlson (2004) 3. Read Gaztambide-Fernández (2006)	Submit topic for Curriculum Controversy Research to Instructor
March 9: Curriculum & class <i>How do class differences and divisions influence the theory and design of curriculum?</i>	1. Read Saathoff (2019) 2. Read Sandlin et. al. (2011) 3. Read Anyon (1981) 4. Read Xiang (2018)	Complete Midterm Course Feedback Survey
March 16: Curriculum & gender <i>How do diverse genders and gendered perspectives influence the theory and design of curriculum?</i>	1. Read Gallagher (2000) 2. Read Martino (2008) 3. Read Grumet (1988) 4. Read Shelton (2018)	Submit topic for Applied Curriculum Inquiry to Instructor

<p>March 23: Curriculum & sexuality</p> <p><i>How do diverse sexualities and sexual orientations influence the theory and design of curriculum?</i></p>	<p>Choose e-book to read from list provided in class (or select your own)</p> <p><u>This is an asynchronous week.</u> <u>No synchronous Zoom session.</u></p>	N/A
<p>March 30: Deliberating curriculum through ecological and environmental perspectives</p> <p><i>How do concerns for ecology and the environment influence the theory and design of curriculum?</i></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Read Stapleton (2020) 2. Read Kissling & Bell (2020) 3. Read Hicks & Stewart (2020) 4. Read Gilbert & Byers (2020) 	Submit Curriculum Perspective Analysis
<p>April 6: Decolonizing, transnational, and indigenous curriculum perspectives</p> <p><i>How do decolonizing, transnational, and indigenous ways of knowing influence the theory and design of curriculum</i></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Read Tuck & Gaztambie-Fernández (2013) 2. Read Tuck & Yang (2012) 3. Read Asher (2005) 4. Read Krueger (2019) 	Browse sample curriculum frameworks posted on Blackboard
<p>April 13: Presentations on Curriculum Controversy Projects</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Prepare to present Curriculum Controversy research to class 	Submit Curriculum Controversy papers online
<p>April 20: Places and praxis for curriculum-related work</p> <p><i>Where are places to publish, present, and engage in curriculum scholarship?</i></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Read website descriptions and profiles of professional curriculum organizations (AERA, ACSD) 2. Read entries from Kridel (2010) 	Submit Applied Curriculum Inquiry and post on Blackboard Blog
<p>April 27: Final class session</p> <p><i>What do we imagine our future work looking like with curriculum theory, practice, design, & deliberation?</i></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. TBD 	Final course evaluation

Core Values Commitment

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

GMU Policies and Resources for Students

Policies

- Students must adhere to the guidelines of the Mason Honor Code (see <https://catalog.gmu.edu/policies/honor-code-system/>).

- Students must follow the university policy for Responsible Use of Computing (see <https://universitypolicy.gmu.edu/policies/responsible-use-of-computing/>).
- 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 <https://ds.gmu.edu/>).
- Students must silence all sound emitting devices during class unless otherwise authorized by the instructor.

Campus Resources

- Questions or concerns regarding use of Blackboard should be directed to <https://its.gmu.edu/knowledge-base/blackboard-instructional-technology-support-for-students/>.
- For information on student support resources on campus, see <https://ctfe.gmu.edu/teaching/student-support-resources-on-campus>

Notice of mandatory reporting of sexual assault, interpersonal violence, and stalking:

As a faculty member, I am designated as a “Responsible Employee,” and must report all disclosures of sexual assault, interpersonal violence, and stalking to Mason’s Title IX Coordinator per University Policy 1202. If you wish to speak with someone confidentially, please contact one of Mason’s confidential resources, such as Student Support and Advocacy Center (SSAC) at 703-380-1434 or Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) at 703-993-2380. You may also seek assistance from Mason’s Title IX Coordinator by calling 703-993-8730, or emailing titleix@gmu.edu.

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