

# ***CRITICAL ISSUES in urban education***

**Spring 2017  
10:50 – 11:50am  
M, W, F Neill 304  
EDUC 260**

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***Office: Neill 100B***

***Office Hours: Tuesday 1:00 – 3:00pm, Friday 9:30 – 10:30am***

***& by appointment***

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***Welcome to EDUC 260!***

Hollywood has done a masterful job portraying “urban education,” or what some think happens in urban schools, as something to be feared, ridiculed, and reformed. This reformation is supposed to be accomplished by singular, no-nonsense saviors in the form of teachers or principals. But how do we really make sense of modern education in the nation’s city centers? With shifting demographics, economic factors, battles over curriculum and assessment, and alternative forms of governance, urban schools exist in a whirlwind of controversy and contradiction. This course will examine these factors and others as we explore the current and future landscapes of urban education. Critical Issues in Urban Education is a survey course. We will cover myriad topics and I encourage you to think critically, debate, and reconsider core assumptions about how education operates. I look forward to taking this journey with you this semester as we strive to understand what makes urban education unique, and develop perspectives that will help us realize equity and justice through positioning education as a common good.

***“This is the paradox facing urban school reformers. On the one hand, urban schools are producing academic failure at alarming rates; at the same time, they are doing this inside a systemic structural design that essentially predetermines their failure.”***

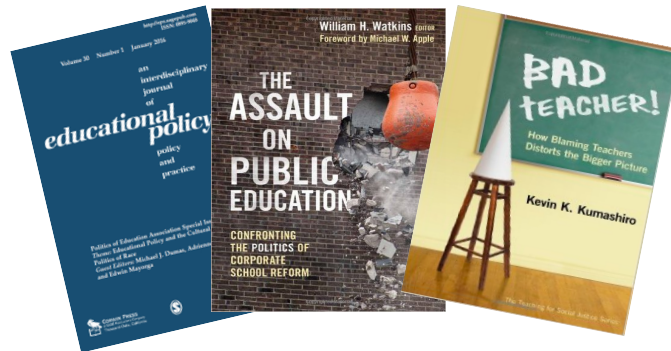
***-Jeff Duncan-Andrade & Ernest Morrell***

## Learning Objectives

At the end of this course you should be able to:

- Make connections between policy, schools, teachers, and students within an urban context
- Understand how high stakes standardized testing has impacted the educational landscape
- Articulate how urban education is shifting with regard to school governance, choice, and demographics
- Demonstrate an understanding of how top-down mandates are impacting teachers in urban schools.
- Use critical discourse analysis to explore how local and federal education policy produces the potential for disparate outcomes with regard to race, gender, class, and other markers of identity
- Understand how poverty impacts the schooling experiences of youth and families
- Construct logical and effective arguments about controversial topics
- Demonstrate an understanding of how sociopolitical forces have impacted educational discourse
- Understand the implications for shifting demographics of youth in urban schools
- Describe a vision for racial, linguistic, cultural, and social justice in education

## Required Texts:



Kumashiro, K. (2012). *Bad Teacher!: How Blaming Teachers Distorts the Bigger Picture*. New York: Teachers College Press.

Watkins, W. (2014). *Assault on Public Education*. New York: Teachers College Press.

\* Selected supplemental readings provided by the instructor via Moodle will also be required.

### **Recommended Texts:**

Apple, M. (2004). *Ideology and Curriculum, Third Edition*. New York: RoutledgeFalmer.

Belfield, C. & Levin, H. (2007). *The Price We Pay: Economic and Social Consequences of Inadequate Education*. Washington, DC: The Brookings Institution.

Carter, P. (2005). *Keepin' It Real: School Success Beyond Black and White*. New York, Oxford University Press.

Duncan-Andrade, J. & Morrell, E. (2008). *The Art of Critical Pedagogy: Possibilities for Moving from Theory to Practice in Urban Schools*. New York: Peter Lang Publishing, Inc.

hooks, b. (1994). *Teaching to Transgress: Education as the Practice of Freedom*. New York: Routledge.

Hagopian, J. (Ed.) (2014). *More Than a Score: The New Uprising Against High-Stakes Testing*. Chicago, IL: Haymarket Books.

Horsford, S. D. (2011). *Learning in a Burning House: Educational Inequality, Ideology, and (Dis)integration*. New York: Teachers College Press.

Kliebard, H. (2004). *The Struggle for the American Curriculum 1893-1958, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition*. New York: Routledge.

Kumashiro, K. (2002). *Troubling Education: Queer Activism and Antioppressive Pedagogy*. New York: RoutledgeFalmer.

Lipman, P. (2011). *The New Political Economy of Urban Education: Neoliberalism, Race, and the Right to the City*. New York: Routledge

Picower, B. & Mayorga, E. (2015). *What's Race Got to Do With It?: How current School Reform Policy Maintains Racial and Economic Inequality*. New York: Peter Lang.

Rury, J. (Ed.) (2005). *Urban Education in the United States: A Historical Reader*. New York: Palgrave MacMillan.

Tuck, E & Yang, K.W. (Eds.) (2014a). *Youth Resistance Research and Theories of Change*. New York: Routledge.

Valenzuela, A. (1999). *Subtractive Schooling: U.S.-Mexican Youth and the Politics of Caring*. Albany, NY: SUNY Press.

# Schedule

(Please note that this schedule is subject to change)

Week 1  
Jan 20

## In Class Topics

Teach-in: The Bipartisan Attack on Public Education

Week 2  
Jan 23,  
25, 27

## In Class Topics

Course Introduction and Community Building  
-Overview & introductions  
-Syllabus  
  
-What is Urban Education?  
-Historical Context  
-Challenges of mass education in diverse spaces

## In Preparation

### For (1/25) Read:

Milner – “But What is Urban Education?” (Moodle)  
Rury – “The Changing Social Contours of Urban Education” (Moodle)  
Kumashiro – Foreward – Ch. 2

## Due

Reflection # 1 & Response (How do you define “urban” and what are the biggest challenges you see in urban education?)

Week 3  
Jan 30,  
Feb 1

## In Class Topics

-Surveying the Landscape of Urban Ed.  
-Neoliberalism & Privatization in Education Reform

## In Preparation

### Read:

Kumashiro – Ch. 3 – Conclusion  
Hursh – “Neoliberalism, Markets, Accountability” (Moodle)  
Belfield & Levin – “Education privatization”, Introduction – Section II (Moodle)

## Due

Reflection # 2 & Response

**NO CLASS 2/3**

Week 4  
Feb 6,  
8, 10

## In Class Topics

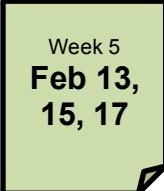

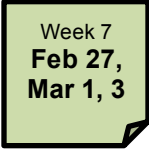


-Exploring Education Policy (Historical & Modern)

## In Preparation

### Read:

Belfield & Levin – “Education privatization”, Section III – Section V (Moodle)  
Kliebard – Ch. 1 (Moodle)  
Watkins – Ch. 2

## Due

|   | In Class Topics  | In Preparation   | Due  |
|---|--|--|--|
|  <p>Week 5<br/><b>Feb 13, 15, 17</b></p>   | <p>-Standardized Testing Regimes</p>   | <p><b>Read:</b><br/>Au – “Hiding Behind High-Stakes Testing”<br/>Watkins Ch. 4 &amp; 7</p>   | <p><b>Interview Paper (Due 2/17)</b></p>   |
|  <p>Week 6<br/><b>Feb 20, 22</b></p>       | <p>-Racialized Disparity in Education Policy &amp; Outcomes</p> <p><b>NO CLASS 2/24</b></p>  | <p><b>Read:</b><br/>Educational Policy Journal – Special Issue: Ed Policy &amp; the Cultural Politics of Race<br/>-Introduction Editorial &amp; Choose 2 articles (Moodle)</p> | <p>Reflection # 3 &amp; Response (What are the connections between the articles you chose?)</p>              |
|  <p>Week 7<br/><b>Feb 27, Mar 1, 3</b></p> | <p>-School Governance<br/>-School Choice<br/>-Closing Schools</p> <p><b>Guest Lecture (3/1):<br/>Kim Ellison, MPS School Board</b></p>   | <p><b>Read:</b><br/>Stovall – Mayoral Control (Moodle)<br/>Darling-Hammond – “Creating Excellent &amp; Equitable Schools” (Moodle)<br/>Aggarwal – Ch. 5 (Moodle)</p>           | <p><b>Due</b></p>  |
|  <p>Week 8<br/><b>Mar 6, 8, 10</b></p>   | <p>-Charter Schools<br/>-School Discipline (School-Prison Pipeline)</p> <p><b>Class Debate #1 3/10 (Centralized vs Decentralized school governance)</b></p> <p><b>Guest Lecture:<br/>Brandon Royce-Diop (Hiawatha Academy)</b></p> | <p><b>Read:</b><br/>Hawkins – How Minnesota’s Push to Integrate...” (Moodle)<br/>Karp – “Charter Schools and the Future of Public Education” (Moodle)<br/>Watkins – Ch. 8</p>  | <p>Reflection #4 &amp; Response (Should charter schools have a place in the public education ecosystem?)</p> |
|  <p>Week 9<br/><b>Spring Break</b></p>   | <p><b>In Class Topics</b></p>  | <p><b>In Preparation</b></p>   | <p><b>Due</b></p>  |

| Week 10<br>Mar 20,<br>22, 24 | In Class Topics  | In Preparation  | Due |
|------------------------------|--|---|-----|
|                              | -Teacher Education & Pathways into the classroom<br>-Deunionization of teachers<br><br>Critical Discourse Analysis | <b>Read:</b><br>Darling-Hammond – “Constructing 21 <sup>st</sup> Century Teacher Education” (Moodle)<br>Perry – “The attack on bad teacher tenure laws...” (Moodle)<br>Watkins Ch. 5<br>Royal & Gibson – They Schools: CRP Under Siege (Moodle) |     |
|                              | <b>Guest Lecture (3/24)</b><br>– Dr. Silvy Un (St. Paul Public Schools)  |   |     |

| Week 11<br>Mar 27,<br>29, 31 | In Class Topics                                    | In Preparation  | Due                               |
|------------------------------|--|---|-----------------------------------|
|                              | -Teacher Recruitment and Diversity                 | <b>Read:</b><br>Jones – Keys to the Schoolhouse (Moodle)<br>Ladson-Billings “Teacher Education & Black Communities” | <b>Policy Analysis (Due 3/31)</b> |
|                              | <b>Class Debate #2 3/31 (Pathways to teaching)</b> |   |                                   |

| Week 12<br>Apr 3,<br>5, 7 | In Class Topics  | In Preparation  | Due                                       |
|---------------------------|--|---|---|
|                           | -Poverty & Education<br>-The Economics of Poor Education | <b>Read:</b><br>Anyon – “What Counts as Policy?” (Moodle)<br>Orfield & Lee – “Why Segregation Matters” (Moodle)<br>Belfield & Levin – The Price We Pay (Moodle) | <b>Final Project Prospectus (Due 4/7)</b> |

| Week 13<br>Apr 10,<br>12, 14 | In Class Topics                                       | In Preparation | Due  |
|------------------------------|---|----------------|--|
|                              | Reflections and revisiting relevant topics            | <b>Read:</b>   | <b>Reflection #5 &amp; Response (What are the largest contradictions you see in how urban education systems are designed?)</b> |
|                              | <b>Class Debate #3 4/14 (Poverty &amp; Education)</b> |                |  |

Week 14  
**Apr 17,  
19, 21**

**In Class Topics**

-Towards the future:  
youth resistance, opt  
out movements,  
grassroots initiatives

**In Preparation**

**Read:**  
Hagopian – Preface –Ch. 1 (Moodle)  
Watkins Ch. 9

**Due**

**Final Project (Due  
4/21)**

Week 15  
**Apr  
24, 26**

**Course Wrap-up  
Presentations  
Celebration  
NO CLASS 4/28, 5/1**

# ***Learning Environment***

It is critically important that the class be a safe, inclusive learning environment for everyone involved because it is our right as learners and the success of this class is dependent upon everyone's participation. This course will regularly address issues of race, ethnicity, gender, social class, sexuality, and other markers of identity. I intend to present materials and activities that are respectful of diversity in these areas. I intend that people from all backgrounds will be well served by this course, that your learning needs will be addressed both in and out of class, and that the diversity you bring to this class will be viewed as a resource, strength, and benefit by all class members. Please let me know ways to improve the effectiveness of the course for you personally or for other students or student groups. Furthermore, to ensure a productive learning environment for instructor and students, electronic devices such as cell phones should be kept on silent during class time. In addition, friends or relatives of enrolled students may not attend class sessions unless prior consent of the instructor is given.

## **Accommodations:**

I will strive to accommodate every student to achieve optimal learning conditions. In some cases this may mean adapting the course design or classroom environment. If you think you need an accommodation for disability please contact the Office of Student Affairs at your earliest convenience. The Assistant Dean of Students, Robin Hart Ruthenbeck, coordinates services. To schedule an appointment, call 651-696-6220.

## **Course Attendance:**

Class attendance is critical to the learning process. Many of the class exercises and activities cannot be replicated by make up assignments. There also may be topics and examples discussed in class, not in texts, that you will be expected to understand. Therefore, **at least 80% attendance is required for successful completion of the course.** I understand that unavoidable absences may occur. Whether an absence is planned or unplanned, it is your responsibility to:

- 1) Inform the instructor of your absence before the class session missed
- 2) Follow-up on what you have missed with either a classmate or the instructor before the next class session because it is your responsibility to keep on-track with course requirements.

## **Class Participation**

This course is taught from the philosophy that knowledge is socially constructed; therefore, each class member's participation is desired and needed in order to maximize our collective learning and understanding. Students are expected to attend each class on time, be prepared for class, actively participate in class exercises and group learning experiences, and communicate with the instructor.

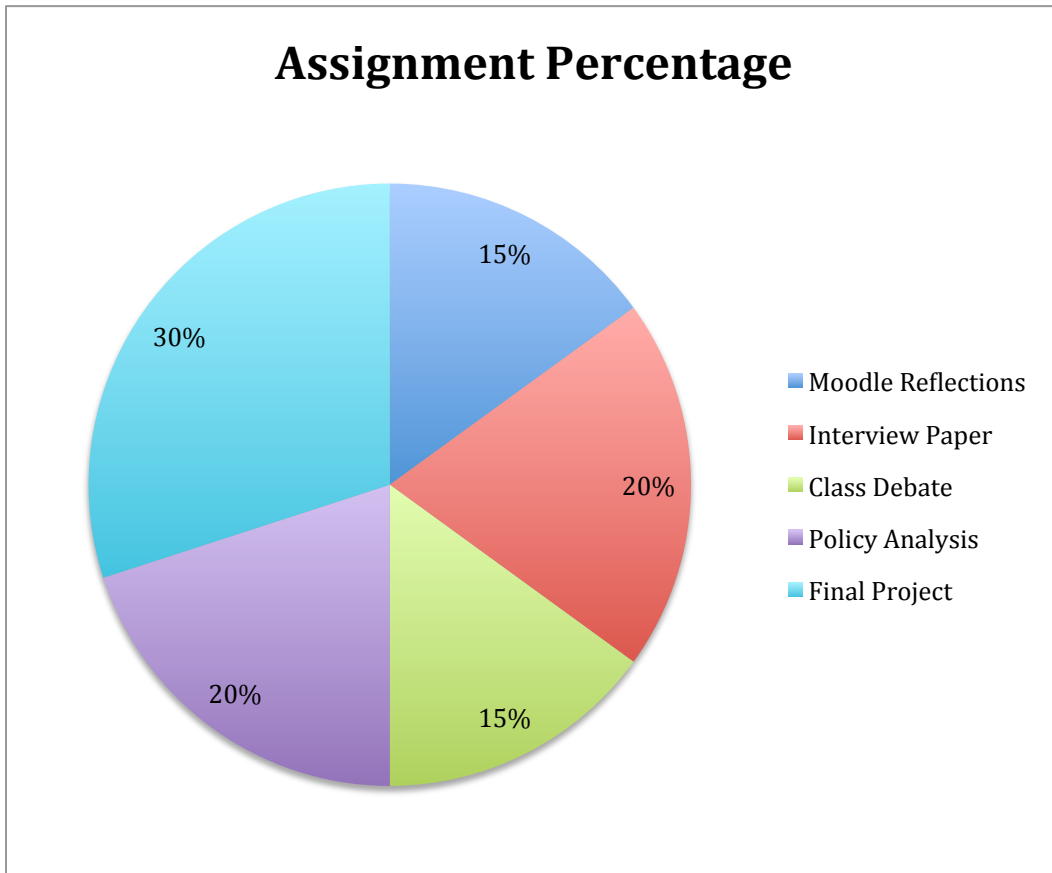
## **Late Work**

Due dates for assignments are firm for logistical reasons. All assignments should be handed in by the date indicated on the syllabus unless you and I have prior written agreement on an extension. Assignments turned in after the due date, without prior written agreement may not be counted toward your final grade.



# Assignments & Grading

## Assignment Quick-view



## Assignment Details

- Each individual assignment will be introduced in class.
- In some cases assessment rubrics will be made available as the class progresses.
- All written assignments should be double-spaced using 12pt. font, APA citations, and 1" margins.
- Assignments should be submitted electronically on the class Moodle site unless otherwise instructed.

### Assignment Overview

| Assignment         | Due            | % of grade |
|--------------------|----------------|------------|
| Moodle Reflections | Multiple dates | 15%        |
| Interview Paper    | 2/17           | 20%        |
| Policy Analysis    | 3/31           | 20%        |
| Class Debates      | Multiple dates | 15%        |
| Final Project      | 4/21           | 30%        |

## **Assignment Descriptions**

**Moodle Reflections** – You will have 5 opportunities to post 4 reflections to Moodle according to the dates in the syllabus. The reflections should be between 350-400 words. They should address the assigned readings for the week and incorporate your views, other texts, or questions you still have. *The reflections should not be summaries of the readings.* I may ask specific questions to be addressed in the reflection. Reflections must be posted by Tuesday to allow time for others to respond before Friday's class.

In addition, students will form reflection groups of 4-5 members. Reflection group members will respond to each other's reflections by Thursday of each week.

**Interview Paper** – (See detailed assignment description handed out in class) An important aspect of this class is considering multiple perspectives within education. This assignment is meant to bring together various stakeholders in educational settings. In groups of 4 you will develop an interview protocol focusing on a specific issue within urban education. Individually you will conduct and audio record one 15-20 minute interview and transcribe it. Your group must interview 4 of the following K-12 stakeholders: an elected official, a district employee (not a teacher or principal), a school administrator, a teacher, or a parent of a student in a K-12 school. As a group you should review the transcripts, code the data, identify themes and write a 6-8 page paper (12 pt., APA citation, double-spaced, 1" margins) exploring the multiple perspectives connected to your issue.

**Policy Analysis** - (See detailed assignment description handed out in class) Much of this class will focus on the federal, state, and local policies that impact K-12, urban education. In this assignment you will identify a policy and write a 3-4 page (12 pt., APA citation, double-spaced, 1" margins) critical discourse analysis exploring the potential for disparate outcomes. You should apply some form of theoretical framework to your analysis. We will explore critical discourse analysis and examples of critical theoretical frameworks in class.

**Class Debates** – We will have 3 formal class debates on issues like school governance and teacher preparation. You must participate (in teams of 3) in one of the debates. You will be expected to do background research outside of class to help develop your position on the issue and be able to construct a logical and forceful argument.

**Final Project** - (See detailed assignment description handed out in class) The final project is an open-ended exploration of any of our course topics. You can choose to pursue anything that spoke to you or challenged you throughout the semester. There are three format options for your final project:

- 1) 6-8 page paper (not including references)
- 2) 10-12 minute digital story
- 3) Multimodal visual text (e.g. Padlet.com) – requirements negotiated

# *For support with ...*

## **Writing / Research / Presentations**

For support with writing, research, and presentations feel free to talk with me. You can also make use of the MAX Center <http://www.macalester.edu/max/> and the Dewitt Wallace Library <http://www.macalester.edu/library/>

## **Mental Health and Stress Management:**

As a student you may experience a range of issues that can cause barriers to learning, such as strained relationships, increased anxiety, alcohol/drug problems, feeling down, difficulty concentrating and/or lack of motivation. These mental health concerns or stressful events may lead to diminished academic performance and may reduce your ability to participate in daily activities. Macalester services are available to assist you. You can learn more about the broad range of confidential mental health services available on campus via the Health and Wellness Center <http://www.macalester.edu/healthandwellness/>