EDF 2085
Diversity for Educators
Fall 2014, Online Course

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PREREQUISITES: None.

TEXT: See below (under Learning Outcomes)

Managing difference is becoming one of the greatest challenges to multicultural countries. From France to Sweden, Brazil to Bolivia, Indonesia to Malaysia, the work of managing difference calls forth a new educational agenda. Children growing up in these and other settings are more likely than any previous generation in human history to face a life of working and networking, loving and living with others from different national, linguistic, religious, and racial backgrounds.


COURSE DESCRIPTION:

What is diversity, and why is it so important that passing this course is prerequisite to your entrance into the College of Education? In this course we will explore the answers to those and many other questions about tolerating (better than nothing) to embracing difference. My short answer is this: I respect your personal beliefs and values, from far right to very liberal. However, as a teacher, it is your ethical duty to do everything you can to understand and support every student in your class: the undocumented child who struggles with English, the child who is constantly being called “gay” and “faggot,” a child of color who acts tough and defensive, a disruptive child with Asperger's Syndrome, the Jehovah's Witness student who cannot take part in birthday and holiday celebrations, the child who is teased for smelling poorly or wearing unstylish clothing due to poverty or culture. While government pressures ignore these realities in the relentless charge for accountability and “annual yearly progress,” teachers do so at their peril, both in terms of finding professional success/satisfaction and helping every child achieve.

The high rate of immigration to the United States not only from Central and South America, but also from Africa, Asia, and Eastern Europe has challenged U.S. teachers and educational systems to understand and provide for students of numerous cultures and languages. For example, public schools in Dekalb County, Georgia, serve 13,100 immigrant and refugee students from 170 countries who speak 145 different languages or dialects. In Hillsborough County, refugee students alone are from 18 different countries and they attend 43 different schools. Florida is one of the top five states to resettle refugees, yet most teachers have not had training in refugee education and how this population differs from other immigrants. We are also a top state for teaching the children of migrant workers.

How do you see these issues? Problems, or opportunities? To become a successful teacher, it is important that you investigate your personal beliefs and biases, and be willing to consider new information, challenge yourself to increase your welcoming in your role as a teacher, and learn how to work successfully with diversity.
COURSE TOPICS:
1. Ethnicity and Race
2. Class and Socioeconomic Status
3. Gender and Sexual Orientation
4. Exceptionality
5. Language
6. Religion
7. Youth Culture
8. Multicultural Education

COURSE OBJECTIVES: The goals of this course are as follows. Students will:
1. Acknowledge the diversity of students and their cultures in schools
2. Evaluate impacts of immigration and racial diversity on schools and communities
3. Outline factors contributing to socioeconomic status and describe how SES interacts with other diversity factors, contributing to inequalities in schools and communities
4. Evaluate strategies used by educators to provide equitable education to both genders
5. Recognize discrimination experienced by LGBTQ people and develop strategies to create safe, supportive classrooms and schools
6. Explain exceptionality and some basic needs of exceptional children
7. Describe differences in ESOL strategies, and recognize ways in which some international languages are stereotypically given preference over others
8. Examine the role of religious beliefs and customs as they affect schools and society
9. Recognize how children’s age, culture and environment can affect ways in which they learn and interact
10. Understand how the use of culturally responsive teaching can acknowledge and respect the life histories of students and their families.

COURSE STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES:
Upon completion of this course, students will be able to demonstrate their competencies in the above-outlined goals as follows:
1. Write initial responses addressing each topic in Canvas using not only summary, but also analysis.
2. Respond in writing to diverse peers on Canvas demonstrating respect for different perspectives by applying the strategies and techniques learned in class
3. Broaden their understanding and perspectives about people of diverse races, ethnicities, cultures, sexuality, etc. by actively participating in 15 hours of field experiences and providing written reflections on what they learn from the field.
4. Demonstrate beginning research knowledge by accessing a peer-reviewed article on one of the topics of diversity using a USF library database and writing an article review

TEXT AND MATERIALS:
B. Any additional materials will be listed on our Canvas course

CANVAS USE:
The class syllabus is posted in Canvas, an online course management system. In this class Canvas will be used for explaining weekly assignments, any miscellaneous materials we may view for a weekly topic, weekly discussions, and uploading of all assignments
Information on how to use Canvas is available at: http://www.usfsm.edu/infocommons/students.php

GRADING, EVALUATION AND ATTENDANCE POLICIES:
A. USFSM policy requires that all students receive a graded assignment or examination prior to the semester’s drop/withdraw date.
B. The value of and the manner in which each assignment in the syllabus will be evaluated or graded are stated below under Assignments, and in more detail (including rubrics) on Canvas.
C. Grading is as follows:
97-100 A+ 94-96 A 90-93 A-
87-89 B+ 84-86 B 80-83 B-
77-79 C+ 74-76 C 70-73 C-
67-69 D+ 64-67 D 60-63 D-

E. I do not give permission to sell notes or tapes of class lectures.
F. If you are considering withdrawal from the course, please check with Student Services about the last day to drop class with a “W”

COURSE SCHEDULE OF ASSIGNMENTS:

A. Weekly discussion board contributions (possible 4 points/week; 60 total)
Each discussion board (DB) will include your reflections on the week's readings/videos. Read my post in each week's discussion board so you know how to respond. You will receive two points for your original response to the DB, and two points for a thoughtful response to one of your fellow classmates. Original responses are typically around 3-5 paragraphs, and responses to classmates 1-2 paragraphs. Refer to passages from the text to indicate your reading of the assignment. Original post on the weekly assignment is due by the end of Tuesday (you can use the weekend prior to do the assignment and create your first post if you like). I will do my best to read and respond to them on Wednesday. One thoughtful response to a peer will be due on Sunday (you have three business days to do this if you prefer not to do this work on the weekend). I will do my best to read those by Tuesday. My lengthier comments will be to the first post, although I will read all peer responses and grade them accordingly. I expect you to read my comments and at least occasionally refer to them in your second post. My lengthier comments will be to the first post, although I will read all peer responses and grade them accordingly. I expect you to read my comments and at least occasionally refer to them in your second post. I expect you to refer to the materials for the week in making your responses, and I expect a thoughtful reply that includes concepts from the assignment to a peer. Please reply to someone who has not had a response in your second post.

B. Fifteen hours of field work (20 points possible. Please space out your reflections through the semester and hand in the final one no later than SEE CANVAS).
A requirement of this course is that students are exposed to a variety of situations in which you can experience yourself and your responses as well as opening yourself to new perspectives. You will need to think about your current beliefs and values to choose the most opportune activities for you. For instance, are you a liberal Democrat? See if you can find a Tea Party rally to go to, and find ways in which you have common interests. A conservative Christian? Attend the new mosque on Lockwood Ridge and explore common beliefs. Opposed to gay rights? Attend a PFLAG meeting. You can also attend a cultural festival for an unfamiliar culture, an arts performance if you do not typically go, help at a shelter, volunteer at an after-school homework help site, etc.

As I see opportunities, I will post them in Canvas announcements. Suggestions are WELCOME, and please post them for the whole class (I will create a Discussion Board for these). Ideally, I would like you to combine a variety of experiences (an event that is not primarily in your first language, an activity in which your age is not typical for the event, learning about a new culture or area of the world, an international fair, a conversation with someone who has opposing views to yours on a particular topic, Habitat for Humanity, a soup kitchen, etc.) as well as an activity you could sustain over several weeks (such as tutoring ESOL children or children living in poverty), as you would learn in different ways from such experiences. However, I will be flexible to help you meet the requirements of this assignment. You will report back with a 1-2 page reflection on each experience, tell the time you spent at the event/activity, and give me the name of someone involved with the event that I could contact about your presence at the experience. Do NOT wait until November to begin this assignment! There are not specified dates for reflections, because they will depend on when activities you choose are scheduled. But I will not be able to read carefully 15 hours' worth for everyone in late November-early December!

C. Introduction to Research (10 points possible; due SEE CANVAS)
Look through the topics of diversity included in the text and choose one you would like to know more about. What questions do you have about this topic? Choose one of your questions, and find an article that addresses your question in a peer-reviewed journal (more about this to come). Write a review of the article: brief summary and critique; then reflect on what you learned from the article.
D. Final Reflection (10 points possible; due SEE CANVAS)
This is to be a short reflection paper (3 pages) describing what you have learned about yourself and others by taking this course. Refer to specific readings/videos/experiences to make your points.

USFSM Policies
A. Academic Dishonesty: The University considers any form of plagiarism or cheating on exams, projects, or papers to be unacceptable behavior. Please be sure to review the university’s policy in the catalog, USFSM Undergraduate Catalog or USFSM Graduate Catalog, the USF System Academic Integrity of Students, and the USF System Student Code of Conduct.

B. Academic Disruption: The University does not tolerate behavior that disrupts the learning process. The policy for addressing academic disruption is included with Academic Dishonesty in the catalog: USFSM Undergraduate Catalog or USFSM Graduate Catalog, USF System Academic Integrity of Students, and the USF System Student Code of Conduct.

C. Contingency Plans: In the event of an emergency, it may be necessary for USFSM to suspend normal operations. During this time, USFSM may opt to continue delivery of instruction through methods that include but are not limited to: Canvas, Elluminate, Skype, and email messaging and/or an alternate schedule. It’s the responsibility of the student to monitor Canvas site for each class for course specific communication, and the main USFSM and College websites, emails, and MoBull messages for important general information. The USF hotline at 1 (800) 992-4231 is updated with pre-recorded information during an emergency. See the Safety Preparedness Website for further information.

D. Disabilities Accommodation: Students are responsible for registering with the Office of Students with Disabilities Services (SDS) in order to receive academic accommodations. Reasonable notice must be given to the SDS office (typically 5 working days) for accommodations to be arranged. It is the responsibility of the student to provide each instructor with a copy of the official Memo of Accommodation. Contact Information: Pat Lakey, Coordinator, 941-359-4714, plakey@sar.usf.edu, www.sarasota.usf.edu/Students/Disability/

E. Fire Alarm Instructions: At the beginning of each semester please note the emergency exit maps posted in each classroom. These signs are marked with the primary evacuation route (red) and secondary evacuation route (orange) in case the building needs to be evacuated. See Emergency Evacuation Procedures.

F. Religious Observances: USFSM recognizes the right of students and faculty to observe major religious holidays. Students who anticipate the necessity of being absent from class for a major religious observance must provide notice of the date(s) to the instructor, in writing, by the second week of classes. Instructors canceling class for a religious observance should have this stated in the syllabus with an appropriate alternative assignment.

G. Web Portal Information: Every newly enrolled USF student receives an official USF e-mail account. Students receive official USF correspondence and Canvas course information via that address.

More about EDF 2085: I am passionate about teachers' needs to know themselves and to be mindful and respectful of diversity, having raised a son with Asperger's Syndrome, traversing various religions in my personal journey, having the privilege of traveling six of the seven world continents, working with refugees and war-affected children and undocumented immigrants, and having about 25% of my closest friends identifying as LGBTQ. I will urge you to understand yourself and those who are different from people in your comfort zone. Great teachers do this, and they are rewarded for their efforts. I will miss the opportunity to work with you face to face, but I will do my best to make your experience authentic and expansive. But I am only half of the equation. The rest depends on you – reading assignments carefully, responding to exercises thoughtfully, watching the videos, doing your field exercises.
I will be looking for you to do this, as my review of your work may determine whether or not you continue in the College of Education. Hard work will be rewarding, personally and professionally!

Please be aware, this course might make you uncomfortable. If I cause you to question your opinions, or at times make you angry, defensive, or even confused about your values or beliefs, then I am doing my job. Our country is very diverse and always changing. US citizens look at that notion at once with pride and with discomfort, or even anger, when new groups come into the country. Expect to be provoked. In fact, remember that you have no idea about the diversity of the students in our classroom at USF. Expect that you are among people of diverse religions, sexuality, upbringings, ethnicities, and beliefs. Remember this as you make remarks in discussions. I will do my best to create an environment that is safe for expressing viewpoints. I will ask you to do the same. Let's aim to confront one another with respect.

You will get out of the course what you put in. I chose the Gollnick and Chinn text not only because of its treatment of numerous issues of diversity, but also because of its excellent reflective exercises and videos. You should expect to spend an average of six-eight hours/week on the course (because it takes place over a shorter amount of time than a whole semester) – three would typically be class time, and three-five for out of class preparation and field experiences.

For week by week assignments, see Canvas modules!