

**FOUN 7000: Cultural Foundations of Education**  
**Auburn University**  
**Fall 2010**  
Mondays 5:00 - 7:50pm

**COURSE FACULTY:**

Dr. Ivan E. Watts

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Office Hours: by appointment

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

In this course we are going to explore the critical relationship between education and culture. Traditionally, educational institutions were conceived as sites where only the dissemination of academic knowledge occurred and where this process was not subject to any debate or contestation. In recent years, this limited view has been contradicted by new education research that has described how contestations over the school curriculum have, in fact, reflected the contestations that occur within the broader cultural, political, and economic contexts of a multicultural U.S. society. Therefore, in this course we will draw critical linkages between the cultural contestations that occur in schools and those that occur in society at large.

The course will provide us with the theoretical tools necessary to become critical readers and thinkers of cultural practices that occur in both U.S. schools and society. More specially, the course will introduce us to critical concepts in the field of cultural studies and explore how these concepts relate to the cultural context of schooling. We will then use these theoretical concepts to offer a critical reading of how social and cultural difference is constituted and re-constituted both in schools and society.

More specifically, one of the main emphasis of the course is to critically inquire into what constitutes “American” culture. If one of the principle goals of education is to socialize students into the “American” way of life, then whose cultural values are upheld and others are dismissed or rendered invisible? When we use the metaphor of the “melting pot,” what do we melt into? These are some the central questions that this course will address.

Additionally, this course is to foreground the voices of those who have been historically silenced—those oppressively marked by race, social economic class, gender, ability and sexual orientation—in the discussion regarding U.S. “national” culture. Rather than restrict ourselves to traditional social science research, this course will also use other cultural texts such as films, poetry and fiction. Through these creative texts, these “silence others” will have a voice critiquing “American” culture.

**INSTRUCTIONAL OBJECTIVES:**

On completion of this course, class participants should have a general understanding of the scholarship and debates within the cultural foundations of education including:

- ◆ The theoretical and interpretive frameworks that have been utilized to examine the cultural context of schooling.
- ◆ A critical understanding of a sampling of the cultural conflicts that have beset U.S. education and U.S. society.
- ◆ The ability to reconceptualize what a truly democratic education means in a multicultural society.
- ◆ To create a space or sphere where critical dialogue can take place, whereby change is the subsequent outcome.

**REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS:**

Pai, Young. Susan A. Adler, and Linda K. Shadiow. (2005). Cultural Foundation of Education (4<sup>th</sup> ed)  
New York, NY: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Taylor & Francis Group

Spring, Joel. (2008). Wheels in the Head (3<sup>rd</sup> ed). New York, NY: McGraw-Hill.

***SOME READING MATERIALS ARE AVAILABLE IN BLACKBOARD. THESE ARTICLES ARE IDENTIFIED BY AN \* IN THE CLASS CALENDAR.***

**COURSE EVALUATION:**

Class Participation	20%
Final Examination	30%
Group Lead Discussion	15%
Research Presentation	35%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>

**GRADING SCALE:**

100 – 90 points	A
89.9 – 80 points	B
79.9 – 70 points	C
69.9 – 60 points	D
Below 59.9 points	F

**EVALUATION METHODS**

Class participation: Students are expected to complete reading assignments before class and to discuss issues relevant to the readings during class discussion. In-class discussions and work will count towards the class participation grade. Furthermore, you must attend class in order to participate. Consequently, attendance will be taken each class period and 2 points will be subtracted from your final grade for each unexcused absence. An additional 2 points will be subtracted for continual early departure from class and excessive late arrival.

Final Examination. You will be given the Final examination on November 15<sup>th</sup>, and it is due December 3<sup>rd</sup> to 4086 Haley by 12noon. **Examinations should be no longer than 12-15 pages in length.**

Group Lead Discussion Students will be placed in groups at the first the class meeting. Each group will have an opportunity to lead class discussion over the assigned readings for that class period. You must integrate at least four (4) different mediums into your presentation (ie., videos, youtube, articles, etc..). These mediums should increase our understanding of the topic. The presentation should be clear, concise, and articulate.

Research Presentation & Outline: Each group will be responsible for researching a topic of their choice, under the larger umbrella of Cultural Foundations of Education. The presentation should be clear, concise, articulate and **not to exceed 60 minutes!** Presentations should integrate that day readings and other course materials that you deem significant to the presentation. Also, each group is responsible for submitting a 2-3 page detailed outline of their research presentation and bibliography on the day of their presentation. The outline should provide vital information such as **a brief introduction of the topic, importance of topics, sub-topics of importance, conclusion, and implications for professionals.**

**\*\*Notify the professor in advance if special equipment is needed to share your presentation with the class.\*\***

**Assignment Guidelines:** All assignments must be double-spaced and typewritten or word-processed. You should keep a copy or file of your paper and all graded assignments returned to you until the end of the semester. Late papers will result in an assignment grade that is lowered 10% per day. For, example, a paper that is turned in one day late and results in a grade of “100” will be lowered to a “90”. Similarly, a paper that is turned in two days late and results in a grade of “100” will be lowered to a “80”. Additionally, points will also be deducted for misspelled words or grammatical errors.

**Academic Honesty:** Written assignments that include material that is similar to that from course reading materials or other sources should include a citation including source, author, and page number. Quotation marks should be used if the material is copied directly from the readings and text citations should be used (Kozol, 1988, p.22). If the material is paraphrased, (Kozol, 1988) should appear immediately following the paraphrased material. Failing to do so constitutes violation of the Auburn University Academic Honesty Code. In addition, written assignments that are similar or identical to those of other students in the class is also a violation of the Code. The consequence for a violation of the Auburn University Academic Honesty Code is “zero points” for the assignment. Rewriting the assignment or earning extra credit points will not be an option. Finally, you may not submit the work of someone else as your own or work that you have submitted for another class or another PART of this class. See **Tiger Cub** for rules on academic honesty.

**Students with Disabilities:** If you are a student with a disability, you should consult with the Program of Students with Disabilities located in 1232 Haley Center at 844-2096 to identify which accommodations might be needed for this course. Please contact the course instructor as soon as possible to discuss your needs.

### CLASS CALENDAR

<b>Meeting 1</b> <b>August 23</b>	<b>Introduction</b>
<b>Meeting 2</b> <b>August 30</b> <b>Democracy and Education: Teachers' Roles and Responsibilities</b>	<b>"We the People...": Democracy and Education</b> In what ways are the changing demographics effecting social/political/economic aspects of American democracy? How will culture play into the way democracy is defined? Why is this discussion relevant to contemporary education? <b>Readings Due:</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Pai et al; Chptr 1,2 <input type="checkbox"/> Spring Chptrs. 1
<b>Meeting 3</b> <b>September 13</b> <b>The Individual in Public Education</b>	<b>Identity: Assertion of Self vs. Achieving Our Country</b> What is the relationship of the self to society? Should societal needs supercede those of the individual? Furthermore, what is the impact of difference on the construction of "self"? How does the construction of the different "self" impact one's experiences inside and outside of the classroom? <b>Readings Due:</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Spring: Chptrs. 2,3 Pai et al: Chptr 3
<b>Meeting 4</b> <b>September 20</b> <b>Historical Forces Shaping the Structure of Public Education</b>	<b>Historical Forces Shaping Education and Teaching</b> What were the initial goals of the common school? What groups benefitted from the presence of these schools and which groups did not? Why was it inevitable that public schooling develop in this country? <b>Readings Due:</b> <input type="checkbox"/> *Spring, <u>The Ideology &amp; Politics of the Common School</u> , <input type="checkbox"/> *Anderson, <u>Education and the Race Problem in the New South</u> ,
<b>Meeting 5</b> <b>September 27</b> <b>Forces Shaping the Structure of Public Education</b>	<b>Public Schooling and the Question of Democracy: Sociological Perspectives</b> How do sociologists explain the relationship between school and society? How do the different theoretical perspectives explain social difference? How do these explanations relate to democracy? What are the strengths and weaknesses of these perspectives? <b>Readings Due:</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Spring: Chptrs. 4,5,6
<b>Meeting 6</b> <b>October 4</b> <b>Forces Shaping the Structure of culture &amp; Education</b>	<b>The Politics of Culture</b> What is Cultural Literacy? In what ways does this process affect educational opportunities? How is privilege and disadvantage perpetuated? Is it important to, for the existence of American culture, to have cultural unity? <b>Readings Due:</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Spring: Chptrs. 7,8

Meeting 7  October 11  The quest for a quality education	<b>Does Equality Really Exist in Education?</b> When you adopt different perspectives, do children have the same educational experiences? What factors influence the quality of their experiences in the classroom? How much of the difference is caused by student/family background or teacher/school characteristics? <b>Readings Due:</b> <input type="checkbox"/> *Kozol: <u>Other people's children</u>
Meeting 8  October 18 Student Differences in the Classroom	<b>Social Construction of Race/Racism &amp; Culture</b> How had it been constructed? In what ways do schools perpetuate racism? Is racism an American value? <b>Readings Due:</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Pai; Chptrs. 4,5 <b>Film:</b> "Skin Deep"
Meeting 9  October 25  Student Differences in the Classroom	<b>An Examination: School and Youth Violence Using Structural/Institutional Violence</b> What are the causes of youth violence: In what ways does American culture give rise to school violence? If school violence is a manifestation of American culture, can you minimize occurrences? <b>Readings Due:</b> <input type="checkbox"/> *Galtung, <u>Violence Peace &amp; Peace Research</u> <input type="checkbox"/> *Newman, <u>Rampage</u> <input type="checkbox"/> *Curtin & Litke, <u>Preface</u> <b>Group- Led Discussion</b>
Meeting 10  November 1  Student Differences in the Classroom	<b>Language Minority Students in American Classrooms</b> What are American attitudes and values towards limited English proficient or LEP students? How do those attitudes influence school policy and disadvantage LEP students in the classroom? Additionally, how do school policies, practices and programs perpetuate inequalities for LEP students? <b>Readings Due:</b> <input type="checkbox"/> *Garcia, <u>Student Cultral Diversity</u> <input type="checkbox"/> *Marshall, <u>Cultural Diversity in our school</u> <b>Group- Led Discussion:</b>
Meeting 11  November 8  Gender and Social Relations in the Classroom	<b>The Impact of Gender on Students' Classroom Experiences</b> Why is gender an important category in the social analysis of schools? How are gendered identities constructed within society and in schools? How do issues of race, class, sexuality, age, and ability influence the construction of gender? How do these discussions influence the role of women teachers? <b>Readings Due:</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Spring: Chptrs. 9,10 <b>Group- Led Discussion:</b>

<p><b>Meeting 12</b></p> <p><b>November 15</b></p> <p><b>Making a Difference in Today's Classroom</b></p> <p><i>Handout Final Exam</i></p>	<p><b>Thinking “Out of the Box”!</b> How difficult is it to adopt perspectives different from your own? How does this skill influence teacher behavior?</p> <p><b>Readings Due:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> *Howard chptrs. 2, 3,4</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Spring: Chptr. 11</li> </ul> <p><b>Group- Led Discussion:</b></p>
<p><b>Meeting 13</b></p> <p><b>November 29</b></p> <p><b>Making a Difference in Today's Classroom</b></p>	<p><b>Mapping Strategies to Promote Equity in the Classroom</b> What goals should you adopt to ensure that students are treated equitably in your classroom? If you don't think goal setting is necessary, why not? What would Howard say in response to your questions?</p> <p><b>Readings Due:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Spring: Chptr. 12</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Pai : Chptr. 7</li> </ul>
<p><b>Finals Week</b></p>	<p><i>Submit Final Examination to 4086 Haley Center by 12 noon December 3, 2010</i></p>

### **How to Approach Writing an Essay**

To be able to write a well-organized essay is a necessary skill for people whose responsibility will be to impart such skills to their students. The components of such an essay include an **introduction**, the **body**, and a **conclusion**. The more immediate value of writing in this way has to do with your ability to successfully complete assignments for this class.

The **introduction** includes a thesis statement. A thesis statement tends to address the following questions: What point do you want to make? or What position are you taking on a particular issue?

The **body** of the essay essentially includes the elements of your argument that either make your point or support the position that you've decided to take. A well-organized, short, essay might organize a paragraph or two around each point. In either case, you will find it necessary to use the course readings for support. To do so requires you to either paraphrase the material from the readings or use direct quotes. When doing so, you should always reference the author. When you utilize someone else's material but do not give them credit, you have committed plagiarism. Here is an example of how to reference a direct quote from an author within the body of the text (King, 1999, p. 1) or (author, year, page number). Remember, the part taken from the text should utilize quotation marks at the beginning and end of the passage. If you decide to paraphrase the ideas of an author, you don't need to use quotation marks, but the reference should look like this (King, 1999) or (author, year). Lastly, extensively long quotes defeat the purpose of you writing the paper. Therefore, you should avoid direct citations that are longer than one or two lines of typed written text. Certainly, it will adversely influence your grade for any written assignment submitted in this class.

Lastly, the **conclusion** essentially reminds the reader of the point you were making, the parts of your argument that supported your position, and possibly the relevance of the discussion to some broader issue. Given that the work assigned in this class is relevant to education, you should make some meaningful comment about the relevance of your conversation to education.