

Education 723 North Dakota State University
Diversity and Educational Policy
Online
3 Credits

“The mission of the College of Human Development and Education at North Dakota State University is to provide educational programs and conduct research and other scholarly activities that focus on the lives of individuals and their families as they interact in their work, educational, and living environments.”

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Please call or send me an email with questions anytime.

This course is designed for doctoral students seeking to more fully understand themselves and the world around them. Curiosity is central to learning; an open mind is integral to inquiry. Thinking for oneself requires not only an education, but many years of practice and self-discipline. ***The primary goal of this course is to give students the freedom and support to think and act for themselves.*** Curiosity and an open mind will be encouraged. Your individual expression and ideas are valued. By the end of the course, you will begin to understand the complexities of human relations, hold a broader worldview, and examine the talent and skills available within you to transform the world in which we live; in order to make it a better place to live for those closest to you and for those who work within (or without) the same systems that you do.

Bloom’s Taxonomy of Educational Objectives (1956) covers six areas of cognitive domain: 1. Knowledge, 2. Comprehension, 3. Application, 4. Analysis, 5. Synthesis, and 6. Evaluation. ***This course will engage you in the last three areas of cognitive domain: Analysis, Synthesis, and Evaluation through reading, writing, creative activity, and discussion.***

Bank’s transformative approach to multicultural education was the construct used for designing this course (Banks, 1999). Various approaches to multicultural education are attributed to Banks (1997), but one in particular teaches a progressive approach to learning that begins with understanding, leads to empathy, and results in action:

Major goals of a transformative curriculum that foster multicultural literacy should be to help students *to know, to care, and to act* in ways that will develop a democratic and just society in which all groups experience cultural democracy and cultural empowerment...Knowledge alone will not help students to develop an empathetic, caring commitment to humane and democratic change...To help our

nation and world become more culturally democratic, students must also develop a commitment to personal, social, and civic action. (Banks, 1999, pp. 32-33)

According to Banks, prejudicial attitudes may be diminished as students move from 'knowing' to 'caring' and may begin to be eliminated as students act to eliminate them. Transformation may be possible only at the individual level, reaching one student at a time. While the definition for transformation used for this course is based on Banks, it rests in Transformation Theory (Mezirow, 2000), which focuses on how students learn to act on their own, rather than uncritically assimilate the attitudes and beliefs of others, gaining responsibility and control for their own actions as clear-thinking independent decision makers.

In order to move through a learning experience involving transformation, students must be free to think for themselves and speak their mind openly (Mezirow, 2000). The course is established within the context of open dialogue and conversation, based on Bank's (1994) understanding of a transformative learning experience: "reflective decision making and personal and civic action must be the primary goals of a transformative and empowering curriculum" (p. 152). In discussing diversity in higher education, MacDonald and Bernardo (2005) recognized that the university itself represents open-ended inquiry that includes learning that is new, integrated, and empowers students. Responses to the environment can be unintentional, embedded in memory, and unconscious. A conscious, thoughtful effort is needed to stimulate change in existing well-learned responses (Shiffrin & Dumais, 1981).

Required Texts:

Three texts are required reading for the course:

Dewey, John. (1916/2007). *Democracy and education*. Echo Library.
Freire, Paulo. (2000). *Pedagogy of the oppressed*. Continuum International.
hooks, bell. (1994). *Teaching to transgress: Education as the practice of freedom*.
Routledge.

The Texts and Discussion Board:

During the six weeks of the course, there will be an ongoing discussion of the texts on the Blackboard Discussion Board. hooks will be read the first week and discussed the second week; Freire will be read the third week and discussed the fourth week; and Dewey will be read the fifth week and discussed the sixth week. You may go back to the Discussion Board and add to discussions at anytime -- please participate in the Discussion Board throughout the duration of the course, but make sure you participate while the discussion is going on the second, fourth, and sixth weeks. Participation in discussion is worth 50% of the grade. In addition to course content, there is a plethora of material available on diversity, some included in the Course Documents section on Blackboard for this course. Please feel welcome to bring additional material or other ideas you have into the Discussion Board. In addition, please add any thoughts on what you learn through the discussion board to your journal.

Your Journal and the Presenters:

There are several presenters for this course. To listen to the presenters, you will need to link to the videos in Blackboard. For each presentation, please write entries in your journal and date the entries. Write about your thoughts regarding the presentations; there are no restrictions on what you may write. What did you learn? What is difficult to understand? What are the points that seem most important to you in light of the presenter's educational journey? Most importantly, are you changing the way you think about yourself and others?

Your Journal and Movies:

You will be asked to watch at least three movies out of the following list for this course: *Shindler's List*, *Sophie's Choice*, *High Noon*, *The Ben Carson Story*, *The Boy in the Striped Pajamas*, *Running Brave*, and *Precious*. If there is another movie that you would rather watch related to diversity, please let me know. Write in your journals what you learned from these movies: What do they mean to you in light of your own understanding and experience? What do you understand from the experience of others?

The Journal

Your journal entries should total at least 25 double-spaced pages. Please upload your journal the last day of class. For this course, I am not judging your journal for content, but am interested instead that you are thinking about the texts, presentations, movies, and anything else you may be learning in relation to diversity. What are you learning, what do you think? What are you learning that is changing your attitude about yourself and others? There are not right or wrong ways to write about what you learn. The journal is worth 50% of the grade. In addition to the content in the course, there is a plethora of material available on diversity, some which is included in the Course Documents section on Blackboard for this course. Please feel welcome to bring additional material into your journal.

Students with disabilities or other special needs, require special accommodations in this course are invited to share these concerns or requests with the professor as soon as possible.

All work in this course must be completed in a manner consistent with NDSU University Senate Policy, Section 335: Code of Academic Responsibility and Conduct: <http://www.ndsu.edu/policy/335.htm>