

**OVp129 Critical Issues in Democratic Citizenship Education
Autumn 2022**

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OBJECTIVES/PURPOSE OF THE COURSE

This course is designed to engage teacher-scholars in critical issues centered around the place of schooling in a robust, deliberative democracy. We will consider the climate of political polarization, attacks on the nature of the public sphere, race and class segregation as determinants of what kind of civic education students will get, and the challenges of teaching controversial issues. We will explore theoretical, political, and educational perspectives, while maintaining a focus on classroom teachers and the challenging work they do to prepare students for participation in a vibrant civic culture. My additional goals are to facilitate your use of this body of work to inform your own scholarship and teaching, and to support your skills and confidence in facilitating and participating in scholarly discussions with peers. I am also available to help you develop a scholarly research agenda if you are considering further graduate studies.

You will see the guiding question(s) for each week at the top of the schedule for that week (located in the IS MU).

Ultimately, our goal is to explore a variety of models for critical perspectives on democratic citizenship education, so that you can draw your own conclusions about what you want your model to look like in your own classroom.

USING A SOCIAL JUSTICE LENS TO VIEW DEMOCRATIC CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION

- I believe that democracy is not an end goal in and of itself. Rather, it is a means for achieving social justice.
- I believe that this course provides an appropriate forum to discuss social justice issues from a critical pedagogy standpoint. When I use the word “critical,” I do not mean that we are going to condemn every idea that comes along, with no apparent purpose in mind except to be negative. Critical pedagogy can be exciting and illuminating!

Critical Pedagogy

Critical pedagogy is a teaching approach which attempts to help students question and challenge domination, and the beliefs and practices that dominate. In other words, it is a theory and practice of helping students achieve critical consciousness. Critical pedagogic educator Ira Shor defines critical pedagogy as:

Habits of thought, reading, writing, and speaking which go beneath surface meaning, first impressions, dominant myths, official pronouncements, traditional cliches, received wisdom, and mere opinions, to understand the deep meaning, root causes, social context, ideology, and

personal consequences of any action, event, object, process, organization, experience, text, subject matter, policy, mass media, or discourse.

In this tradition, the teacher works to lead students to question ideologies and practices considered oppressive (including those at school) and encourage liberatory collective and individual responses to the actual conditions of their own lives. The student often begins as a member of the group or process (including religion, national identity, cultural norms, or expected roles) they are critically studying. The next behavior encouraged is sharing this knowledge with the attempt to change the oppressive nature of the society.

Social Justice Teaching

We are all socialized in a culture that normalizes and justifies inequitable power hierarchies, such as racism and classism. Using a social justice lens requires us to challenge these hierarchies in favor of more just and equitable outcomes. For this reason, teaching is an inherently political act; to not challenge or recognize these hierarchies is to support the status quo. New teachers perceive social pressures from their administrators, parents, and colleagues to implement politically palatable curriculum and instruction.

Given these pressures, it is important to ground our social justice lens in academic research. Official curricular structures in place, such as pacing guides, textbooks, and standards, do not often center social justice concepts. For this reason, one of the main objectives of this class is to critically examine existing structures, while finding ways to integrate citizenship/civic education concepts that spark reflection and action both inside and outside of the classroom.

Pedagogy that supports social justice encourages students to challenge and analyze the knowledge they are presented with. More often than not, students from lower socio-economic backgrounds are more likely to define knowledge as “remembering things” or “doing pages in our workbooks”, whereas students from affluent schools define knowledge as “thinking of new ideas” and “figuring things out.” By teaching learners of all backgrounds in ways that promote critical thinking and inquiry, teachers are enacting social justice. Democratic social justice does not only require the integration of important social issues into the curriculum; it also requires that teachers facilitate the construction of student knowledge through inquiry, collaboration, critical examinations of master narratives and counter-narratives. This class promotes social studies teaching that is aligned with these goals, deliberative problem solving, and social action learning.

To Keep in Mind Throughout the Course

- This is not a methods course. This is an advanced course in which you will be reading a variety of research studies that are very descriptive. I curated readings that I think have a good story to tell. Most of these readings are based on research in “real world” classroom settings, where the voices of teacher and student participants are prominent. For the readings that are more theoretical/conceptual, we will explore implications for the classroom.
- I do not claim an exhaustive coverage of democratic citizenship issues. I selected some exemplars that have emerged in the research literature on democratic citizenship/civic

education because they are interesting. They are not meant to be the “last word” on the subject – just some great food for thought and hopefully a challenge for your thinking.

- In thinking about what to include, I may have neglected to include something important to you. If you notice anything, please reach out so that I can address it.

CLASS FORMAT

There are 12 class meetings in this course. Each week includes readings, other types of resources, and discussions in which you are required to participate. To proceed through the course, simply follow the assignments for each week in the order in which they are listed.

Class discussions will be structured around the readings and other resources in each week of the semester. We will take turns leading discussions, and we will focus on synthesizing ideas and themes within and across readings. We will also talk about how you can apply new ideas to your own work and experience in education.

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

This is a Pass/Fail course. The breakdown of assignments is as follows:

1. The first condition for receiving your grade is attendance and informed, active participation in seminar discussions. This includes being prepared for class by completing and referring to the readings in the discussions, as well as listening and commenting respectfully. *You are allowed two absences without having to provide an excuse.*
2. The second condition for receiving your grade is your presentation/discussion leader assignment.
 - When you are a presentation/discussion leader, prepare a **handout** about your assigned reading. This should be concise (about one page or so). Preview the reading in three ways: A) provide a short summary of the reading; B) provide a few specific focus questions to guide us through the reading; and C) provide a bullet point outline of the reading. **Please email your handout to me on the Friday before your presentation so that I can share it with the entire class.**
 - Do an informal **presentation** about your assigned reading. Go over your handout with us and do a quick introduction of your readings; b) discuss how the reading addresses your focus questions and what the author(s) concluded; and c) spend most of your time on your reflections/critique of the reading. What did you take away from the reading? What did it mean to you, both personally and as an educator? Have you had classroom experiences relevant to the reading? Was there anything in the reading that you felt strongly about, either positive or negative?
 - Prepare **three questions** for the week’s discussion. Don’t write questions that ask us to simply summarize what we read. Help us to dig deeper into the readings, and to analyze and critique the content. In other words, you will have a turn to plan and moderate the questions so that we can engage in dialogue and respond to

each other's ideas. I will be participating/responding, but not playing the lead role.

SUGGESTED QUESTIONS THAT MIGHT HELP YOU WITH YOUR PRESENTATION:

What is the author trying to convince you of?

What did you agree with? Why?

What did you disagree with? Why?

What was something that made you say, "Ah, that makes sense!"?

What was something that did not make sense to you, or that you did not understand?

If you were to chat with the author, what question(s) might you want to ask?

ADDITIONAL GUIDELINES

- Assignments should be submitted on IS MU by the indicated due date and time.
- If your work is late because of illness, please provide a doctor's note.
- You must complete all assignments. You may not opt out of an assignment.
- I am always willing to discuss your ideas with you in advance and provide timely feedback.
- Do NOT submit late work without communicating with me first.
- Carefully edit, proofread, and format your work so that it looks professional and neat.
- By no means am I claiming to have the "right answers" on all aspects of the content. We may have more questions than answers, but I regard this as a good thing because these questions can stimulate our thinking as we go forward as educators. I will push you a bit (politely, of course!) to dive deeper into ideas and issues, and I hope you will push each other and me in a similar manner.
- I do not benefit materially from adopting these course materials.
- I am very confident that we will maintain civility and meaningful engagement with each other. If any issues arise, I will reach out to you privately to resolve the issue to our mutual satisfaction.

COURSE CALENDAR

NOTE: Articles (PDFs) are in IS MU in the order listed below. Everything else (e.g., web resources with links to videos) will be discussed in class and do not have to be done before class. Also note that you have two short readings due on the first day of class.

Start of Week	Guiding Questions	To Read for Class
<p>September 19</p> <p>Week 1</p>	<p>What will we do in this course? Why does civic education matter?</p> <p>INTRODUCTIONS <i>Please share your preferred name/nickname, where you live/teach/study, maybe something special about family, partners, friends, and/or animal companions, and an interesting fact about yourself. Also, when was the first time (if ever) you felt like a citizen?</i></p> <p>GO OVER COURSE SYLLABUS <i>Assignments</i> <i>Grading</i> <i>Class policies</i></p> <p>DISCUSS: John Roberts article Sonia Sotomayor article</p>	<p>Read CNN article on U.S. Chief Justice John Roberts (PDF)</p> <p>Read NBC News article on U.S. Justice Sonia Sotomayor (PDF)</p>
<p>September 26</p> <p>Week 2</p>	<p>No class – Dr. Washington in Praha for Fulbright Scholars Orientation</p>	<p>None</p>
<p>October 3</p> <p>Week 3</p>	<p>What is critical pedagogy, and why is it relevant to civic education? What makes a “good” citizen in a democracy?</p> <p>WARMUP: <u>Intro to Critical Pedagogy video</u></p> <p>BRIEF LECTURE: <u>“Critical Pedagogy” by Dr. Washington</u></p> <p>DISCUSS: Westheimer and Kahne article</p>	<p>Read Westheimer and Kahne article, “What Kind of Citizen: The Politics of Educating for Democracy” (PDF)</p>

<p>October 10 Week 4</p>	<p>What contextual issues in U. S. society are putting democratic citizenship education at risk?</p> <p>WARMUP: “How to Revive Your Belief in Democracy” TED Talk</p> <p>DISCUSS: Kareem Abdul-Jabbar article</p> <p>DISCUSS: Sleeter article</p>	<p>Read <i>Time Magazine</i> article on Kareem Abdul-Jabbar (PDF)</p> <p>Read Sleeter article, “Teaching for Democracy in an Age of Corporatocracy” (PDF)</p>
<p>October 17 Week 5</p>	<p>What does some of the research say about how teacher beliefs shape democratic citizenship/civic education (Part 1)?</p> <p>WARMUP: Watch Eve Pearlman TED Talk, “How to Lead a Conversation Between People Who Disagree”</p> <p>DISCUSS: Castro article</p>	<p>Read Castro article, “What Makes a Citizen? Critical and Multicultural Citizenship and Preservice Teachers’ Understandings of Citizenship Skills” (PDF)</p>
<p>October 24 Week 6</p>	<p>No class – Reading Week</p>	<p>None</p>
<p>October 31 Week 7</p>	<p>What does some of the research say about how teacher beliefs shape democratic citizenship/civic education (Part 2)?</p> <p>WARMUP: Michael Sandel TED Talk, “The Lost Art of Democratic Debate”</p> <p>DISCUSS: Pace article</p>	<p>Read student handout for Week 7</p> <p>Read Pace article, “Contained Risk Taking: Preparing Preservice Teachers to Teach Controversial Issues” (PDF)</p>
<p>November 7 Week 8</p>	<p>What are some issues related to the civic identities of young people (Part 1)?</p> <p>WARMUP:</p>	<p>Read student handout for Week 8</p> <p>Read Clark article, “Examining the</p>

	<p>Listen to Civics 101 podcast, “Student Free Speech Rights”</p> <p>WATCH/LISTEN/PARTICIPATE: Student presentation and discussion of Clark article</p>	<p>Relationship Between Civic Education and Partisan Alignment in Young Voters” (PDF)</p>
<p>November 14 Week 9</p>	<p>What are some issues related to the civic identities of young people (Part 2)?</p> <p>WARMUP: Watch Noah Tesfaye TED Talk, “Restoring Youth Civic Engagement”</p> <p>WATCH/LISTEN/PARTICIPATE: Student presentation and discussion of Johnson article</p>	<p>Read student handout for Week 9</p> <p>Read Johnson article, “Trump, Kaepernick, and MLK as “Maybe Citizens”: Early Elementary African American Males’ Analysis of Citizenship” (PDF)</p>
<p>November 21 Week 10</p>	<p>How/what do students learn and experience in a civics classroom (Part 1)?</p> <p>WARMUP: Watch Dr. Banaji TED Talk, “Young People, the Internet, and Civic Participation”</p> <p>WATCH/LISTEN/PARTICIPATE: Student presentation and discussion of Ho & Barton article</p>	<p>Read student handout for Week 10</p> <p>Read Ho & Barton, “Preparation for Civil Society: A Necessary Element of Curriculum for Social Justice” (PDF)</p>
<p>November 28 Week 11</p>	<p>How/what do students learn and experience in a civics classroom (Part 2)?</p> <p>WARMUP: “What Does it Mean to be a Citizen of the World?”</p> <p>WATCH/LISTEN/PARTICIPATE: Student presentation and discussion of Osler article</p>	<p>Read student handout for Week 11</p> <p>Read Osler, “Human Rights Education: Postcolonial Scholarship and Action for Social Justice” (PDF)</p>
<p>December 5 Week 12</p>	<p>How might we think about moving towards a critical pedagogy for democratic citizenship education (Part 1)?</p> <p>WARMUP:</p>	<p>Read student handout for Week 12</p> <p>Read Gibson article, “From Deliberation to Counter-Narration: Toward a</p>

	<p><u>New York Times article, “Politically Engaged Schools”</u></p> <p>WATCH/LISTEN/PARTICIPATE: Student presentation and discussion of Gibson article</p>	<p>Critical Pedagogy for Democratic Citizenship” (PDF)</p> <p><i>New York Times article, “What Students Are Saying About Politics in School” (PDF)</i> <i>This will be read in class – no need to read ahead of time.</i></p>
<p>December 12 Week 13</p>	<p>How might we think about moving towards a critical pedagogy for democratic citizenship education (Part 2)?</p> <p>WATCH/LISTEN/PARTICIPATE: Student presentation and discussion of Clay & Rubin article</p> <p>CLOSING: <u>“The Consciousness Gap in Education: An Equity Imperative”</u></p> <p>BRIEF REMARKS: <u>“Looking Ahead” by Dr. Washington</u></p>	<p>Read student handout for Week 13</p> <p>Read Clay & Rubin article, “I Look Deep into This Stuff Because it is a Part of Me: Toward A Critically Relevant Civics Education” (PDF)</p>