

University of Massachusetts Lowell
Graduate School of Education

Course: 04.637, History and Theory of Curriculum
Term: Spring 2012
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Office Hours: Chat: 4 Wednesdays, Feb. 15, March 14, April 11, April 25
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Class Release Days: Thursdays

Course Overview

The Graduate School of Education is committed to providing its students an “Education for Transformation” with a focus on excellence, equity, collaboration and inquiry in all courses. In this course, Education for Transformation is not only a desired outcome for students enrolled, but also a pervasive theme in the history we will examine. Belief in the power of schooling to change lives and communities in a positive and democratic way has shaped much of the story we will read about in the journey from colonial to 21st century schools. As the narrative unfolds, you may be surprised to see revealed the origins of practices we take for granted in schools today, and appalled at what passed for education in other times. We will directly address the persistent tension between excellence and equity in schools, and seek to achieve both in our understanding of the material and in our discussions and writing. You will, of course, practice inquiry and collaboration as you examine primary source documents, as you interact with classmates, and as you formulate assignments.

History and Theory of Curriculum assumes teaching experience in schools sufficient that students are conversant with curriculum language, frameworks and practice in the PreK-12 environment. Please note, this is not a course in design or implementation of curriculum. Students seeking an applied course should enroll in Curriculum Design K-12.

In this course, students will examine the history of curriculum in American schools, with a particular view to its social, political and economic roots, and explore the theoretical perspectives that have shaped curriculum in that history. The goal is development by students of a broad understanding of the major curricular agendas in the United States since the colonial period, knowledge of the beliefs and theories that gave rise to those agendas, and insight into how contemporary curriculum issues can be understood in light of history.

Specific learning outcomes include:

- Knowledge of the major periods in American educational history, including the Colonial, National, Metropolitan and contemporary eras

- Understanding of the social, political and economic forces in each period that impacted school curriculum
- Recognition of the dominant curriculum theories that shaped American school curriculum, including progressivism, social reconstruction, perennialism or essentialism.
- Analysis of contemporary curriculum issues with an historical, theoretical lens

Course Schedule

This is a thirteen week course, with a new learning module posted on Thursday of each week. Modules are released on Thursday to allow you sufficient time to read the sometimes lengthy assignments over the weekend, and post your first response on Sunday.

There is a master calendar of weekly readings and assignments for the term provided. See last section of the syllabus. You may want to print this out for ready reference. Each module will also provide guidelines for reading, responding to discussion questions on the website, and other tasks required. Please note this calendar may change in terms of the “to do” requirements as the semester unfolds. However, text readings and assignments will stay the same.

Required Texts

Ellis, A. (2004). *Exemplars of curriculum theory*. New York: Eye on Education.

Spring, J. (2010). *The American School, A Global Context: From the Puritans to the Obama Administration*. McGraw-Hill.

Willis, George et al. (1994). *The American curriculum: A documentary history*. Connecticut: Praeger.

Assignments

Reading: Weekly readings are listed on the syllabus, as well as in the master calendar of required readings and tasks. You can use these tools to read ahead or plan your work. Course notes for each week provide a synthesis of the reading material, with thematic links to earlier classes. Please read these materials before you respond to the discussion questions.

Discussion: Discussion board prompts/questions will be posted on Thursday, your response should be up by Sunday evening, and your peer comment by Wednesday noontime.

Please note: discussion postings should be carefully composed, thoughtful, reading-based comments that respond to the questions or prompts provided. Your postings should take an analytical or explicatory posture toward the topic, rather than just opinion. Think NPR, not Fox News, as your model for scholarly discourse. Opinion is welcome when it is based on understanding and analysis of the question or problem posed.

Of course you know that appropriate online communication requires that you write your postings in full sentences (not text message speak), observe the protocols of respectful academic interchange (no rude or dismissive remarks), and strive to advance the conversation, rather than just agree with what has been said.

Writing: There are 4 assignments: three written, one a media task. See the Assignment section on the Blackboard homepage for details and rubrics.

All written work should be word processed, use 1" margins, 12 pt. font, double space. Citations and references should use APA format.

Please send your assignments as attachments through the Blackboard Assignment dropbox. Click on the assignment # you are submitting, attach your file, including a title page for your paper with your name, and put your name and assignment # in the subject line of dropbox submissions so I know the source.

A Note about Writing:

All written work, including contribution to the discussion board, is expected to be of the highest quality. That is, it needs to be fluent, coherent and incisive. Do not spend many words summarizing; your focus should be on analysis, synthesis, and reflection about the task. It goes without saying that all written work needs to be grammatically correct, spell-checked, and cited properly according to APA. Writing quality counts in assessment of written work.

The first paper, due on week 4, is 3-5 page commentary on the influence of one aspect of the common school movement on contemporary American education. This is not a research paper, but you may certainly cite readings you have done for class. Rather, the goal is for you to assess the extent to which schooling today is a reflection of, or reaction against, one structure, curriculum, belief or practice that characterized the common school in the mid-19th century. Be sure in your paper to define clearly the common school idea that you see influencing (positively or negatively) contemporary American schooling, and explain specifically the nature and extent of the influence it has today. Give specific examples of contemporary practice to explain your argument.

The second paper, due on week 8, is a field report of an interview with a curriculum director or decision maker in a school system.. The goal is to determine how curriculum

is selected for the district or school and by whom. You will want to learn what constituencies are involved in the decision, what factors influence the choice, what review process is in place that determines continuation or change in a curriculum. As you prepare your questions for the interview, keep in mind the history you know about school curriculum, and the various political, legal, social and religious forces that have shaped it in schools over time. Without leading your subject, you should try to ascertain if any of these forces are at work in the target district or school. Details on the report format will be provided.

The third assignment is a group project, due on week 11. The task is to make a presentation in support of one of the theoretical models of schooling outlined in Ellis. You are not expected to advocate for a particular school, but for the approach to learning reflected in either the learner centered, society centered or knowledge centered theories. This can take the form of a video, a website, a wiki, a podcast, a vodcast, a brochure, a radio broadcast, or other media forms you may think of (except power point!). Your presentation must make clear that you understand the key beliefs of the theoretical approach you are advocating, and how it differs from the others. A rubric will be provided. The whole class will assess the group products.

The final paper, due on week 14, is an 8-10 page analysis of “Learning for the 21st Century,” a curriculum framework proposed by the Partnership for 21st Century Skills. www.21stcenturyskills.org. This task requires application of course readings in history and theory, as well as careful examination of a number of the programs cited in the document to support your interpretation. Your paper should articulate the historical traditions and theoretical framework(s) that shape the 21st Century Skills curriculum. Your paper should conclude with an assessment of the viability of the proposed curriculum framework tied to your historical and theoretical understanding and supported by evidence from the class readings.

Academic Integrity: all papers must be your own work, and include complete and proper citation for ideas or words of others. The University has a license for “TurnItIn,” plagiarism detection software that identifies instances of text in a student paper that have appeared in others’ documents. While I do not require you to submit your papers through this software program, I do use it occasionally to check for originality of writing. So please be careful in your documentation of sources used in papers. Also, see the following policy on plagiarism from the Graduate School of Education.

GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION POLICY ON PLAGIARISM

Plagiarism is defined as (1) direct quotation or word-for-word copying of all or part of the work of another without identification or acknowledgement of the quoted work; (2) extensive use of acknowledged quotation from the work of others which is joined together by a few words or lines of one’s own text; and (3) an unacknowledged abbreviated restatement of someone else’s analysis or conclusion, however skillfully paraphrased. All reported violations are referred to the Admissions and Standards Committee. Information on the Appeal’s process can be found in the undergraduate catalog on page 46.

- Determination of plagiarism in a first paper submitted in a course will result in grade of F on the paper and a letter in the student file.
- Determination of plagiarism a second time in the same or any future course will result in an F for the course and dismissal from the program.
- Determination of plagiarism in comprehensive exams, dissertation proposals or dissertations will result in dismissal from the program...

A further discussion of plagiarism can be found in the APA Publication Manual, 5th edition, pages 349-350,395.

Grading Procedures

Detailed written assignment information and rubrics for each task are provided in the Assignment Section of Blackboard.

Course grades are assigned based on the following criteria:

- Web Work 25% - This involves both frequency and quality of contribution to the discussion board, including your own postings and your comments on a classmate's
- Paper 1 15% - A rubric is provided
- Paper 2 20% - A rubric is provided
- Group Project 10% - A rubric is provided
- Paper 3 30% - A rubric is provided

Grading System

| Grade | GPA | Point Structure | Explanation |
|-------|-----|-----------------|--|
| A | 4.0 | 96-100 | Exemplary work in all dimensions of task. |
| A- | 3.7 | 91-95 | Very good work but flawed in one area |
| B+ | 3.3 | 86-90 | Good work but some areas need improvement |
| B | 3.0 | 80-85 | Adequate work but lacks depth, insight and/or fluency |
| B- | 2.7 | 76-79 | Effort evident but marked weakness in understanding or execution of task |
| C+ | 2.3 | 70-75 | Poor quality in multiple areas of |

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| | | | task |
| C | 2.0 | 65-69 | Very poor quality and significant weakness in understanding and execution of task |
| F | 0.0 | Below 65 | Work not submitted, submitted with no evidence of effort and/or understanding, or plagiarized. |

Selected Bibliography

- Adler, M. (1982) *The paideia proposal*. New York: McMillan.
- Bruner, J. (1977). *The process of education*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
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- Dewey, J. (1938). *Experience and education*. New York: Touchstone.
- Freire, P. (1993). *Pedagogy of the oppressed*. New York: Continuum.
- Hirsch, E.D. (1987). *Cultural literacy: What every American needs to know*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.
- _____ (1996). *The schools we need and why we don't have them*. New York: Anchor Books.
- Kaestle, C. (1983). *Pillars of the republic: Common schools and American society, 1780-1860*. New York: Hill and Wang.
- Kliebard, H. (2002). *Changing course: American curriculum reform in the 20th century*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Kliebard, H. (2004). *The struggle for the American curriculum, 1893-1958*. New York: Routledge Falmer.
- Pinar, W. (2004). *What is curriculum theory?* New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Ravitch, D.(2001). *Left back: A century of battles over school reform*. New York: Touchstone.
- Ravitch, D. (2010). *The Death and Life of the Great American School System: How Testing and Choice Are Undermining Education*. Basic Books.
- Tanner, D. and L. Tanner (1995). *Curriculum development: Theory into practice*. 3rd edition. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Merrill.
- _____ (1990). *History of the school curriculum*. New York: MacMillan.
- Tyack, D. (1974). *The one best system: A history of American urban education*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Tyler, R. (1949). *Basic principles of curriculum and instruction*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Watras, J. (2004). *Philosophic conflicts in American education: 1893-2000*. Boston: Pearson.

History and Theory of Curriculum Weekly Schedule

| Week | Topic | To Read | To Do |
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| Week 1 1/23-/2/1 | Intro to Course Overview of Syllabus and Spring text The Colonial Period | What We're Doing This Week (WDDW) and Course Notes in Blackboard Spring, Ch. 1 and 2 Documents #1, 2. Be sure to read the editors' brief intros to each document. | Introduce yourself in the Getting Acquainted Section on the Blackboard Discussion Board Discussion Board: Respond to Prompt on 6 Themes from Spring Comment on Early Models of Curriculum (Harvard and Franklin) Read Classmates' Postings and respond to one on each topic Begin thinking about a curriculum leader you can interview for assignment #2. If you have an Asst. Superintendent in mind, you may have to schedule way in advance. The paper is due 3/21. |
| Week 2 2/2-2/8 <i>Note: 2/3 is the last day to drop a course without cost. After that, you will pay the full tuition and fees even if you do withdraw.</i> | The National Period and the Common School | WDDW and Course Notes Spring, Ch. 3, 4, 6 Documents #3, 5, 6 | Watch "The Common School: 1770-1890," at www.fmgondemand.com . Playlist Code FPVNYE. Then, go to the Common School Blog on the Discussion Board and post a brief (but thoughtful) observation on the film, drawing also on your reading of Spring's Ch. 4. Read at least some of your classmate's postings and comment. Respond to the discussion prompt in your assigned group regarding one document of the 3 you read. Respond to a member of your group who commented on a different document using the voice of your author. So, if you chose the Yale Report (#3) for your first posting, you would reply in the voice of a Yale author to someone who chose either #5 or #6. |

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| | | | Look at assignment one guidelines and rubric. Start thinking about your approach to the topic. Post any questions to the discussion board or send me an email. |
| Week 3 2/9-2/15 | The Disenfranchised | WWDW and Course Notes Spring, Ch. 5, 7, 8 | Watch “As American as Public School: 1900-1950,” at www.fmgondemand.com . Playlist Code NMT5U4. Post feedback about the video in the designated blog space on the Discussion Board. Respond to the discussion prompt for the group to which you are assigned. Return and post a summary of your group’s conversation. Work on Assignment #1, Essay on the Common School Legacy, due 2/22. See details and scoring rubric in the Assignment section of the home page. Chat this week, Wed.2/15, 7:30-8:30 EST. Open agenda, but timed to address assignment questions. |
| Week 4 2/16-2/22 | Secondary Schools | WWDW and Course Notes Spring, Ch. 9 Documents # 7, 8, 15, 26,27, 29 | Look at the website www.achieve.org Respond to the discussion prompt on the common high school in your small group. Submit Assignment #1 as attached file to the Blackboard dropbox by 2/22. |
| Week 5 2/23-2-29 | Curriculum Making | WWDW and Course Notes. Spring, Ch. 10 Documents, #16, 17, ,24,29, 30, 35 | Communicate with your assigned group members to decide if you can arrange a chat, or will use the discussion board for your work on Curriculum Models this week. Regardless of which tool you use, one member of the group should post a summary of the conversation, labeled as Group x Summary, in the Curriculum Models space for others to read and respond. Finalize your interview for Assignment #2 so you have time to write up your report. |
| Week 6 3/1-3/7 | Politics and Curriculum | WWDW and Course Notes | Watch “The Bottom Line in Education, 1980-present,” at www.fmgondemand.com . Playlist Code EKD2E5. Post feedback about |

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| | | Spring 11,13 Docs #31, 33, 36 | the video in the designated blog space on the Discussion Board. Post your response to the prompt about <i>A Nation at Risk</i> , keeping in mind the readings you've done over the past 6 weeks. Return to comment on a classmate's posting. |
| Week 7, Spring Break 3/8-3/21 This module is open for 2 weeks to accommodate the university break. | The End of the Century | WWDW and Course Notes Spring, Ch. 14, 15 | Watch "A Struggle for Educational Equality, 1950-1980" at www.fmgondemand.com . Playlist Code 2W5SBG. Post feedback about the video in the designated blog space on the Discussion Board. Select one of the 5 big ideas that Spring discusses in Ch. 15 and address the questions posed about it on the discussion board. Respond to a classmate's posting on the same or a different topic. Chat this week, Wed.3/14, 7:30-8:30 EST. Open agenda, but timed to address assignment #2 questions. |
| Week 8, 3/22-3/28 | Curriculum Theory | WWDW and Course Notes Ellis, Ch. 1, 2, 3, 4 | *Submit Assignment #2 to Dropbox by .3/28. In your assigned group, respond to the discussion prompt about Ellis' fundamental questions on curriculum. Engage with your group members around the topic. After reading Ellis, sign up on course homepage for a group to work on the media project. Select by kind of curriculum model you wish to develop. There should be at least 3 and no more than 5 in a group. I will create additional sections if there is demand. |
| Week 9, 3/29-4/4 | Curriculum Theory: Learner Centered and Society Centered | WWDW and Course Notes Ellis, Ch. 5, 6 | Select one of the Ellis exemplars for each of the two models, or find your own, and use the Web to examine the models in more detail. (If you have a site near you, go for a visit!) When you feel you understand the exemplar from your research, post a one paragraph summary of the key features and one paragraph comment on the strengths and |

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| | | | <p>weaknesses of each model. Go back later to read and comment on what your classmates said.</p> <p>By now your group should have chosen an approach to the group media project and determined who will do what to complete the task.</p> |
| Week 10, 4/5-4/11 | Curriculum Theory: Knowledge Centered | WWDW and Course Notes Ellis, Ch. 7, 8 | <p>This week, your discussion focuses on essentialism and its prevalence in American public education. See the discussion board for specific prompt.</p> <p>You should also be finalizing your group media project this week.</p> <p>Chat is scheduled for Wed., April 11, 7:30-8:30 EST, to address any issues regarding assignment #3 as well as the Final Project.</p> |
| Week 11, 4/12-4/18 | Curriculum Theory: Knowledge Centered | WWDW and Course Notes Ellis, pp. 124-141. Explore these 3 KC exemplars on the web. | <p>After reading extensively on the web about the 3 KC exemplars, post an analytical or reflective comment about each (or one in depth). Respond to peer posting on at least one exemplar.</p> <p>Post Assignment #3 to Group Media Section on Discussion Board, by 4/18.</p> |
| Week 12, 4/19-4/25 | The No Child Left Behind Act | WWDW and Course Notes Read about NCLB on federal govt site as well as others. | <p>At the <i>Review of Group Media Projects</i> topic of Wk 12 Discussion, look at media projects of other groups and use the peer review scale to evaluate the work. Comments are welcome.</p> <p>After reading about NCLB on several websites, respond to the prompt regarding one aspect of the law. As always, read classmate postings and respond to at least one.</p> <p>Look at the video identified in Course Notes for another perspective on NCLB. What do you think of Zhao's message?</p> <p>Chat is scheduled for Wed., April 25, 7:30-</p> |

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| | | | 8:30 EST, to address any issues regarding the Final Project. |
| <p>Week 13, 4/26-5/2</p> <p>Note: 4/30 is the last day to Withdraw from a course with a W</p> | Contemporary Curriculum Issues | <p>WWDW and Course Notes</p> <p>Read widely on your topic so you have a good grasp of the issues associated with it.</p> | <p>Briefly describe the controversial curriculum topic you have chosen, then explain why it is an issue and what you think is likely to be its fate.</p> <p>Read a range of classmates' posting on other topics, then comment on at least one.</p> |
| Week 14 | | | Assignment #4, Final Project, Due 5/2 |