



408 – Foundations of American Education

Section 002C – Fall 2008

T/R, 3:00-5:00 – Clow 205

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Office Hours: T, 12:00-3:00; R, 12:00-3:00

Course Description: This course explores the philosophical, social, legal, and historical foundations of American education and childhood. The course focuses on contemporary and historical issues in American education as they relate to the larger society. Course participants will engage in a critical study of the schooling system and social order and reflect on the legal and ethical obligations of teachers in a democratic society.

Required Texts:

Books

- Joel Spring, *The American School: From the Puritans to No Child Left Behind*, 7th Edition.
- Steven Mintz, *Huck's Raft: A History of American Childhood* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004).

Online Texts (Links and/or Text Posted on D2L):

Court Cases

- *Brown v. Board of Education*, 347 U.S. 483 (1954)
- *Pickering v. Board of Education*, 391 U.S. 563 (1968)
- *Tinker v. Des Moines School District*, 393 U.S. 503 (1969)
- *Wisconsin v. Yoder*, 406 U.S. 205 (1972)
- *Plyler v. Doe*, 457 U.S. 202 (1982)

Other Readings

- Human Rights Watch, "A Violent Education: Corporal Punishment of Children in US Public Schools," (2008).
- Wisconsin, 2007 Senate Bill 396
- Wisconsin Court of Appeals, *Johnson v. Burmaster* (2008)
- Wisconsin, Wisconsin Act 222
- Wisconsin Statutes—Chapter 118, "General School Operations." (Sections to be assigned periodically throughout the semester.)
- Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)

Classroom Rules:

- Be yourself.
- Find your voice and use it often.
- Respect your classmates by listening to their contributions.
- Ask questions whenever you need clarification.
- Bring a sense of humor and an ample supply of curiosity.
- Challenge the professor if (and when) you disagree with him.
- Have fun, enjoy learning, and push yourself.

The Larger Context: "To receive a license to teach in Wisconsin, an applicant shall complete an approved program and demonstrate proficient performance in the knowledge, skills and dispositions under all of the following standards:

1. Teachers know the subjects they are teaching.
2. Teachers know how children grow.
3. Teachers understand that children learn differently.

4. Teachers know how to teach.
5. Teachers know how to manage a classroom.
6. Teachers communicate well.
7. Teachers are able to plan different kinds of lessons.
8. Teachers know how to test for student progress.
9. Teachers are able to evaluate themselves.
10. Teachers are connected with other teachers and the community.”
(Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, “Wisconsin Standards for Teacher Development and Licensure” *Education Licensing Reform—Information Packet.*)

Though our study of educational foundations should improve our ability to excel under each of these DPI standards, this course will focus primarily on Wisconsin Educator Standard 10: “Teachers are connected with other teachers and the community.” Students will be expected to achieve an advanced understanding of Standard #10 and will be evaluated based on the many assignments that seek to promote professional and community-based communication.

As per the course description, “Course participants will engage in a critical study of the schooling system and social order and reflect on the legal and ethical obligations of teachers in a democratic society.” Assessment of student learning, with regard to Standard #10, will evaluate students’ understanding of the complex social context in which teaching occurs—this is the focus of several writing assignments.

Evaluation:

- 1) **Engagement & Attendance (10%):** Here your performance as a class member is evaluated. Did you participate in class discussions? Was this participation of value to the class? How well did you engage with the texts and with your fellow classmates? Were you respectful to your colleagues? The success of a class depends on student engagement; therefore, it is essential that students not only attend class, but also come to class prepared. Unexcused absences will negatively impact your grade.
Self-Assessment Rubric: Your classroom engagement grade will be based on a self-assessment rubric to be completed once a week. In essence, *you* will grade *yourself* in this area. Copies of the rubric will be handed out to you and, at the end of the course, your assessment in this area will be based on a score averaged from those self-evaluations.
- 2) **Quizzes (20%):** Each class will begin with a brief, four question, multiple-choice quiz that will cover the reading materials for that day.
- 3) **Team Blog (20%):** Using the website blogger.com, students will create team blogs that focus on the following issues:
 - Children & Youth’s Rights
 - Education & Childhood in Wisconsin
 - Children & the Media
 - Politics & Education
 - Children, Schools & Social Justice
 - The Teaching Profession in the 21st Century

The blogs **will not** be public; rather, we will grant permissions for all class members to view one another’s postings. Each student will post *five* blogs, each of which should be researched, well-written, and connected to the overall theme of the team blog.
- 4) **Current Events (10%):** Classes will begin with small groups of individuals giving a brief presentation on a current event that is of interest/relevance to us—don’t feel constrained by only “school-related” issues; rather, feel free to find articles in papers/news magazines/Internet sites that deal more broadly with problems facing children in contemporary society, American or otherwise. Through our discussions, we will attempt to discover the educational significance of these issues.
- 5) **On-Line Test (10%):** A “scavenger hunt-type test” that will assist students in developing the ability to navigate through the *Wisconsin Statutes*’ on-line archives. Students will search for specific information posed in hypothetical legal questions. **Due 09/25.**

- 6) **Policy Brief (10%):** Students will write a two-page brief addressing a current policy issue dealing with a specific piece of educational reform legislation in Wisconsin. The essay's audience will be members of our state government. The brief will be well researched, and will draw upon *four* scholarly sources—that means peer-reviewed academic journals. **Due 11/25.**
- 7) **Educational Platform Summary, 2008 Presidential Election (10%):** In preparation for the upcoming election, students will research each candidate's education platform and prepare a one-page summary of each candidate's positions on important educational issues. This assignment simply asks you to present, in summary form, the candidates' platforms and *will not* require that you take a particular side (although you can, if you like). **Due 10/28.**
- 8) **Conflict Resolution Essay (10%):** Throughout the semester, we will explore how conflicts affect educational policy and classroom practice. This will be our final writing assignment and will provide an opportunity for students to reflect on the nature of educational conflict, its causes, and practices which seek to resolve it. **Due 12/11.**

Course Policies:

- **Academic Honesty:** “Academic honesty is fundamental to the integrity of the university, and academic misconduct is taken very seriously. Students are responsible for the honest completion and representation of their work, for the appropriate citation of sources, and for respect of others’ academic endeavors.” (From the University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh Student Discipline Code, 14.01) Academic misconduct will result in sanctions, as outlined in the Student Discipline Code, 14.04. If you are ever unsure about the specifics of UW-O’s policies on this matter, please see me!
- **Class Preparation:** All students are expected to come to class prepared—failure to do so will negatively impact your “Engagement” grade. This means that you ought to read the assignments for that particular day.
- **Professional Comportment:** Please carry yourselves as professionals and be aware that when you come to class another professional (me!) is at work. So, please don’t text message or leave your cell phones on. Don’t sleep or work on other class assignments. Etc.
- **Day Care Issues:** Moms and dads; grandparents and siblings: If a day care “crisis” ever arises, you are more than welcome to bring the kid(s) to class.
- **Attendance:** Only *documented* absences will be excused—if you need to miss class it is up to you to present the professor with documentation, either from your physician, the dean of students, etc. Otherwise, absences will negatively impact your grade. Should you obtain documentation please make a photocopy for the professor’s records.
 - UW-O campus-wide policy: (4) Students are excused from class for participation in all-University events [GEN 4.B.10 (1)(b)] and for circumstances beyond the students' control such as medical or family emergencies (medical care for pregnancy, illness, child care issues, death or serious health problem of family member), court appearance, jury or military duty, etc. Students may not be penalized for such absences if appropriate documentation is provided in a timely manner.
 - **There is no need to email me regarding absences.** Should you absolutely feel the need to inform me of an absence via email, please select the “request receipt”/“when viewed” option on TitanMail. This will verify acknowledgement for you.
 - Save your excused absence documentation over the course of the semester and hand it in to the professor at the end of the semester; specifically, on the day of the final exam.
- **Late Assignments:** Will be accepted, but 5% of the assignment’s final grade will be deducted for each day that the assignment is late.
- **Missed Work:** Missed quizzes, due to absences, excused or unexcused, are *not* available for retaking, under any circumstance. Should a student miss a quiz due to an excused—documented—absence, unearned quiz points can be made up by submitting a two-page, single-spaced summary of that day’s reading. The summary is due *within seven days* of the absence. Nothing submitted after this due date will be accepted. Students who missed quizzes and do not have proper documentation will not be given the opportunity to make up for those points.
- **Submission of Work Via E-mail:** All assignments are to be submitted in hard copy format. Only in the case of a medical or family emergency should students submit work electronically. For the most part, however, e-mailed work will not be graded.
- **Accountability:** Like you, I am accountable for my performance in the classroom. And just as I hold all of my students to high expectations, you should expect the same from me. Should any of you ever have

comments, concerns, or criticisms, please make time to see me during my office hours. I am quite serious about meeting the needs of all of my students and you will find me to be a flexible and fair professor. My immediate supervisor here at the University is Dr. Jupian Leung, Chairperson of the Department of Educational Foundations: leung@uwosh.edu

- **Timely Return of Student Work:** All student work will be graded within seven days of submission.
- **Grading Policy:**

Points	93-100	88-92	83-87	78-82	73-77	68-72	61-67	56-60
Grade	A	A/B	B	B/C	C	C/D	D	F

Course Schedule:

09/04: Introduction

09/09: Human Rights Watch, “A Violent Education: Corporal Punishment of Children in US Public Schools,” (2008)

09/11: Educational Policy in Wisconsin – The “Virtual Charter School” Example

Read: Wisconsin, 2007 Senate Bill 396; Wisconsin Court of Appeals, *Johnson v. Burmaster* (2008) Wisconsin, Wisconsin Act 222

09/16: Team Blog Meeting

09/18: Teachers & the First Amendment—Speech

Read: *Pickering v. Board of Education* (1968)

09/23: Students & the First Amendment—Speech

Read: *Tinker v. DesMoines* (1969)

09/25: Parents versus the State

Read: *Wisconsin v. Yoder* (1972)

Due: On-Line Test

09/30: Team Blog Meeting

10/02: No Class – Josh’s Brother’s Wedding!!!

10/07: The State versus Parents

Read: *Plyler v. Doe*, 457 U.S. 202 (1982)

10/09: Education & Religion—Colonial American and Puritanical Views of Childhood

Read: Mintz, Chapter 1; Spring, Chapter 2—Intro; “The Role of Education in Colonial Society”; “Authority and Social Status in Colonial New England”; “The Family and the Child”

10/14: Team Blog Meeting

10/16: Education & Nationalism—Education the New Republic: Jefferson, Webster, Rush

Read: Mintz, Chapter 3; Spring, Chapter 3—Intro; “Noah Webster”; “Thomas Jefferson”

10/21: The Common School Movement & The Catholic Response

Read: Spring, Chapter 4

10/23: Education in the South

Read: Mintz, Chapter 5

10/28: Team Blog Meeting

Due: Educational Platform Summary, 2008 Presidential Election.

10/30: No Class – American Educational Studies Association, Savannah, Georgia

11/04: ELECTION DAY!!!

The Progressive Era, Part I

Read: Mintz, Chapter 7; Spring, Chapter 9

11/06: The Progressive Era, Part II

Read: Mintz, Chapter 8; Spring, Chapter 8

11/11: Team Blog Meeting

11/13: Education & Immigration

Read: Mintz, Chapter 10

11/18: The Development of American Youth Culture

Read: Mintz, Chapters 11-12

11/20: Schooling & the Cold War

Read: Mintz, Chapter 14; Spring, Chapter 13

11/25: Childhood and Education in the 1950s-1960s

Read: Mintz, Chapter 15; Spring, Chapter 14; *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954)

Due: Policy Brief

11/27: Thanksgiving Break – No Class

12/02: Education & Conservatism, 1980s

Read: Mintz, Chapter 16

12/04: Education & Childhood in the New Millennium

Read: Spring, Chapter 15

12/09: Team Blog Meeting – Evaluation

12/11: Final Meeting

Read: FERPA

Due: Conflict Resolution Essays