CURRINS 250: Current Topics in Curriculum and Instruction:  
First-Year Student Seminar, Early Childhood Education  
Fall 2012  
1 credit, U

Instructor: Vicki Herman  
Office: 339 Enderis  
Phone: 229-3855  
Email: vherman@uwm.edu  
Office Hours: By appointment

Class times & location:  
Wednesdays 12:30–3:10 p.m.  
9/12, 9/19, 9/26, 10/3, 10/10  
Enderis Hall, Room 384

Course pre-requisites: None

Course rationale: This course is intended to serve two concerns. One is that the School of Education’s retention rate for beginning students is lower than desirable. We would like this course to create earlier connections for students with the professional faculty and advisors and resources in order to be helpful toward increasing retention. Second is that ECE students spend the first year to year and a half without connection to the principles and values of our program. We hope that by introducing these earlier (e.g., professionalism, urban mission) we can impact how students proceed through their early years in the program.

Course description: The course provides students with an orientation to the Department of Curriculum and Instruction’s academic program and to academic, university life. This course is designed for new students (freshman and transfer) interested in early childhood education. The course prepares students to become active participants in their educational careers, to understand the meaning of seeking a professional career, and to understand the urban focus of the UWM School of Education.

Course goals:  
Students will:  
1. Understand learning and personal resources, services and policies relevant to their academic program and personal strengths/growth areas.  
2. Understand advising procedures and be able to proactively plan and problem-solve their academic and professional careers.  
3. Understand the characteristics that define a profession and professional conduct/ethics.  
4. Demonstrate critical thinking skills.  
5. Describe the characteristics of effective and ineffective written and face-to-face communication.  
6. Explore their personal understanding of urban neighborhoods, schools, and political, social and philosophical issues that impact teaching in urban schools.  
7. Visit and interact with professional educators at an exemplary Milwaukee Public School.  
8. Interact with individuals in early childhood education who are in various ranges of the professional education career ladder, i.e., students, teachers, child care professionals, university faculty, etc.
Course topics:
Over the sessions that the course meets, five major topics will be covered. They are as follows:

1. Time management, study skills and university resources. An introduction to information for staying on track with a college workload and to the types of personal and professional resources available (e.g., library, academic support and tutoring, Writing Center, counseling and health services, minority student offices, student professional organizations).

2. Communication skills. An introduction to communicating effectively with a variety of audiences, including those in authority positions, faculty, peers, children, and families.

3. Navigating college. An examination of students’ goals and career tracks, program requirements and deadlines, and the importance of critical thinking in higher education coursework.

4. Professionalism. An introduction to the characteristics that define a profession, the place of professionalism in early childhood practice, and ethics.

5. Urban education. An introduction to the urban environment, including a visit to an urban school; and beginning exploration of students’ personal experiences as they impact understanding of the urban context.

Required Readings:
Readings can be found on the CURRINS 250 D2L site. You should bring copies of the articles to class.


Assignments and Grading:

Students will be responsible for the following course elements and assignments:

1. **Attendance and Participation.** We expect you to attend class and contribute to class dialogues and activities (some will be whole class and some will be with small groups). While not everyone feels comfortable in whole class discussions, nor is it possible for everyone to actively participate, you also contribute through attentive listening and being respectful of classmates and the ideas that they express. 15 points (3 points per class)

   *Please note: Missing class means missing the interaction and the collaborative construction of knowledge. It is difficult if not impossible to make this up. Thus, we take attendance and participation in class very seriously. You are required to contact the instructor about any absence prior to the start of the missed class.*

2. **Group Presentation** Students will work in groups with 2-3 peers to make a presentation to the group about resources at UWM. Grading will be based upon clarity of information presented, soundness of information, materials presented and intra-group coordination. 20 points

3. **Discussion Board & Reading Reflections** Each week readings are assigned. Students are responsible for reading the articles, posting to the D2L discussion board and reading the posts from the other students. Each student is required to submit at least two posts per article. One post should be a personal response to the article and one post should be a response to another student’s post. The D2L weekly discussion board will open on Saturday and be closed on Friday of each week. The posts need to be made within the given time frame in order to receive points for the reflections. Please be mindful of giving enough time for other students to respond to your post. That means don’t wait until the last minute! Also keep in mind that you are writing academically, so usage of social media type writing is not appropriate. Your posts need to reflect that you have completed the readings. You should note important points, things learned, continuing questions and concerns. Grading will be based upon integration of course content and evidence of reading. Percentage of grade: 28 Points (4 points per article)

4. **Professional Essay** Students will write an essay about what it means to them to be a professional educator. The essay should be 3-4 typed, double spaced pages. Grading will be based upon content related to professionalism in teaching and other course topics, as well as on acceptable standards of writing. Students may choose to use citations from course readings (use APA format, please), but this is not mandatory. 20 points

5. **Cultural Event** Students will attend one UWM cultural event, such as an art show, musical performance, cultural lecture or film series (not a sporting event) and write a 2 page (typed, double-spaced) reflection on the experience. Requirements include a description of the event (time/date, name, place, etc.), a summary of the experience, a reflection on what you learned, and what pre-conceived notions you had that may have changed after the experience. Attach a program or flyer of the event, if applicable. 17 points
Grading will be based upon the following scale:

- 93-100%  A
- 90-92%  A-
- 87-89%  B+
- 83-86%  B
- 80-82%  B-
- 77-79%  C+
- 73-76%  C
- 70-72%  C-
- 67-69%  D+
- 63-66%  D
- 60-62%  D-
- Below 60%  F

**Course Teaching Methods:** Small and large group discussion will be used predominantly. For one session, the class will take a field trip to a Milwaukee Public School for a tour and class activity.

**Standard Policies:**

**Incompletes** A notation of "incomplete" may be given in lieu of a final grade to a student who has carried a subject successfully until the end of a semester but who, because of illness or other unusual and substantiated cause beyond the student's control, has been unable to take or complete the final examination or to complete some limited amount of term work.  
http://www4.uwm.edu/secu/docs/other/S31.pdf

**Accommodations for religious observances** Students will be allowed to complete requirements that are missed because of a religious observance. Inform me two weeks before the absence due to religious observance.  
http://www4.uwm.edu/secu/docs/other/S1.5.htm

**Accommodations for students with disabilities** If you have an identified disability that may affect your performance in this class, schedule an appointment (no later than the third week of class) so that provisions can be made to ensure that you have an equal opportunity to meet all the requirements of the course.  
If you do require modification of instruction and/or evaluation communicate your needs to me by means of the Student Accessibility Center's Verified Individual Services and Accommodation form (VISA). The VISA is a written record of instructional accommodations recommended by SAC staff. VISA forms are obtained from the Student Accessibility Center located in Mitchell Hall, Room 112.  
http://www4.uwm.edu/sac/SACltr.pdf

**Academic misconduct** Academic Misconduct: The University has a responsibility to promote academic honesty and integrity and to develop procedures to deal effectively with instances of academic dishonesty. 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. Cheating on exams or plagiarism are violations of the academic honor code and carry severe sanctions, including failing a course or even suspension or dismissal from the University.  
http://www4.uwm.edu/acad_aff/policy/academicmisconduct.cfm

**Discriminatory conduct (such as sexual harassment)** Discriminatory conduct will not be tolerated by the University. It poisons the work and learning environment of the University and threatens the careers, educational experience, and well-being of students, faculty, and staff.  
http://www4.uwm.edu/secu/docs/other/S47.pdf
**Military Service** Students called to active military service after the beginning of a term or session are entitled to drop their courses and receive a full refund of tuition and fees for courses still in progress and in which they are actively enrolled at the time of the call-up. 
Students: http://www4.uwm.edu/current_students/military_call_up.cfm (Editorially Revised, 3/25/09)

**Complaint procedures** Students may direct complaints to the head of the academic unit or department in which the complaint occurs. If the complaint allegedly violates a specific university policy, it may be directed to the head of the department or academic unit in which the complaint occurred or to the appropriate university office responsible for enforcing the policy. 
http://www4.uwm.edu/secu/docs/other/S49.7.htm

**Grade appeal procedures** A student may appeal a grade on the grounds that it is based on a capricious or arbitrary decision of the course instructor. Such an appeal shall follow the established procedures adopted by the department, college, or school in which the course resides or in the case of graduate students, the Graduate School. These procedures are available in writing from the respective department chairperson or the Academic Dean of the College/School. http://www4.uwm.edu/secu/docs/other/S28.htm

**The final exam requirement**, etc. http://www4.uwm.edu/secu/docs/other/S22.htm

Selected Academic and Administrative Policy 24.5, Firearms and Dangerous Weapons Policy
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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Course Content Goals and Class Activities</th>
<th>Assigned Readings Class Preparation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>September 12</td>
<td>• Syllabus&lt;br&gt;• Seminar expectations, student information cards, intro to essay assignment, Norris Health Center resources.</td>
<td>• What is professionalism&lt;br&gt;John Lockman, ECE Academic Advisor (2:00)</td>
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<td>Wednesday</td>
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<td>Jalongo article</td>
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<td>September 19</td>
<td>• Panel Discussion with ECE Undergraduates&lt;br&gt;• Campus Discovery Activity&lt;br&gt;• E-Mail &amp; Role Play Communication Skills</td>
<td>Carothers chapter and Espinosa chapter</td>
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<td>Wednesday</td>
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<td>September 26</td>
<td>• Workplace/culture activity&lt;br&gt;• Presentations of campus discovery activity/brochure</td>
<td>: Israel article and Palmer ‘Mystery’ article</td>
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<td>Wednesday</td>
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<td>October 3</td>
<td>• Panel discussion with UWM professionals ECE people.</td>
<td>Freeman &amp; Feeney article and Penuel &amp; Riel article</td>
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<td>Wednesday</td>
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<tr>
<td>October 10</td>
<td>• School visit</td>
<td>• Cultural activity paper&lt;br&gt;• Professional essay</td>
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<td>Panel discussion with UWM professionals ECE people. <em>(Include someone from guest speaker from the Praxis study office (technical name needed)</em></td>
<td>Freeman &amp; Feeney article and Penuel &amp; Riel article</td>
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<td>October 3</td>
<td>School visit, cultural activity paper and professional essay due. <em>Gwen T. Jackson Elementary School ?</em></td>
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