

CHAPMAN UNIVERSITY
University Honors Program
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COURSE SYLLABUS

Dr. Peter McLaren
Fall 2015
Office: Reeves Hall 201
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Office Hours: 11:00-12:45

Course Number: HON-418

Course Title: Critical Pedagogy: Teaching to Transgress

Credits: 3

Classroom: AF 205

Time: MW 1-2:15pm

Prerequisite: Acceptance in the University Honors Program

Course Description

In this course, we will focus on different models of teachers for the purpose of challenging the oppressive structures of the social order so as to build a deeper and stronger democracy in which all peoples can participate and have a voice. We will also give credit to those institutions and values that need to be upheld and defended but we will not shirk from challenging institutions and social relations that are unfair or unjust. In other words, we seek to “speak truth to power.” The course is designed to challenge fundamental preconceptions of what a teacher should be or how a teaching should be conveyed.

Restrictions

- Acceptance into the University Honors Program

Program Learning Outcomes

1. Obtain a starting point for integrative exploration of the development of cultures and intellectual achievements through a variety of disciplinary and interdisciplinary perspectives;
2. Sharpen the ability to critically analyze and synthesize a broad range of knowledge through the study of primary texts and through engagement in active learning with fellow students, faculty, and texts (broadly understood);
3. Understand how to apply more integrative and interdisciplinary forms of understanding in the advancement of knowledge and in addressing dramatic challenges shaping the world;

4. Develop effective communication skills, specifically in the areas of written and oral exposition and analysis.

Course Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of this course, the student will be able to:

1. engage in robust dialogue while identifying diverse viewpoints about teaching and learning in the 21st century.
2. understand and critique current school reform practices
3. utilize critical pedagogy as a counterpoint in challenging school reform initiatives by the US Department of Education and other constituencies
4. recognize and critique loaded language and other propaganda techniques used in contemporary discourse about schooling.
5. take a firm stand on an issue and defend that position effectively in a presentation and scholarly paper.
- 6.

Texts from which reading materials will be drawn (and posted on blackboard)

1. *Teachers As Cultural Workers: Letters to Those Who Dare Teach* With New Commentary by Peter McLaren, Joe L. Kincheloe, and Shirley Steinberg Expanded Edition Paperback – April 11, 2005 by Paulo Freire (Author)
2. *Teaching to Transgress: Education as the Practice of Freedom* by bell hooks (Author)
3. *A People's History of the Classroom* by Bill Bigelow (Author)
4. *Lies My Teacher Told Me: Everything Your American History Textbook Got Wrong* by James W. Loewen (Author)
5. *How to Take An Exam...and Remake the World* by Bertell Ollman (Author)
6. *Life in Schools: An Introduction to Critical Pedagogy in the Foundations of Education*, 6th Edition (Paradigm Publishers) by Peter McLaren (Author)
7. *The Art of Critical Pedagogy* (Ernest Morell and Jeff Duncan Andrade)

Instructional Strategies

- Biweekly seminar meetings
- This seminar-type class will focus on dialogue, fostering an atmosphere of trust, where ideological demagoguery is discouraged and mutual respect for a diversity of opinions is respected. The course will consist of small group assignments, individual research, guest speakers, panel discussions, reading and group discussion, debates; possible use of film, TV, and talk radio sources.

Chapman University Academic Integrity Policy

Chapman University is a community of scholars which emphasizes the mutual responsibility of all members to seek knowledge honestly and in good faith. Students are responsible for doing their own work, and academic dishonesty of any kind will not be tolerated anywhere in the university.

Chapman University Students with Disabilities Policy

In compliance with ADA guidelines, students who have any condition, either permanent or temporary, that might affect their ability to perform in this class are encouraged to contact the Office of Disability Services. If you will need to utilize your approved accommodations in this class, please follow the proper notification procedure for informing your professor(s). This notification process must occur more than a week before any accommodation can be utilized. Please contact Disability Services at (714) 516-4520 or (www.chapman.edu/students/student-health-services/disability-services) if you have questions regarding this procedure, or for information and to make an appointment to discuss and/or request potential accommodations based on documentation of your disability. Once formal approval of your need for an accommodation has been granted, you are encouraged to talk with your professor(s) about your accommodation options. The granting of any accommodation will not be retroactive and cannot jeopardize the academic standards or integrity of the course.

Chapman University Diversity Policy

Chapman University is committed to fostering learning and working environments that encourage and embrace diversity, multiple perspectives, and the free exchange of ideas as important measures to advance educational and social benefits. Our commitment and affirmation are rooted in our traditions of peace and social justice and our mission of producing ethical and responsible global citizens. The term diversity implies a respect for all and an understanding of individual differences in age, class, disability, ethnicity, gender, language, national origin, race, religion, sexual orientation, and socioeconomic status.

Methods of Evaluation

The final grade will be based on points earned as follows:

Assignments

1. Journal reflections on the readings and class discussions.... 35 points
2. Poster Session..... 33 points
3. Panel Discussions.....32 points

Requirements

1. You are responsible for checking your Chapman email every day. You may have your Chapman email forwarded to another account by requesting this service from the My Chapman page of the CU website or go to <http://www.chapman.edu/oac/forwardemail.html>.
If you need to email me, then could you send the email to my gmail account. At present, my gmail is easier for me to access than my Chapman email. My email address is: peter.mclaren1@gmail.com

Class Schedule

Dates of Class Meetings and Assignments for Each Class Meeting

Monday August 31

Introduction to the class. Discussion of the syllabus. Student input into the syllabus and co-creation of assignments and methods of evaluation.

Wednesday September 2. *How to Take an Exam...., pages 1-32; pages 33-55 (group one)*

Monday September 7. *How to Take an Exam...., pages 80-104; pages 56-79 (group two).*

Wednesday September 9. *Lies My Teacher Told Me, pages 136-171; (group three)*

Monday September 14. *Lies My Teacher Told Me, pages 172-203; pages 204-218 (group four)*

Wednesday September 16. *A People's History of the Classroom, pages 15-32; pages 28-49 (group one)*

Monday September 21. *Video: Precious Knowledge*

Wednesday September 23. *Video: Life in Schools. Life in Schools, pages 31-118 (group two)*

Monday September 28. *Life in School, pages 119-129 (group three)*

Wednesday September 30. *Life in Schools, pages 131-158 (group four)*

Monday October 5. *Video: The Color of Fear*

Wednesday October 7. I will be speaking at conferences in Changchun, China and Beijing, China. A guest speaker will be arranged. In the meantime, please continue to work on your assignments.

Monday October 12. *China Conference. A guest speaker will be arranged. In the meantime, please continue to work on your assignments.*

Wednesday October 14. *China Conference. This will be a day to do independent study. Please read the first excerpts from Pedagogy of the Oppressed.*

Monday October 19. *Excerpts from Pedagogy of the Oppressed, Chapters One and Two (group one)*

Wednesday October 21. *Teachers as Cultural Workers, xxvii-xxxix, pages 111-121; pages 135-153 (group two)*

Monday October 26. *Video: Everyday Life*

Wednesday October 28. *The Art of Critical Pedagogy, pages 23-67 (group three)*

Monday November 2. *The Art of Critical Pedagogy, pages 105-131 (group four)*

Wednesday November 4. *I will be speaking in Argentina and being presented with an Honorary Doctorate of Humane Letters. I will arrange a guest lecture.*

Monday November 9. *Teaching to Transgress, pages 1-34. (group one)*

Wednesday November 11. *Teaching to Transgress, pages 35-76; pages 201-208 (group two)*

Monday November 16. *A People's Curriculum for the Earth, pages 267-313 (group three)*

Wednesday November 18. *A People's History of the Classroom, pages 8-14 (group four)*

Monday November 23. Thanksgiving Recess

Wednesday November 25 Thanksgiving Recess

Monday November 30. Chapter 12 from *Pedagogy of Insurrection* (McLaren) is meant to be performed. Student volunteers are invited to perform the chapter, i.e., take turns reading it aloud, and offer a commentary.

Wednesday December 2. Two interviews conducted by Dr. Petar Jandric of Croatia, an expert in digital technology and social media. Pages 805-831 (*Policy Futures in Education*); *Critical Learning in Digital Networks*, pages 199-226.

Monday December 7. Poster Session on a critical educator (from *The Art of Critical Pedagogy*)

Wednesday December 9. Poster Session on a critical educator (from the *Art of Critical Pedagogy*)

Monday December 14. Final Day of Classes
Wrap-up of class. Hand in journal.

Thoughts about Assignments and Evaluations

This class is meant to be a lightly structured course intended to provoke discussion. Some students prefer highly structured classes that tell them where they stand—grade-wise—at every moment of the course. This is not that type of class. The class is meant to introduce students to the field of critical pedagogy—an approach not simply for teaching, but for developing a philosophy of praxis by which to understand and negotiate everyday life.

Compared to many other fields that exist in the academy, education is very much a conservative force. This course is meant to make room for more discussions of the progressive literature in the field. However, this course is open to points of view from multiple perspectives. Arguments made by students from conservative positions will be respected and given as much consideration as those argued from other political positions. The focus will be on how well arguments are made and defended.

Assignments

Poster Session

(33 points)

*At the end of the semester, students will each (or in pairs) create a poster session of a critical educator of their choice. Some of these educators are summarized in the reading, **The Art of Critical Pedagogy** by Ernest Morrell and Jeffery Duncan-Andrade, although you may chose*

other examples of whomever you feel is a critical educator. The criteria for the poster session will be discussed in class.

Journal of Readings and Discussions

(35 points)

Due: December 14

Students will be expected to keep a journal about the class readings and discussions. The journal must be readable and contain reflections on the texts discussed in class. The journal is expected to be thoughtful and critical—that is, students are expected to engage the arguments presented by the authors.

Panel Discussions

32 points (three panel discussions, 8+8+8+8)

(Depending upon the class size), the class will be divided into two groups. Two groups will take turns presenting the reading material. For a class of ten students, each group of two should have participated in leading a panel discussion three times during the semester.

Suggested Questions to Raise During Panel Discussions

In order to provide a substantive analysis of the class reading for the panel presentation, I am providing a set of questions that I would like each student to consider. **These are only suggested questions to help guide you in your readings. You don't have to follow these exact questions.** I strongly suggest that you sketch out for the panel discussion some notes that indicate your answer to the following questions. The point, of course, is that we need to ground our discussions in a more critical and substantive analysis of the readings themselves. The outline below simply provides a method of inquiry that will facilitate a more critical reading of texts under analysis for discussion.

1. What are the basic assumptions that inform the reading?
 - a. What are the major organizing ideas?
 - b. What are the subordinate ideas?
2. What serious questions does the reading raise regarding the nature and purpose of teaching and education?
3. What serious omissions are left out of the article or reading? How do these distort or undermine the author's position?
4. What ideology or world view governs the author's view?

5. In what ways does this article reinforce, extend, challenge, or oppose your own views on schooling? Be specific.

While critical pedagogy is an approach that is, admittedly, politically on the left, this does not mean that students have to agree with what is presented. Students may challenge the material and are expected to make up their own minds about the readings. This class is not about indoctrination but about critical reflection. A good argument (rather than simply an opinion) that challenges the readings will be valued as much as a good argument that supports the readings.

However, critical pedagogy, because of its controversial nature, is not often discussed in university classrooms except in watered-down versions. Thus, in this class we have an opportunity to discuss approaches to teaching and everyday life that are not often given voice in university settings. For instance, the Tucson Unified School District in Arizona recently banned *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, while an earlier edition of my own book, *Life in Schools* was banned in South Africa until apartheid was overthrown in 1994.

In addition to the journal and panel presentation, students are expected to present during the final week of class, a poster session on a critical educator of their choice, and some examples of well-known critical educators are given in the book, *The Art of Critical Pedagogy*. But you can find other choices. Basically, a poster session is when you present visually information about your topic and share that information with an interested audience. So, you will want to use posters, perhaps even video clips, photographs, or other sources of information on your critical educator. Be prepared to answer questions from people visiting your poster session. You may tape this material to the wall, or bring an easel to prop up your posters and half the class not presenting that day will circulate and ask you questions about your poster presentation.

Performing “Critical Rage Pedagogy”

This is an experimental chapter from my book, *Pedagogy of Insurrection*, which I hope will be out in early October. It is a chapter meant to be performed. This will not be graded.

Okay, so let’s summarize this and add the points:

- Journal reflections on the readings and class discussions.... 35 points
- Poster Session..... 33 points
- Panel Discussions.....32 points