



American Institute for Creative Education

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EDU 5500 Contemporary Issues in American Education—Syllabus

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Course Description: The course addresses current, divisive issues facing American public schools in the 21st Century, within the framework of the history of educational reform—since the 1890's. The roles and responsibilities of a democratic society to educate all of its citizens are at the heart of this course. The study includes the social-ecological questions of control, standards, curriculum, and pedagogy. The No Child Left Behind law, high-stakes testing, accountability, Annual Yearly Progress (AYP), teacher merit pay, charter schools, the privatization of public education, and the polarization and politicization of education will be considered, as well as the impact of school unions and private foundations' influence on public education.

Course Schedule—posted at www.aiceonline.com. This is offered as a blended course (intensive seminar schedule, coupled with independent study) and as a Guided Independent Study (GIS).

Course credit:

- 4.5 CEUs (counts as one course toward teacher recertification—Maine DOE.
- 3 semester hours of graduate credit through our academic partnership with the College of Graduate Studies, Plymouth State University. (Students who desire university graduate credit will negotiate additional course requirements, in advance, with the professor.)
- This course may be taken for repeat credit.

The AICE Philosophy of Teaching and Learning:

Philosophically, AICE is committed to a progressive education world-view, informed by a critical pedagogical model of inquiry-based learning.

Course Rationale:

The American Institute for Creative Education (AICE) offers this course with the belief that educators in the 21st Century classroom face tremendous challenges in their multi-faceted roles as teachers in the inclusive classroom.

Required Reading:

- Darling-Hammond, L. (2009). *The Flat World and Education: How America's Commitment to Equity Will Determine Our Future (Multicultural Education)*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Ravitch, D. (2001). *Left Back: A Century of Battles over School Reform*. New York: Simon & Schuster.
- Ravitch, D. (2010). *The Death and Life of Great American School Reform: How Testing and Choice are Undermining Education*. New York: Basic Books.

Recommended Reading:

- Bellah, R. N., Madsen, R., Sullivan, W. M., Swidler, A., & Tipton, S. M. (2007). *Habits of the Heart: Individualism and Commitment in American Life* (3 ed.). Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Compton, M., Weiner, L., *The Global Assault on Teaching, Teachers, and their Unions: Stories for Resistance*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008.

The Study

- Reading—Students will read the required textbooks and other assigned readings.
- The Process Journal—Participants will write about their reading, thinking, and learning throughout the course. Weekly submission of the process journal is required. Critical reflection responses are 2-3 pages (minimum). Students will use APA standards for writing.
- The Experiential Learning Project is negotiated with the instructor.
- Weekly email correspondence with the instructor is required throughout the entire study until all work is completed. Email correspondence is due weekly by Sunday, 7 PM. This includes the weekly process journal submission.
- The Summative Paper—Participants will also write a substantial, thoughtful Summative Critical Reflection Paper at the conclusion of the course.
- A Time/Activity Log is required.
- Students are required to have a Facebook account to communicate with the professor and their peers for the purposes of asynchronous class discussion.

Evaluation of Student Work:

- Completion of all reading and critical reflection writing assignments – 50% of grade
- Experiential Learning Project – 25 % of the grade
- Summative Paper. 25% of the grade
- A – 90 to 100 % (Work exceeds standards.)
- B – 80 to 89% (Work meets standards.)
- Below 80% - No credit will be issued. This applies to CEU students as well as graduate students. This study is more than “clock hours.” It requires professional development level work.

Course Conceptual Framework:

AICE affirms the values of CHECK—the Conceptual Framework of the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE)

- **C**ommitment—We define commitment as dedication, perseverance, and individual and social responsibility. Our [students] are committed to lifelong learning and to increasing self-knowledge. They are committed to the beliefs that all students can learn and that education has the power to transform individuals and the greater society. Our [students] recognize the responsibility of educators to take a thoughtful and critical stance towards themselves and their profession.
- **H**olism—Our holism perspective involves affirming diversity and understanding the ‘whole child’ within the family, community, and cultural context. It includes working towards an integrated curriculum and recognizing how we as educators are shaped by our own experiences and culture. This holistic perspective shapes our larger vision.
- **E**xperience—Experience allows us to put theory into practice. We provide opportunities for experiential learning that swerves communities and schools so that our [students] can do the same for their students. Experience also involves constantly renewing skills and knowledge within one’s discipline.
- **C**ollaboration—Collaboration involves working with students, families and colleagues effectively within the school context toward shared goals, demonstrating respect and openness toward diverse perspectives, and confronting and resolving conflicts effectively and respectfully. Collaboration enhances both teaching and learning, and is an essential part of developing the capacity to lead.
- **K**nowledge—Knowledge refers to understanding the theory, content, methods, materials and technologies of one’s field, as well as understanding child and adolescent development, learning processes, and student motivation within the familial, community, and cultural contexts in which students grow and learn. Teaching that engages all learners combines a knowledge of students in which children grow and learn. Teaching that engages all learners combines a knowledge of students and one’s subjects within the cultural, social and institutional context.

Course Policies

Attendance and Participation: Students must be present and actively participate in all required sessions, do all assignments online and in the intensive sessions, and maintain the Time/Activity Log.

Diversity: Ours is a diverse nation founded upon the protection of rights and liberties regardless of race, gender, ethnicity, religion, social economic status, politics, or sexual orientation. Choosing to teach or lead in public schools means accepting the moral and ethical responsibilities inherent in building a strong democratic republic. In this course you will have the opportunity to bring global resources into your classroom.

Disabilities: If you have a disability for which you may be requesting an accommodation, please contact the instructor prior to the first session.

Academic Integrity: All work must be original and comply with the Student Conduct Code of AICE.

Academic Misconduct: Any act that violates the academic integrity of The American Institute for Creative Education is considered academic misconduct. The matter will be referred to the office of the Dean.

Cheating

- The copying from another student's work, computer files, and listings.
- Knowingly using, buying, selling, transporting, or soliciting in its entirety or in part, the contents of a test or other assignment for unauthorized release.
- Substituting for another student or permitting another student to substitute for oneself.

Plagiarism: Plagiarism is the appropriation, theft, purchase, or obtaining by any means another's work, and the unacknowledged submission or incorporation of that work as one's own offered for credit. Appropriation includes the quoting or paraphrasing of another's work without giving credit therefore.