I. Course Description

Catalogue Description - Experientially explores personal philosophical and pedagogical assumptions, including ethical relationship between educators and children, ethical accountability and responsibility, ethos of institutions, professionals role in sustaining ethical standards, and how these challenges guide our lives as citizens in a democracy.

Hours of Lecture or Seminar per week - 3
Hours of Lab or Studio per week - 0

The new professionalism course focuses on both the theory and practice of being a teacher-professional in the current environment. The course aims to provide students the opportunity to explore their own philosophical and pedagogical assumptions, while examining a broad range of issues including the principled relationship between educators and children, ethical accountability and responsibility, the ethos of institutions, the professional’s role in sustaining ethical standards, as well as how each of these challenges guide our lives as citizens in a democracy and in a global society. The class is rooted in exploring the experiences that allow us to determine our own actions with the desire to make intentional moral decisions that are deeply rooted in both philosophy and pedagogy.

Teachers are active in professional relationships with multiple people. Engaging in the exploration of the best practices that help children learn, while also understanding the on-going professional development that addresses and challenges the why and how teachers do what they do is more complex than ever. Being a teacher is more than being a “technician” working mindlessly at the command of others (Sizer & Sizer, 1999). Teachers should always be in critical dialogue, not only with themselves and their lived experiences, but also with other professionals and constituents. It is a never-ending process of evolution and analysis.

In such a world, teachers might question the rationale of their decisions: Why is this practice best? Does it serve all my students well? Do these practices open doors for growth, or do they thwart learning? What is my role and responsibility as a teacher in all of this? And as a result, we should be able to come back to ask: how should I respond in such a way as to be an advocate for
children, their families, and our community? The aim of the course is to create a space for this
dialogue, rooted squarely in your work and world, a place where you bring your thoughts and
experiences together for critical analysis and dialogue.

NATURE OF COURSE DELIVERY:

This course includes a variety of learning activities: discussions in seminar format, text-
based/multi-media presentation of course materials, experiential learning activities including
teacher action research, interactive assignments, cooperative learning group activities, online
discussions and activities, and lecture.

II. Student Outcomes

Through this course, students will be expected to:

- Re-frame practice in the language and action of ethical behavior or the “new
  professionalism”.
- Explore, use, and critique the language and perspectives of such experiences and
  practices.
- Provide a moral frame for:
  a. Action/teacher research
  b. Reflection
  c. Critical dialogue in a community of learners
  d. Commitment to social justice and opportunities for all learners
- Address personal agency and structural aspects of being an autonomous professional.
- Understand the implications of commitment to social justice and cultural diversity for
  teaching and learning.

III. Relationship to Program Goals and Professional Organizations

This course, and the structure of new professionalism, challenges us to reframe our expectations
that good teachers are made – not born (Campbell, 1993). Our experiences, our intent to do good
work, and our understanding of the world around us, are not enough to ensure that we are strong
teachers. Critical reflection of our philosophy and practice ensures that we are conscious of
decisions that we make and we can recognize the short and long-term ramifications of our
actions. This course establishes a rigorous framework to delve into the harder questions of ethical
and moral teaching.

Additionally, national professional standards as set by the agencies which accredit teachers
training and professional development (NCATE, NBPTS, and others) increasingly emphasize
reflective practice, conceptions of teacher accountability based on authentic assessment of student
learning, attention to the diverse needs of learners, and developing mutual respect and community
in classrooms. These are also the concerns and focus of this course. In addition such research
meets the goals of professional standards set by the 21st century recommendations and aligns with
the core values of the Graduate School of Education at GMU.


21st century standards provide guidance to educators who are working to make sure the K-12
education system provides all students with rich core content and 21st century skills. The
framework defined in this document presents a holistic view of 21st century teaching and
learning. It presents a vision for 21st century student outcomes (a blending of content knowledge, specific skills, expertise and literacies) and the support systems that are needed to produce these outcomes.

Guide and Lead Others
· Use interpersonal and problem-solving skills to influence and guide others toward a goal
· Leverage strengths of others to accomplish a common goal
· Inspire others to reach their very best via example and selflessness
· Demonstrate integrity and ethical behavior in using influence and power

Be Responsible to Others
· Act responsibly with the interests of the larger community in mind

Civic Literacy
· Participating effectively in civic life through knowing how to stay informed and understanding governmental processes
· Exercising the rights and obligations of citizenship at local, state, national and global levels
· Understanding the local and global implications of civic decision

Analyze Media
· Understand both how and why media messages are constructed, and for what purposes
· Examine how individuals interpret messages differently, how values and points of view are included or excluded, and how media can influence beliefs and behaviors
· Apply a fundamental understanding of the ethical/legal issues surrounding the access and use of media

IV. Course Materials

Required Texts


Required Chapters


Required Additional Material

- Indykids
- Teaching Tolerance
- T.H.E. Journal

* Please note: Other readings, media, films, journal articles and miscellaneous content may be assigned as necessary.

V. Course Requirements

In addition to required readings, reflective log entries, and written assignments (see below), the course involves active participation in class meetings and in weekly school-based team meetings.

**Readings.** Readings are carefully chosen to stimulate thinking and dialogue. Some are chosen to challenge your thinking about particular issues. Others are chosen to dialogue with those challenges. Our hope and intention is that you will engage in dialogue around these readings and others you may want to bring to our deliberations. These readings will not contain answers; rather they are designed to raise questions. Any “answers” we come to will arise out of our deliberations as we compare ideas in readings with classroom experience and practical wisdom. Evidence of incorporation of critical interaction with readings into on-line (Blackboard) discussions, team meetings, reflective log, and papers is the essential element of documenting that one has engaged with the readings.

**Weekly team meetings.** Teams are expected to meet together at least once a week throughout the year (in their school or in another designated location) to discuss all aspects of the research process and progress. These regular team meetings allow teams to develop a supportive collaborative research space to engage in critical dialogue over research and teaching issues, readings, and assignments. Minutes from these meetings should be turned in to the team’s mentor via email or blackboard as determined by your mentor within 48 hours of your team meeting.

**Mentors.** Each school team will be assigned a faculty mentor who will work with and support team members and collaborative processes as the research progresses. Your mentor will attend your weekly team meeting approximately two times per semester and will be available on Blackboard or e-mail, phone, or by appointment. If you have any concerns, problems, discoveries, or anything else that you want to discuss with your mentor, please don’t hesitate to contact him/her.
Attendance and Participation in Class Activities are essential. This program is built on the assumption that teachers have much to learn from each other as they bring their experience and practical wisdom to bear on new learning contexts and new problems. Each class day is equivalent to approximately three weeks of class in a traditional program. It is important to be on time and to be engaged. Coming late or leaving early undermines the possibility of learning from your peers and helping your peers learn. Research on learning suggests that students learn best when they are actively engaged with the material to be learned, when they have opportunities to operate collectively and collaboratively, when faculty address students’ various learning styles and multiple intelligences, and when faculty help students see why their subjects and assignments are relevant and important. We plan class days to maximize the likelihood that you will encounter ideas in a variety of ways. We also build a lot of collaborative activity into our class days. When you are absent or not engaged, you deprive yourself and others of the chance to construct knowledge together.

VI. Course Assignments

1. End of Class Reflection. Providing your feedback after each class day offers you an opportunity to revisit and reflect on your experience of the class day. It also gives the faculty valuable information about how you experience the curriculum and where you are in your thinking. We expect that you will keep a copy of your class feedback from the September Class day to the May class Day (you will have to cut and paste your feedback from Blackboard into a Document in order to keep these entries – Keeping your feedback is your responsibility). We will ask you to perform a self-assessment on these reflections a few times during the year.

2. Reflective Log. Reflective Log entries are a requirement of the IET program and are designed to help you think about your experience as a moral professional. Continue to maintain a reflective log throughout the year. You are to write in your reflective log at least twice a week. When your school is in session, one of the entries each week should be field notes from your classroom or school. For the other entry, usually you will choose your reflection topic. You must write at least one entry on every required reading (except those assigned to be read during class days), reflecting on the reading’s impact on your thinking/learning and teaching. You should also use your reflective log to reflect on your research: in addition to reflecting on observations of your students and on your practice, you should use the reflective log to record questions, puzzlements, ideas, and insights. Later, reflect on patterns you are seeing in your data, how what you are finding relates to the work of others, and how your question and/or data collection strategies are changing as your research progresses. Bring your reflective log to every class day and you will be sharing and discussing selected field notes with others. Make it a habit to come to team meetings prepared to share selected reflective log entries with your teammates, particularly about the readings and research process.

3. Performance Based Assessment: Letter Writing Project

Part One: Blackboard Blog

The first phase of this project is to select three letters from Paulo Freire’s book Teachers as cultural workers: Letters to those who dare to teach to read and reflect upon. Over the course of the month between September 19 and October 17th, write three blog entries to post

Please post one blog a week – each blog should be between 500-700 words and should engage the reader in a discussion about the letter your read from Freire’s book.

**Due Date:**

**Part Two: Letter to an Educator**

The second phase of this paper is to complete a letter of your own to an educator that addresses some of the issues you have been reflecting about and also addresses some of the same ideas in Nieto’s chapter. Please ensure this letter is between 3-5 pages.

**Due Date:** Submit electronically in Blackboard under Assignments your letter by December 4th by 11:55 p.m.

**VII. Evaluation**

The following rubric should allow you to understand the sense, scope and expectations for the Letter Writing Project. Each of these will be answered by one of the following: Meets or Does Not Meet requirements.

1. Required work is complete and punctual (the latter is important in case revisions are needed).
2. Written work is clear and coherent with attention to grammar, mechanics, style and spelling.
3. Written work reflects familiarity with and reflection on assigned readings.
4. Did you work to surface and question your assumptions?
5. Required work demonstrates efforts on your part to connect what you are learning to your professional practice.
6. Active, knowledgeable (you’ve read assigned readings), reflective, and generous participation as members of a learning community.

**VIII. Summary of Grades**

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<td>Reflective Log Entries</td>
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<td>Team meeting minutes</td>
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<td>Letter Writing Project - Blogs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Letter Writing Project - Letter to the educator</td>
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**Grade Distribution**

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IX. Policies and Information

Attendance Policy

You have joined this program with a team of teachers with whom you make a commitment of mutual social and intellectual support for the duration of this program. We design our pedagogy to accommodate your busy lives. We check your school division calendars to minimize conflicts with important school division events.

Each of our eight-hour class days is equivalent to three weeks in a regular semester course that meets three hours per week. Faculty and teachers are accountable to the State of Virginia, GMU, and the Graduate School of Education for meeting the expectations of class time and for ensuring that persons awarded the Master of Arts in New Professional Studies – Teaching have met their obligations. By disposition, we are not bureaucratic, neither do we equate hours spent in class as a valid measure of learning. Nevertheless, we do track attendance, so you need to be sure you attend class on class days. You cannot meet your commitments to your teammates and your obligations to the program when you are not in class on class days. To ignore absences is unfair to people who put aside other activities to come. It is a disservice to the work of teams.

We do not want to adjudicate reasons why you may decide to absent yourself from the learning community. If you are going to miss class:
1. We need you to inform us in advance in writing (email will do)
2. You will need to get your team’s agreement to help you recreate the experience you have missed (it is not enough to know what was done; you need to have the experience with your team)
3. The teaching team will require written documentation from the team that the experience has been replicated.
4. Create, complete and turn in a reflection on the alternative learning experience within 14 days of the missed class

Failing to take this personal initiative and responsibility will result in unsatisfactory completion of the participation requirements embedded in each course.

You are able to miss 8 hours per year without affecting your grade. Beyond the 8 hours all absences need to be discussed with the teaching team in order to continue in the program.

Inclement Weather Policy

Check the GMU website http://www.gmu.edu/ for closing or call the GMU Information Line (703-993-1000) to hear announcements of any closings. Occasionally, IET will hold classes on Saturdays when the University is officially closed. Please check our Blackboard site for an opening or closing decision from the IET faculty. Makeup class days are worked into IET’s annual calendar.

Change of Grade Policy
A policy for graduate students entitled “Change of Grades” is printed in the University catalog. The catalog states: “Additional work of any type submitted to improve a grade after the final grade has been assigned and sent to the Office of the Registrar is never accepted.”

There are three possible scenarios that may result in a grade change: (1) if professors allow students to resubmit improved assignments, these must be handed in prior to the final grade; (2) if there is a medical, personal, or family condition, the student may be given an “IN” (incomplete), which allows extra time to complete work (until the middle of the next semester); and (3) if a student appeals a grade he or she feels is unfair.

GSE Syllabus Statements of Expectations

The Graduate School of Education (GSE) expects that all students abide by the following:

Students are expected to exhibit professional behavior and dispositions. See gse.gmu.edu for a listing of these dispositions.

Students must follow the guidelines of the University Honor Code. See http://www.gmu.edu/catalog/apolicies/#TOC_H12 for the full honor code.

Students must agree to abide by the university policy for Responsible Use of Computing. See http://mail.gmu.edu and click on Responsible Use of Computing at the bottom of the screen.

Students with disabilities who seek accommodations in a course must be registered with the GMU Disability Resource Center (DRC) and inform the instructor, in writing, at the beginning of the semester. See www.gmu.edu/student/drc or call 703-993-2474 to access the DRC.