

**GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY  
COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT  
Graduate School of Education**

**EDUC 892 001  
Social Justice and Equity in International Education  
Spring 2010  
4:30-7:10 PM/Wednesdays  
Krug Hall 19**

**PROFESSOR**

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**COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

**A. Prerequisites**

EDUC 895

**B. Course description from the university catalog**

Examines ideological, cultural, and systemic structural inequities in various educational settings at national and international levels. Focuses on educational practices that promote equity and social change throughout the world.

What is social justice and how it is relevant to international education? Social justice, as a construct, evolved over time to encompass issues of justice, fairness, equity and law becoming centered on ideas of how a society engages in the “division and distributions of rewards and burdens” (Zadja, Majhanovich, Rust, & Sabina, 2006). Beyond that, social justice is also a call to action, engaging people to seek out their rights and learn to speak truth to power.

When social justice is linked to education, the complexity grows and becomes even more nuanced in terms of the international arena. Geopolitical engagements, economic stratification, religious divisions, gender inequities, and marginalization of cultural groups are just some of the themes impacting the content, delivery and outcomes of education. Learners in almost every country of the world are being educated in systems that have deep-rooted legacies framed around inequitable resources, marginal success, and sustained disempowerment in terms of their path to achieving a high-quality education. This course will seek to untangle the issues surrounding social justice and international education, allowing for a better understanding of how education can be a tool to shape a fairer and more just world for all learners.

## **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 interactive assignments, cooperative learning group activities, online discussions and activities, and lecture.

## **LEARNER OUTCOMES:**

**This course is designed to enable students to:**

1. Understand the fundamental ideals and principles of social justice from an international perspective.
2. Speak to the critical components of social injustice and how it affects international education.
3. Demonstrate how economic, social and political development is connected to issues of social injustice in the field of education.
4. Build a base of knowledge around the various factors hindering the equitable delivery of education in certain cultural, national, religious and economic contexts.
5. Explore the nature of hope in narratives of programs, policies and people who are actively seeking to create a more socially just field of education from an international perspective.
6. Collaborate to develop personal principles of social justice as an international educator.
7. Engage with learning to be both an activist and a scholar through deeper understanding of social justice in international education through the preparation of a research paper.

## **RELATIONSHIP TO PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS**

International and comparative education is a growing and important field within education and as a result there are a growing number of organizations that are oriented to specific international education audiences, such as the NAFSA: The Association of International Educators, the Association for the Advancement of International Education (AAIE), which serves international schools; the Institute of International Education (IIE), The Alliance for International Education (AIE) focused on developing partnerships between higher education institutions and international schools; the Comparative and International Education Society (CIES), who's purpose is to promote cross-cultural understanding and social development through international education research, policy and practices, and many others. This course addresses some of the aims and goals of the above international education organizations and is

intended for policymakers, practitioners and researchers who are interested in international education.

This course is also aligned with the following vision statements: GSE Priorities--Diversity and Equity, and Children, Families and Communities, CEHD's Center for Language and Culture (CLC) and the National Association for Multicultural Education.

In addition, this course engages with the American Educational Research Association's (AERA) foci on social justice to "to disseminate and promote the use of research knowledge and stimulate interest in research on social justice issues related to education" (AERA website, 2009).

### **REQUIRED TEXTS:**

Ayers, W., Quinn, T., & Stovall, D. (Eds.). (2009). *Handbook of Social Justice in Education*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Sen, A (1999). *Development as Freedom*. New York, NY: Anchor Books.

Selected readings from:

1. International Review of Education, Volume 52, Nos. 1-2, 2006.
2. Comparative Education Review
3. Comparative Education
4. International Journal of Educational Research
5. Other readings as assigned

### **COURSE REQUIREMENTS, PERFORMANCE-BASED ASSESSMENT, AND EVALUATION CRITERIA:**

#### **A. Requirements**

- a. Participation:** This is defined as full attendance, active informed involvement in class discussions and activities, demonstration of positive and collaborative disposition towards colleagues, and satisfactory completion of all project work on time. A major part of course participation is reading, presentation and facilitation of assigned course material.
- b. Discussion questions:** To facilitate and engage students to be empowered in the direction of their own learning, each student will be expected to provide 2 discussion questions to engage their colleagues in class for at least 10 sessions. These questions will be sent to the professor by noon on the days class is held for dissemination.
- c. News Articles:** Students will be assigned a partner and will each provide three news articles on international youth activities related to social justice for classmates to read in April.
- d. Book review:** Students will be expected to choose a scholarly book and prepare an academically oriented review where the critical learnings will be shared with

peers in class as well as prepare for a collaborative presentation in class (More details on the assignment below).

- e. **Geographic issue profile:** Students will select a particular social justice issue and set it in the context of a country of their choice, or students will choose a country and select a social justice issue pertinent to that country to explore. Papers will explore the nature of the problem, it's history in the country, the policies that alleviate or sustain the injustice, and it's impact on education (More details on the assignment below).
- f. **Final Research Paper:** Students will prepare a scholarly paper that addresses a specific issue addressing the content of the course (More details on the assignment below).

**Final Grades will be determined by:**

1. Participation	14%	14 points
2. News articles (3 articles)	3%	3 points
3. Discussion questions 2 points per questions	20%	20 points
4. Book review	15%	15 points
5. Book review panel	3%	3 points
6. Geographic Issue Paper	15%	15 points
7. Research paper	30%	30 points
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100 points</b>

**B. Performance-based assessments**

The book review and the geographic issue profile will be the performance-based assessments.

**C. Criteria for evaluation**

Since this is a doctoral level course, high quality work is expected of all participants. Attendance at all classes for the entire class is a course expectation. In order to qualify for a final grade of A+, a participant enrolled in EDUC 895 must (in addition to scoring the maximum possible points) participate in all class discussions, activities and projects. When absent from class, participants are responsible for obtaining the material covered in class and handing in any work that is due. All papers will follow APA guidelines.

All course requirements will be assessed using a scoring rubrics and/or specific guidelines. All required coursework are due at the beginning of class on the day they are due. Coursework submitted late will automatically receive a one third reduction in total points earned (one full letter grade lower). The grades in this course will be distributed as follows.

## D. Grading scale

A+ = 100 points

A = 95-99 points

A- = 90-94 points

B+ = 85-89 points

B = 80-84

C and below – Not acceptable for graduate credit

## COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT STATEMENT OF EXPECTATIONS:

All students must abide by the following:

1. Students are expected to exhibit professional behavior and dispositions. See <http://gse.gmu.edu/facultystaffres/profdisp.htm> for a listing of these dispositions.
2. Students must follow the guidelines of the University Honor Code. See <http://www.gmu.edu/catalog/apolicies/#Anchor12> for the full honor code.
3. Students must agree to abide by the university policy for Responsible Use of Computing. See <http://www.gmu.edu/facstaff/policy/newpolicy/1301gen.html>. Click on responsible Use of Computing Policy at the bottom of the screen.
4. Students with disabilities who seek accommodations in a course must be registered with the GMU Office of Disability Services (ODS) and inform the instructor, in writing, at the beginning of the semester. See <http://www2.gmu.edu/dpt/unilife/ods/> or call 703-993-2474 to access the ODS.

## Assignment Guidelines

### Book Review

A book review “is a form of literary criticism in which a book is analyzed based on content, style, and merit” (Wikipedia, 2009). Additionally, the purpose of this book review is to engage you to take on a social justice issue from the perspective of how an author presents the information and how the information builds your understanding around the topic in a more thoughtful way. For this review you will be asked to select a book of your choice that is written for an academic, policy, or activist audience, explore a few key ideas and respond in a way that mimics the books reviews in a scholarly journal.

The review will be worth 15 points and should be between 2,000-3,000 words and will be graded on five 3-point categories:

- a. Relevance to the field and succinct details of highlights of the book;
- b. Understanding of author’s perspective and intent in authoring the book;
- c. Analysis in context of other literature and knowledge in the field; and
- d. Critique of style as resulted in learning and to the intended audience;
- e. Critical reflection on your learning as a result of both reading the book and writing the review.

## **Geographic Issue Paper**

You may initiate this project in one of two ways – by selecting a social justice issue and placing it in the context of a specific country, or by selecting a country and highlighting a specific social justice issue within the country.

Either way, you will be expected to prepare a paper (between 3,500-5,000 words) that will be graded on five key elements each worth 3 points:

- a. Provide a clear and thoughtful analysis of the issue.
- b. Explore the nature of the issue in the chosen country.
- c. Delve into the critiques, constraints, and scope of the issue in your chosen country through the lens of education as well as other relevant lenses.
- d. Present policies, programs, and practices that might be evident in working to dismantle or elevate the issue – especially through the lens of education.
- e. Offer creative solutions and/or understandings on the nature of the issue and how you might reflect on the future of the issue in the context of your own interest.

## **Final Research Paper and Presentation**

The final requirement is a research paper that is broadly defined here as to give each student an opportunity to conduct an in depth examination of specific issues or topics related to international education and social justice.

As doctoral students, the project remains open to your interpretation to be helpful in your dissertation development, and students may propose a major project of their own choosing. These papers should be 15-20 pages in length, and topics must be approved in advance by the instructor. Students will be expected to present the paper at the end of the semester.

The presentation will be conducted in the manner of an international conference panel. Three panels will be created and each person will be responsible for a 10-minute presentation that addresses the most salient and critical information that would be of interest based on your audience. Time will be monitored, and a moderator will be randomly selected for each panel from the audience. Use of “props”, strong presentation skills, and audience engagement are **STRONGLY** encouraged.

## PROPOSED CLASS SCHEDULE

Date	Topic/Learning Experiences	Readings and Assignments
January 20	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Introduction</li> <li>2. Syllabus</li> <li>3. Opening assessment</li> <li>4. Generating a social justice definition</li> <li>5. Generating discussion questions (using Ayers Chapter)</li> <li>6. Video – Markets and Social Justice – How is education linked?</li> </ol>	No readings assigned for this class.
January 27	<p>Freedom as justice – The larger picture of social justice within the framework of freedom</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Understanding Sen’s conceptualization of freedom</li> <li>2. Navigating between development, freedom, and justice.</li> <li>3. Creating a concept map in triads.</li> </ol>	United Nations (2006) Section 1 (See Blackboard) Sen, Chapters 1, 2, 3, and 6
February 3	Understanding the ideologies and perspectives of social justice without and within education.	Zadjia et al (2006) (see Blackboard) Ayers et al, Chapter 3 & 4, 34 Gewirtz (2009)(see Blackboard)  <b>BOOK REVIEW TITLE SELECTED            BOOK REVIEW PANEL and SCHEDULE            ESTABLISHED</b>
February 10	Social justice and political and economic systems	Ayers Chapters 2 and 12, Part 7 Introduction Sen, Chapters 4 and 5 United Nations (2006) Section 3 (See Blackboard) Levin (1984) (See Blackboard) Chan Tibergien (2006) (See Blackboard)
February 17	The facets of injustice – gender	Ayers, 9 and 23 Sen, Chapter 8 Stromquist (1996) (See Blackboard)  <b>GEOGRAPHIC ISSUE TOPIC SELECTED –            PLEASE PLAN ON SHARING THE IDEA IN            CLASS.</b>

February 24	<p>The facets of injustice – language, culture and religion</p> <p>WORKING TIME INCLUDED FOR SMALL GROUP SHARING OF IDEAS FOR FINAL RESEARCH PAPER.</p>	<p>Ayers et al, Chapter 13  Sen, Chapter 10  Petherbridge-Hernandez &amp; Latiner Raby (1993) (See Blackboard)  Halstead (2004) (See Blackboard)  McCarty (2003) (See Blackboard)</p> <p><b>BOOK REVIEW DUE</b></p>
March 3	<p><b>No Class today – but discussion questions generated and not used thus far will be posted for online discussion this week (2 posts each will be expected for full participation grades).</b></p>	<p><b>Please also post the review on Blackboard for your colleagues to read and prepare questions for your presentation.</b></p>
March 10	<p><b>SPRING BREAK</b></p>	<p>NO CLASS</p>
March 17	<p>The facets of injustice – ability and sexuality  Midpoint Assessment</p> <p><b>Book review sharing (3+3 presenters with 30/30 minute facilitated discussion around the book)</b></p>	<p>Ayers et al, Chapter 18, 20, 24, 25  Sefa Dei (2005) (See Blackboard)</p> <p><b>RESEARCH TOPIC PAPER SELECTED  Please plan on turning 1 page on your selected topic.</b></p>
March 24	<p>The facets of injustice – communities in conflict</p> <p><b>Book review sharing (3+3 presenters with 30/30 minute facilitated discussion around the book)</b></p>	<p>Ayers et al, Chapter 11, 30,  Kraak (1991) (See Blackboard)  Sen, Chapter 7</p> <p><b>PAIRS ASSIGNED FOR ARTICLES FOR DISTRIBUTION NEXT WEEK FOR APRIL 7<sup>TH</sup> CLASS (CAN PAIR UP EARLIER IF YOU ALL WANT – ONE GROUP OF THREE ALLOWED)</b></p>
March 31	<p>The facets of injustice – ethnicity, race, and caste</p> <p><b>Book review sharing (3+2 presenters with 30/20 minute facilitated discussion around the book)</b></p> <p>If you have concerns about making copies, please see/email me so I can arrange for those copies to be made.</p>	<p>Ayers et al, Chapter 8 and 10  Freeman (2006) (See Blackboard)  Psacharopoulos (1992) (See Blackboard)</p> <p><b>GEOGRAPHIC ISSUE PROFILE DUE  ARTICLES TO BE READ FOR NEXT WEEK DISTRIBUTED  (EACH PAIR SHOULD BRING ENOUGH COPIES OF THEIR ARTICLE FOR EVERYONE IN THE CLASS)</b></p>



April 7	The role of youth in social justice – where idealism and powerlessness meet.	News articles on youth and social justice distributed from last week for readings this week.
April 14	Structural injustice – role of teachers and schools	Ayers et al, Chapter 39, 41, 50, 51 and Response to Part 8. Potentially one more reading TBD.  <b>LAST DAY TO SUBMIT DRAFT OF RESEARCH PAPER FOR FEEDBACK</b>
April 21	1. Structural injustice in education – Balancing the needs of the few with the many and the many with the few 2. Research Presentations	Ayers et al, Chapter 36, Sen, Chapters 11 and 12 Geo-Jaja (2006) (see Blackboard), Mundy (2006) (See Blackboard)
April 28	Social justice in practice – policy and practice Research presentations	Ayers et al, Chapters 7, 38, 39, 41, and Response to Part 7. Potentially one more reading TBD.  <b>FINAL RESEARCH PAPER DUE</b>
May 5	Social justice in practice – future directions – curriculum, content, pedagogy, and epistemology. Research presentations Course evaluations Final assessment	United Nations (2006) Section 6 (See Blackboard) Ayers et al, Chapter 35 Rizvi (2004) (See Blackboard)

## RESEARCH PAPER ASSESSMENT RUBRIC

Grade Points	Quality of Written Work	Completeness of Work	Class Presentation
A+ 100	Exceptional quality and insight; a rare & valuable contribution to the field.	100% complete	Clear description of the topic and its importance; strong evidence of critical reflection; delivery is engaging and interactive; strong evidence of preparation & organization; extensive resources provided.
A 99-95	Convincingly on target; demonstrates evidence of understanding and application; clear and concise writing; the reader is not distracted by grammar and/or spelling and citation errors.	Accurate & seamless writing; virtually a complete product	Clear description and importance; critical reflection apparent; delivery is good and somewhat engaging; evidence of preparation & organization; some resources provided.
A- 94-90	On target with evidence of understanding; additional need for clarification; more than four errors in grammar, spelling or citations	Some shortcomings, none that distract from overall work	Description of topic; little evidence of reflection; delivery is okay; little engagement; some evidence of organization & preparation; limited resources provided.
B+ 89 –85	Competent; provides credible evidence of understanding and application; some lapses in organization, citations and/or writing clarity.	Moderate shortcomings; minor elements missing that distract the instructor’s ability to see the product as a whole.	Student states the topic but fails to describe importance. No apparent critical reflection; Delivery is understandable but not enthusiastic or engaging; evidence of preparation is not clear; very limited resources provided.
B 80 – 84	Evidence of understanding presented but incomplete; writing indicates gaps in logic; grammar and/or spelling errors distract the reader. Weak or insufficient citations.	Evidence of effort but one or more significant and important points are missed or not addressed.	Student makes a presentation without sufficient planning or preparation; topic is unclear; importance is not identified; delivery is difficult to follow; no indication of preparation; few if any resources presented.
C 79 and below	Undergraduate level and quality; unsophisticated; assignments show little or not connection to course content or concepts.	Insufficient evidence of understanding and application; important elements missing or difficult to find.	No presentation is attempted.
F	Unacceptable	Difficult to recognize as the assigned task.	No constructive participation; destructive; demeaning toward other points of view.