

Rhode Island College
Feinstein School of Education and Human Development
Department of Educational Studies
Fall 2010

FNED 546.01
Contexts of Schooling
4 credits

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Office: HBS 220
Office Hours: TuTh 2:30-3:30

Class Location: HBS 221
Class Meeting Time: Tu 4-7:50

Course Information

a. Prerequisite: Graduate standing or permission of the department chair

b. Texts:

- (1) Kozol, Jonathan. *Savage Inequalities: Children in America's Schools*. New York: Harper Perennial, 1991.
- (2) Paley, Vivian. *White Teacher*, 2nd edition. Cambridge, MA: Harvard, 2000.
- (3) Sizer, Theodore. *Horace's Compromise: The Dilemma of the American High School*, 2nd edition. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1997.

Course Descriptions

Catalogue

Integrating class work and a fifteen-hour field component, students examine the social and cultural forces that affect schools. Students cannot receive credit for both Foundations of Education 541 and 546.

Relationship to Professional Program

FNED 546 is designed for students enrolled in initial teacher certification programs at the graduate level. The course combines an interdisciplinary approach with field-based observations to explore the forces -- social, cultural, political, economic, historical, philosophical, and legal -- which affect education.

Relationship to the FSEHD Conceptual Framework

As stated in **Developing Reflective Practitioners**, the Conceptual Framework of the FSEHD, reflective practitioners possess "a critical understanding of the contexts of schooling" which helps them to "develop an informed basis for their professional decision-making" (20-21). The course "Contexts of Schooling" advances this aim by contributing to the professional knowledge base of prospective educators in each of the areas represented by the Four Themes of the Conceptual Framework: Knowledge, Pedagogy, Diversity, and Professionalism. In particular, it helps students to view schools from a multicultural and global perspective, uphold democratic values of caring and respect for persons, and advocate as professionals on behalf of the students, families, and communities they serve.

Course Objectives/Outcomes

(With relevant standards from (1) the Conceptual Framework of the Feinstein School of Education and Human Development (FSEHD) and (2) the Rhode Island Beginning Teacher Standards (RIBTS).)

- to reflect upon the roles of history, politics, and culture in shaping contemporary American educational policy and practice (FSEHD: General Knowledge, Knowledge of Contexts; RIBTS: 1-General Knowledge)
- to question assumptions about the purposes of schooling, the student-teacher relationship, and the role of schools in promoting or hindering the democratic way of life (FSEHD: Knowledge of Contexts, Professional Ethics; RIBTS: 5-Thinking & Problem Solving)
- to think critically about educational issues, developing well-reasoned opinions and arguments on central issues in education and educational reform (FSEHD: Knowledge of Contexts, Collaboration and Advocacy; RIBTS: 5-Thinking & Problem Solving, 7-Collaboration, 8-Communication)
- to engage in service-learning activities in approved public K-12 schools or other educational institutions serving diverse populations in order to gain insight into the perspectives and experiences of minority students (FSEHD: Knowledge of Contexts, Pedagogy, Assessment, Cultural Diversity, Collaboration and Advocacy; RIBTS: 3- Learning & Development, 4-Diversity, 6-Learning Environment, 7-Collaboration, 9-Assessment)
- to acquire an appreciation of the culture, history, and group differences of major American ethnic subcultures, including African-American, Asian-American, and Latino-American, with implications for schools and classrooms (FSEHD: General Knowledge, Cultural Diversity; RIBTS: 1-General Knowledge, 4-Diversity)
- to examine their own attitudes and approaches to civic responsibility, ethnicity, race, social class, religion, gender, sexual orientation, and exceptionality (FSEHD: Professional Ethics, Collaboration and Advocacy; RIBTS: 11-Professional Standards)

Course Requirements

A. Participation & attendance

Students are responsible for all work and should rely on one another for missed handouts, announcements, assignments, etc. You should get the phone number and/or e-mail address of at least two other class members for this purpose. You are expected to attend all classes, to arrive on time, and to come to class prepared to discuss that week's assignment. Since the success of this course depends in no small measure on the quality of classroom discussions, you are expected to participate in class: both as listener and contributor. (If your natural inclination is towards one more than another, we will all gently nudge you in the appropriate direction.)

B. "Catching the News"

There are many articles in newspapers, in newsmagazines, and on the internet concerning the contexts of schooling. For this assignment, make a file of clippings from various sources. Near the end of the semester, you will submit the one or two most interesting articles along with a brief essay summarizing and reflecting on each (total length: 2-3 pages).

C. Mid-Term Paper

A mid-term paper will ask for your reaction to the material we've covered up until that point. Detailed guidelines will be provided several classes in advance.

D. Service-Learning Component and Paper

Students are required to make approximately eight to ten visits (for fifteen total hours) to a classroom with a diverse student population to observe and help out in the class, to interview the teacher, and to achieve a better understanding of the school within the community. Towards this end, you also are expected to attend a school committee, school improvement team, or SALT meeting sometime during the semester. A synopsis of your experience will be due at the last class meeting. Detailed guidelines will be provided in class.

E. Promising Practices

On Saturday, November 6, RIC is hosting a day-long conference on multicultural education. All students are expected to attend and to write a short paper on their experience. Class will be cancelled (at a time to be announced) to make more room in your schedule. Detailed guidelines will be provided in class.

Evaluation

Class Participation	40%
Catching the News	10%
Mid-Term Paper	20%
SL Component	20%
Promising Practices	10%

References

Books

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- Banks, James A., and Cherry McGee Banks. *Multicultural Education: Issues and Perspectives*. Indianapolis: Wiley Press, 2006.
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- Bennett, William. *Our Children and our Country: Improving America's Schools and Affirming the Common Culture*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1988.
- Bloom, Allan. *The Closing of the American Mind*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1987.
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- Chenoweth, Karin. *"It's Being Done": Academic Success in Unexpected Schools*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard Education Press, 2007.
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- Delpit, Lisa. *Other People's Children: Cultural Conflict in the Classroom*. New York: The New Press, 1995.
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- Epstein, Joyce. *School, Family, and Community Partnerships : Preparing Educators and Improving Schools*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2001.
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- Giboney, Richard A., and Clark D. Webb. *What Every Great Teacher Knows: Practical Principles for Effective Teaching*. Brandon, VT: Holistic Education Press, 1998.
- Gilligan, Carol. *In a Different Voice: Psychological Theory and Women's Development*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1982.
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- Greene, Maxine. *The Dialectic of Freedom*. New York: Teachers College Press, 1988.
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Websites

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www.ed.gov	U.S. Department of Education
www.ed.gov/nclb	No Child Left Behind Act of 2001
www.educationnext.org	Provocative policy analysis
www.edweek.org	Education Week
www.heartland.org	Libertarian policy institute
www.heritage.org	Right-leaning policy institute
www.infoworks.ride.uri.edu	RIDE presentation of SALT data
www.nochildleft.com	Devoted to analysis and critique of NCLB
www.projo.com/education/content/	Providence Journal on education
www.rethinkingschools.org	Left-leaning educational journal
www.ridoe.net	RI Department of Education
www.shankerinstitute.org	Institute named after the late AFT president

Course Schedule, Topics, Reading Assignments
(Subject to Modification)

Tu 8/31	First class & Introductions
Tu 9/7	<i>A Nation at Risk</i> (on-line handout)
Tu 9/14	The Standards Debate (on-line handouts)
Tu 9/21	Rousseau: <i>Emile</i> (on-line handout) Dewey: <i>Democracy & Education</i> (on-line handout)
Tu 9/2	Darling-Hammond: “From Separate But Equal to ‘No Child Left Behind’”; Kohn: “Choices for Children”; Ravitch: “Why I Changed My Mind”; Shor: “Education Is Politics” (on-line handouts)
Tu 10/5	Sizer: <i>Horace’s Compromise</i> , pp. 1-68, 131-171
Tu 10/12	No Class: Tu = M
Tu 10/19	First Paper due
Tu 10/26	Kozol: <i>Savage Inequalities</i> , chs. 2-3
Tu 11/2	No Class: Attend Promising Practices Sa
Sa 11/6	Promising Practices
Tu 11/9	Paley: <i>White Teacher</i> , whole book
Tu 11/16	Southeast Asians (on-line handout) & Catching the News due
Tu 11/23	Shorris: <i>Latinos</i> (on-line handout)
Tu 11/30	Orenstein: <i>School Girls</i> (on-line handout)
Tu 12/7	Final paper due