

SJS 216: EMPOWER II: The Intersections of Race, Class, and Education

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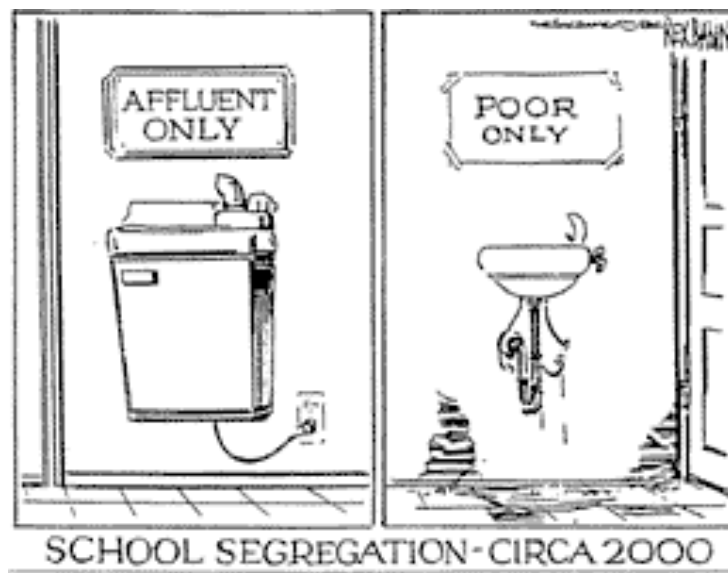
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"The children of the suburbs learn to think and to interrogate reality; the inner-city kids meanwhile are trained for nonreflective acquiescence. One race and social class is educated for the exploration of ideas and for political sagacity and future economic power; the other is prepared for intellectual subordination. The longer this goes on...I'm afraid the vast divide that we already see within American society is going to grow wider."

– Jonathan Kozol

"We can, whenever and wherever we choose, successfully teach all children whose schooling is of interest to us. We already know more than we need to do that. Whether or not we do it must finally depend on how we feel about the fact that we haven't so far."

– Ronald Edmonds



Course Description

This class, SJS 216: EMPOWER II - The Intersections of Race, Class, and Education, is a 2 credit hour Service-Learning course that is designed to build on the concepts introduced in SJS 215: EMPOWER – Educational and Economic Justice and Service-Learning.* The class was designed for students who are involved in the Urban Teaching Cohort, as well as students interested in the social justice aspects of education. The class aims to introduce students to the racial and economic divide between white students and students of color as it relates to education. This class will require students to work with low-income schools or non-profit agencies that serve children while learning about past and present social problems affecting education and educational policy. Additionally, this class will integrate each student's own experience with education into the learning process.

**Note: SJS 215: Empower is a prerequisite of this course, unless you obtain instructor permission.*

Learning Objectives

Through classroom discussions and Service-Learning, students will:

1. Understand the history behind social problems that have caused inequity within the educational system.
2. Be able to articulate how their own privileges and identities have affected their educational experience.
3. Learn about educational reform, and ways to navigate change within the educational system.
4. Be able to connect the socioeconomic and racial realms of identity.
5. Develop the skills, knowledge, attitude, and behaviors that lead to a stronger commitment to service and civic engagement.
6. Learn to connect knowledge gained from service experiences with knowledge gained in the academy through reflection.

Course Purpose and Approach

The purpose of the course is to help students think critically about what race and education mean both for themselves and in the United States of America; to test their assumptions about what public education consists of; to help them see and compare various perspectives on educational reform; and to help them explore the sociological issues at the heart of work in the educational system. It is a course oriented to both critical examination of education as well as helping build skills and strategies for future engagement in political and educational spheres.

This course is based on the principles of Service-Learning, and as such, uses a critical pedagogy approach. Critical pedagogy is an approach to teaching and learning that aims to raise learners' critical consciousness regarding oppressive social conditions. It also assumes that everyone can contribute to the educational experience. The classroom is envisioned as a place where new knowledge, grounded in the experiences of students and teachers alike, is produced through meaningful dialogue. Therefore, instructors and scholars will explore and learn from one another. This experience is designed to use group activities and discussion as catalysts for learning. By forming a network and developing our skills we can begin to create a supportive community for fellow service leaders and volunteers. This collaborative effort can ultimately strengthen service efforts and maximize the benefits both our community and for you as individual students.

Required Readings:

Kozol, J. (2007). *Letters to a Young Teacher*. New York, NY: Crown Publishing Group.

*Letters to a Young Teacher is available on Amazon.com for \$10.20 (Paperback) or \$13.99 (Kindle). If you do not have a Kindle, they have a free Kindle application for iPad/iPhone/iPod Touch and for PC/Mac Computers. It is also available on Nook for \$13.99. The first 3 chapters of the book are posted on Niikha to give students time to order the paperback version if they prefer.

All other readings will be provided on Niikha.

Service-Learning Component

This course has a required Service-Learning experience. As a result, this course has the SL (Service-Learning) Designation. You will gain valuable experience putting theory into practice in the community. Due to the fact that Service-Learning broadens perspectives, enhances critical thinking, and improves communication, graduate schools and employers are increasingly seeking students with Service-Learning and community engagement skills.

What is Service-Learning?

Miami University defines Service-Learning as “an experiential pedagogical practice that uses action and reflection to meet needs and enhance learning through mutually beneficial, reciprocal partnerships.”

Service-Learning involves integrating community service or other forms of engagement into course content. As a result, Miami students are able to gain real world skills and enhance their learning while contributing to the community.

For more information on Service-Learning, please visit <http://www.muohio.edu/servicelearning> or contact the Office of Community Engagement and Service at servicelearning@muohio.edu or 513.529.2961.

Service-Learning Experience

This class will require each student to attend an Urban Plunge in either Hamilton or Middletown. The Urban Plunge will involve learning about the local community as well as serving in a school or non-profit organization. More details will be provided in class.

Assessment and Evaluation

<u>Grading Scale</u>	
A = 93 – 100	C = 73 – 76.99
A- = 90 – 92.99	C- = 70 – 72.99
B+ = 87 – 89.99	D+ = 67 – 69.99
B = 83 – 86.99	D = 63 – 66.99
B- = 80 – 82.99	D- = 60 – 62.99
C+ = 77 – 79.99	F = 59 and below

Course Requirements:

Assignment #1

This I Believe – Due March 21/22

Assignment #2

My Story of Education – Due March April 4/5

Assignment #3

Urban Plunge Reflection – Due April 18/19

Assignment #4

Identity Narrative – Due April 25/26

Assignment #5

Final Reflection and Synthesis – Due May 2/3

Assignments

Each of the following assignments places an emphasis on reflection. Reflection is an invitation to think deeply about our actions so that we may act with more insight and effectiveness in the future. It is probably something you do already: processing, analyzing, and integrating your experiences through writing, discussions with friends, art, etc. As related to service, reflection is the use of creative and critical thinking skills to help prepare for, succeed in, and learn from service experience, and to examine the larger picture and context in which service occurs (Jim and Pam Toole, Compass Institute).

1. This I Believe Essay (10%) (Due March 21/22)

After reading essays from the *This I Believe* website (<http://thisibelieve.org/top/>), please write your own "This I Believe" essay. Guidelines can be found at this website: <http://thisibelieve.org/guidelines/>. Your essay should be approximately 500 -- 1,000 words / 2 double-spaced pages. Although you focus primarily on one core value when writing this essay, I hope this exercise inspires you to think deeply about the many values you hold. We will read these essays out loud in class on March 21 and 22. If you are not comfortable sharing your essay, you have the option to not do so. I encourage you, though, to take the risk of doing so.

2. My Story of Education (20%) (Due April 4/5)

This assignment is meant to provoke self-reflection. Use this assignment to describe your own story of education. If you are able to articulate the ways in which privilege, race, and socioeconomic status have affected your own experience with education, you will be better able to understand the readings and contribute to class discussion. Papers should be at least 4 pages, double-spaced. Please answer the following questions in your paper:

- What type of K-12 schools did you attend? What was the racial make-up? The socioeconomic status of the area in which your school was located? The socioeconomic status of the students in attendance? Are you able to access your school's "report card" during the time you were in high school? How did your school perform?
- How did your school differ from other local schools?
- How did your race and socioeconomic status affect your attendance at that institution?
- What behaviors and values were expected from the students at your K-12 institution?
- How did you end up attending Miami as an institution of higher education? How was your decision to attend Miami affected by your own race and socioeconomic status?
- How have the readings you have completed in this class, EMPOWER I, and other courses informed your understanding of the education you have received?

3. Identity Narrative (10%) (Due April 25/26)

Write a personal voice narrative about your identity. Write this essay as if it is going to be included in one of the identity anthologies that we used in this course (*Readings for Diversity and Social Justice; Race, Class, and Gender: An Anthology*).

Focus on the aspect(s) of identity of personal choice. This essay may be written in any style that best conveys identity (e.g., prose, poetry). Based on the comfort level of each student and the class as a whole, these narratives may be shared during class. Before writing this narrative, read the narratives assigned for the readings to get a sense of some possible approaches. You can be as creative as you like!

4. Urban Plunge Reflection Paper (10%) (Due April 18/19)

Write a reflection of your Urban Plunge experience. It should be 3 – 6 pages. Questions to consider when reflecting may include (but are not limited to):

1. Describe your experiences in the community. What have you observed or learned?
2. What educational issues or other social issues did you come across while serving?
3. How did these issues impact your work in the community? How did they impact you personally? How do they impact society?
4. How does your experience relate to the academic knowledge you have gained in this class and others?
5. What can you personally do to address educational and social issues in the future?
6. What have you learned about yourself?

Your reflection should incorporate your own experiences in addition to course readings and course discussions.

5. Final Reflection and Synthesis (20%) (Due May 2/3)

For your Final Reflection and Synthesis, consider what you have learned and the experiences you have had (in and out of the classroom) over the past semester. Questions to consider include:

1. What have you learned?
2. What have you learned about yourself?
3. Have you changed and if so, how?
4. How will this impact your future educational and career goals?
5. What are you passionate about? Has this class inspired any new passions or strengthened any previously existing ones?
6. What social issues do you hope to address in the future and how?

Your final reflection can be in the form of a paper, song, video, PPT or Prezi, a piece of artwork (such as a painting) or any other form you choose. The reflection will be due Thursday, May 3 at 11:59 PM. If your reflection is not in an electronic form, please contact Hailee ahead of time at gibbonhm@muohio.edu to arrange an alternative method of submission.

6. Attendance, Participation, and In Class Discussion (20%) (Ongoing)

This is a discussion (not lecture) based class. In order for each student to gain the most from his or her experience, it is expected that each student will come to class having completed the assigned readings and will be ready to participate in active discussion.

Attendance will be tracked each week. You are only permitted one excused absence, after which points will be deducted from your grade. Since we meet for a short time, each week is important. If you do have to miss, we encourage you to make up for it by attending the Dr. Perry lecture on March 28 or finding another educational opportunity (which the instructor must approve).

Guiding Discussion Questions for Readings

Consider the following questions as you read. Our discussions will not be limited to these questions; however, we will continuously revisit them.

1. What major insights did you gain from the reading?
2. What connections did you make between the readings and your own personal experiences?
3. What did you learn from the readings in regards to the concept of identity, privilege, and oppression?

4. What did you learn from the reading in regards to educational issues or other social issues?
5. Did anything from the readings strike you as pertinent or applicable to your future practice in whatever career you may choose?

Class Policies:

Being Prepared for Every Class: Reading and preparation for each class session are essential to the success of the class. It is important that each individual come to class prepared to contribute to the discussion. This will only enhance what you gain from your experience. If necessary, the instructor may give quizzes and active reading guides to gauge students' understanding of the material.

Respectful Class Participation: Please silence your cell phone and refrain from texting during class time. LAPTOPS ARE NOT PERMITTED IN THIS CLASS unless otherwise instructed.

Class Attendance: Because this is a discussion-based course, it is vital that students regularly attend class. The instructor will allow up to one excused absence. Sickness and personal/family emergencies are examples of an excused absence. See the Participation section of the Assignments to learn about potential ways to make up absences if needed.

Academic Honesty: Students are assumed to fulfill all course requirements in compliance with the Miami University statement of Academic Misconduct. Any violation of this statement will lead to an official report and investigation of the charges alleged. Academic integrity is an ultimate value at Miami University and all students, faculty, and staff are responsible to see that academic integrity is protected.

An Important Statement about Plagiarism: Using someone else's ideas or phrasing and representing those ideas or phrasing as our own, either on purpose or through carelessness, is a serious offense known as plagiarism. "Ideas or phrasing" includes written or spoken material, of course — from whole papers and paragraphs to sentences, and, indeed, phrases — but it also includes statistics, lab results, art work, etc. "Someone else" can mean a professional source, such as a published writer or critic in a book, magazine, encyclopedia, or journal; *an electronic resource such as material we discover on the World Wide Web*; another student at our school or anywhere else; a paper-writing "service" (online or otherwise) which offers to sell written papers for a fee. For more detailed information about plagiarism, please visit:
http://writingcenter.lib.muohio.edu/?page_id=28

APA Format: All papers for this course should be double-spaced and written in 12-point font with 1" page margins. When referring to an author or source, it is critical that you cite each source that you use. Please use APA Format for all citations. For more information about APA, please visit:
<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/>

A Note on Late Papers: Part of being a responsible student is to submit papers on time at the beginning of class on the assigned due date. Instructors will dock one letter grade (10%) off for each day the paper is late. For instance, if the paper is due on Monday and the students wait to turn it in the next class (Wednesday), instructors will dock 20% off the paper because it will be two days late. If an emergency occurs (severe sickness, family emergency, etc.) the student will need to notify the instructors before the paper is due to work out a special arrangement.

University Statement for Respect on Human Diversity:

Miami University is a community dedicated to intellectual engagement. Our campuses consist of students, faculty, and staff from a variety of backgrounds and cultures. By living, working, studying, and teaching, we bring our unique viewpoints and life experiences together for the benefit of all. This inclusive learning environment,

based upon an atmosphere of mutual respect and positive engagement, invites all campus citizens to explore how they think about knowledge, about themselves, and about how they see themselves in relation to others. Our intellectual and social development and daily educational interactions, whether co-curricular or classroom related, are greatly enriched by our acceptance of one another as members of the Miami University community. Through valuing our own diversity and the diversity of others, we seek to learn from one another, foster a sense of shared experience, and commit to making the University the intellectual home of us all.

We recognize that we must uphold and abide by University policies and procedures protecting individual rights and guiding democratic engagement. Any actions disregarding these policies and procedures, particularly those resulting in discrimination, harassment, or bigoted acts, will be challenged swiftly and collectively.

All who work, live, study, and teach in the Miami community must be committed to these principles of mutual respect and positive engagement, which are integral parts of Miami's focus, goals, and mission.

-Adopted by University Senate 2004/05

CLASS SCHEDULE

Class	Topic	In-Class Activities <i>(Subject to Change)</i>	Assigned Readings and Homework <i>(Due at the Start of Class)</i>
March 14/15	Welcome to EMPOWER III!	Syllabus Overview	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Letters to a Young Teachers, Chapters 1-3
		Where I'm From Activity	
		This I Believe Essay Review	
		Discussion of Readings	
March 21/22	Lessons Learned: Reflecting on the What We Learned from Individuals and What We Learned from Socialization	This I Believe Essay Reading	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Letters to a Young Teacher, Chapters 4-5 Harro (2000), The Cycle of Socialization Wildman & Davis (2000), Language and Silence: Making Systems of Privilege Visible This I Believe Essays (Optional – Read As Needed for Own Essay) This I Believe Essay Due
		Free Write: (1) What is a valuable lesson you learned from someone who was older than you? (2) What was a valuable lesson you learned from a child?	
		Review of Socialization Cycle	
		Discussion of Readings	
March 28	Dr. Steve Perry – Push Has Come to Shove: Working Together to Give Students the Education They Deserve		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 7:30 PM FSB 1000 Extra Credit – 10 Points for Attendance and 2 Page Reflection Paper
March 28/29	"Diversity" in Education: Race in Schools	Discussion of Readings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Letters to a Young Teacher, Chapters 6-8 Tatum (2000), Defining Racism Blanchett (2006), Disproportionate Representation of African American Students in Special Education
		Socialization and Race Activity	
		Reflection on My Story of Education – Free Write and Discussion	
March 30-31	Urban Plunge		Hamilton
April 4/5	"Diversity" in Education: Race in Schools	Discussion of Readings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Letters to a Young Teacher, Chapters 9-10 Berlak (2001), Race and the Achievement Gap My Story of Education Due
		Current Issues: Justice for Trayvon Martin?	
April 11/12	Classism and The Continuation of Inequality through Funding and Policy	Discussion of Readings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Letters to a Young Teacher, Chapters 11-12 Anyon (2002), Federal Policies Maintain Urban Poverty Langston (2000), Tired of Playing Monopoly? Review History of School Funding
		Social Class Quiz	
April 13-14	Urban Plunge		Middletown
April 18/19	Race, Poverty, and De Facto Segregation	Discussion of Readings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Letters to a Young Teacher, Chapter 13 Ainsworth (2006), How Neighborhood Contexts Shapes Educational Outcomes Ransford (2000), Two Hierarchies Gorski (2008), The Myth of the Culture of

			Poverty <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Urban Plunge Reflection Paper Due
April 25/26	Strategies for Social Change and Becoming an Ally	Identity Narrative Readings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Letters to a Young Teacher, Chapter 14-15 • 5 Identity Narratives of Your Choice • Love (2000), Developing a Liberatory Consciousness • Harro (2000), The Cycle of Liberation • Identity Narrative Due
		Discussion of Readings	
		Spheres of Influence/Action Planning Activity	
May 2/3	No Class		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Final Reflection and Synthesis Paper Due (Due Thursday, May 3 at 11:59 PM)