The objective of this course is to provide future teachers with a complex understanding of the forces that shape the distinct experiences and school lives of diverse students, the ways in which diversity in the classroom influences the learning process, and how specific teaching strategies (informed by an understanding of these relationships) can enhance student learning. The focal point of the class is the development of pedagogies that are effective with all students by emphasizing how to engage those students who have historically been the most disengaged by and in schools. Our focus on diversity, and the foundation of the class in Chicana/o Studies, along with the current climate related to race and schooling, all require an emphasis on Racial & Social Justice in all of our work.

Diversity is an immense topic and one that we can never fully explore in one semester. Because of this, we will organize the course around the idea of school as potential sites for embodying social and racial justice. This is also a broad area of focus, but the rationale behind this approach is connected to the reason this course was developed. Recent efforts to help teachers better understand the needs of disenfranchised communities are a response to the fact that schools have often led to the reproduction of social inequalities. The push for teacher training to deal with diversity was initially a response to this, although teacher training has often ignored the issues underlying inequality and instead focused on “teaching” the supposed cultural characteristics and/or histories of those experiencing inequality. By focusing our work on becoming effective teachers in diverse communities through the lens of racial and social justice, we will be able to develop models and approaches that can be adapted to the needs of any group of students.

Our classroom will be a lab for all of this work, as we will reflect on our own school experiences and the teaching and learning in our classroom.

Assignments

I have organized the readings both around my areas of expertise and your interests. I strive to share readings that I understand deeply and whose authors I know have integrity and embody the principles integrated in their work (I know almost all of the authors we will be reading personally). This does leave us with gaps in terms of other arenas of diversity. We will address this in two ways. First, when appropriate we will always ask how the insights of our readings apply to other types of diversity (including gender, sexual orientation, class, ability, learning styles and other areas that are important to us), as well as the ways in which the readings fall short. Second you will have the opportunity to integrate your own reading interests into the class. [All of the readings will be available on the course website by 2/8.]

I have paired each of the readings so that we will read them with another related reading. For each reading, you will write a short Reading Challenge Assignment. This should include: 1) a short quote from one or both of the week’s readings that challenged you in some way or that you want to challenge, 2) an explanation of how the passage challenged your thinking,
understanding, or personal experiences OR how your thinking, understanding, or personal experiences challenge the author and the ideas in the passage. Please note that “Challenge” does not have to mean disagree and it can reflect deep thinking and being intrigued in new ways. [Note: This is not intended as a summary or test to show that you did the reading. We will assume that each of us will do all of the readings, so this assignment is an opportunity for us to deeply engage these readings in the context of our interests in the class. If you would like to simply do a deep exploration of the readings in an essay, that is a great alternative to this scripted format.]

As the rest of the syllabus explains, we will be doing a significant amount of writing. Strong writing is essential for all careers and especially for teaching. Everything you submit should be your best writing. Take on this challenge and consult with me early on if you need any help developing as a writer.

We will focus on using our assignments to prepare you to be effective teachers in diverse contexts [NOTE: For those who are committed to becoming school counselors, we will create an option for you to do this work with a focus on counseling. You need to see me to discuss this option if you are interested in it.]. To achieve this goal, each of our assignments will be based on your work in a local school [NOTE: There is not a required number of hours, but the more time you invest in this, the easier the work will be and the more you will learn]. This year we have developed an agreement with DCP El Camino Middle School to use their school as a lab to focus our applied work. We will be visiting and observing the school three times during the semester. This is enough to minimally achieve our goals for the assignments that follow, but you may want to volunteer in one of the classes and/or plan your own visit. [Note: If you have another school where you are working or have worked in the past, you can do the applied work in that school. I also work with a Latina/o Lit class at Lincoln High School and can help you do your work there or in one of the other classes/schools where my colleagues teach.] In essence, all of the remaining assignments will be part of one Teaching Portfolio. You should plan to include any and all relevant insights from our readings in these assignments so that each assignment should reference at least one of our readings (this can also be in the form of challenging something covered in a reading). The Teaching Portfolio is divided into the following components:

**Student Observation Assignment & Essay:** We will begin with an introduction to DCP (meeting the Principal, Dr. Cuevas, the Social Studies teacher, Ms. Haro, and interviewing a student) and then follow up with a second visit that will be an in-depth observation of a class period. In that observation, our focus will be the students. In watching the class, work to see the class through the students’ eyes, you may want to pick a specific student to focus on (ideally this would be the student you interviewed in our first visit) or a few, to track their engagement in the class and what seems to influence that. As you do this observation, identify questions that you want to ask the students to better understand issues that you see related to engagement and plan to follow up with the student to ask those questions (at the end of class). In your paper, emphasize the insights you took from the observation along with the questions you sought to answer, and then highlight any insights you obtained from the students, as well as questions that it raises for you that you want to ask the teacher. Using our work on Community Cultural Wealth, identify what resources the students have that are important to the class culture and student success (and be sure to include at least one of our course readings in some way). Finally, include a section in your paper that shares your own autobiographical analysis of your schooling, identity, and experiences with diversity (we will
be exploring these experiences in class during most of the class, so you can use your work in
class to help with this). You can consider the relationship between your identity and school
experiences and the role of school and teachers in shaping who you became as a student and
as a person. [Note: Plan to share some of your own experiences and story with the student
you interview so that you establish some sense of reciprocity and connection.] Remember to
include your self-assessment of your work at the end of the paper!

**Teacher Observation Assignment & Essay:** In our third visit, our focus will be on the teacher.
In watching the class, work to see the class through the teacher’s eyes. Analyze how the
teacher is striving to engage the students as a class, and the different kinds of students you
notice in the class. As you do this observation, identify questions that you want to ask the
teacher to better understand issues that you see related to engagement. We will have some
time for you to ask these questions at the end of the class. You can ask about her greatest
successes and challenges, her training and anything that was lacking, and her approach to
diverse students and engaging all students, as well as insights she has for incoming teachers.
We should also ask about her ethics as a teacher. [Note: You can also use another teacher you
are working with at a different site if it will help you.] In your paper, emphasize the insights
you took from the observation along with the questions you sought to answer and then
highlight the key insights you obtained from our conversation with the teacher. Using our
work on Community Cultural Wealth, further develop your analysis of the resources the
students have that the teacher is using or could be using to enhance student success. Finally,
discuss the insights you are developing related to your own ethical framework for teaching
(and be sure to include at least one of our course readings in some way). Remember to
include your self-assessment of your work at the end of the paper!

**Teaching Framework [draft and final] & Final Assessment of your Learning:** The last piece
of the project will be to integrate all of your learning in the class into your description and
explanation of your framework and ethics that will shape your approach to teaching and
engaging diverse students. This will be written directly to someone specifically: a former
teacher, yourself in 3 years, yourself 5-10 years ago, a younger sibling… Reflect back on
each phase of this process and explain what you learned. Next, provide a detailed description
of your framework for teaching with a specific emphasis on the ethics that will inform your
approach to working with diverse students. You should cover at least three ethical principles
to your approach to teaching and provide examples from our work in class, our visits to DCP
and any other classrooms you observed (this can include other classes at SJSU). Finally,
using a specific classroom/school (you can use DCP), complete an asset mapping (building
on our work with Community Cultural Wealth) and how your ethical framework would allow
you to build on these assets. Use at least one specific example (which could be a particular
lesson or classroom practice). Integrate the lessons from your own readings to any relevant
parts of this paper (for example: a reading focused on working with special needs youth
could be integrated into your ethics and practice) as well as at least three of our class
readings. The final version of this assignment will be submitted as the Final Teaching
Portfolio that also includes all of your previous work for the semester. Remember to include
your self-assessment of your work at the end of the paper, which should provide your overall
assessment of your growth and performance in class this semester!

**Teaching [Extra Credit or Replacement Assignment]:** Some of you are very interested in
beginning to practice teaching. I have found that this is a challenging task for undergraduate students because it is often very limited in scope and does not provide a real feel of what it is like to teach. If you are interested in this as an option, however, I will work with you on how we can do that and how we can integrate it into the Framework assignment, replace another assignment, and/or consider it as extra credit.

All of our work will be strengthened by the support we get from our peers so we will regularly use class time to help each other with different aspects of the project and to learn from the work others are doing. Communicating with me about your work is also important to your success in the class. So plan to check in with me early in the semester to discuss your ideas for the project, and then follow up about mid-way through the semester to let me know how it’s going.

Class participation is a critical component of this course. We will integrate a number of different exercises and approaches to meeting our goals through class activities, including freewrites and feedback on our work in class. The most important of these will be the Learning Journal. After each of our Activities, Guest Professors, and Teaching Demos you will write a journal entry that tracks the lessons you learned from that as well as any concerns or questions it raised. You will send that to me as an email message [not an attachment] within 24 hours of that class session. This will help me understand your insights and needs and it will help you with the final essay that covers all of your key insights from the course. You can also do additional journals at any time that it is helpful to you during the semester. The journal will also be written to someone specifically (the same person to whom you will be writing the Final Project).

Obviously, being in class will be essential because these lessons are learned through participation. The key to effective participation is simply engaging. There are not right and wrong answers. We are looking for effort, which involves different things for different students. We will be discussing this throughout the semester. We also hope to provide opportunities for you to teach in class. The size of our class makes this challenging so we will develop creative ways of doing this as the work takes shape. We will discuss the options for this in class.

Assignments & Grading

- Student Observation Essay [Due 3/22] – 20%
- Teacher Observation Essay [Due 4/12] – 20%
- Class Participation/Learning Journal – 20%

Please save all of your work throughout the semester, including your class notes, freewrites and all of your assignments (especially the versions that have my feedback on them). You will be submitting all of this work again at the end of the semester.

For each of these assignments, we will develop a rubric or guideline in class together so that we know exactly what the goals and requirements of the assignment are. This will be the measure used to evaluate/grade all assignments. In addition, students will provide in-depth, self-evaluations of each assignment using the rubric. Explain your goals for the assignment and how well you achieved them! Whenever possible, we will also have peers evaluate the assignments to provide another level of feedback. Peer feedback will never affect your grade negatively, although it might help me see something that I might not have otherwise. The self-,
peer-, and instructor evaluations will include honest perceptions of the amount of effort that was put into an assignment. Students should always come talk to me whenever your self-assessment and my assessment of your work do not match. Again, you may help me see something that I missed and I may also help you better understand something that you missed.

**University Policy on Academic Integrity**

“Academic integrity is essential to the mission of San José State University. As such, students are expected to perform their own work (except when collaboration is expressly permitted by the course instructor) without the use of any outside resources. Students are not permitted to use old tests, quizzes when preparing for exams, nor may they consult with students who have already taken the exam. When practiced, academic integrity ensures that all students are fairly graded. Violations to the Academic Integrity Policy undermine the educational process and will not be tolerated. It also demonstrates a lack of respect for oneself, fellow students and the course instructor and can ruin the university’s reputation and the value of the degrees it offers. We all share the obligation to maintain an environment, which practices academic integrity. Violators of the Academic Integrity Policy will be subject to failing this course and being reported to the Office of Judicial Affairs for disciplinary action which could result in suspension or expulsion from San José State University.” The policy on academic integrity can be found at:  
http://sa.sjsu.edu/student_conduct

**University Policy on Students with Disabilities Act**

“If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability, or if you need special arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, please make an appointment with me as soon as possible, or see me during office hours. Presidential Directive 97-03 requires that students with disabilities register with DRC to establish a record of their disability.” See http://www2sjsu.edu/senate/s97-10.htm

**Weekly Schedule**

I have developed this plan for our work based on my understanding of how best to meet the course goals, combined with a careful look at who you are as students and future teachers, and the interests you have. My understanding of you and your needs will evolve as we go through this process, as will your own interests. Because of that, we will make changes to the course if needed (I expect that this will most likely apply to the sessions in April). If this happens, we will not be adding assignments, but we may change the readings we assign, develop and clarify assignments, and change the plan for how we pursue our goals. Any significant changes in the syllabus will be made in writing and due dates will not be added or moved up.

**Weeks 1-2: Class Planning / Goal Setting**  
January 30, February 1, 6, 8  
We will explore our individual interests and needs as future teachers as well as the goals for the course and the means by which we will both pursue those goals and evaluate our effectiveness in reaching them.  
**Assignments Due:** 2 Short Assignments on Student Interests [Due 2/1 & 2/6]

**Week 3-4: The Role of Ideology, Meritocracy, and History in Shaping our Understandings of Diversity and Schooling in the US**  
February 13, 15, 20, 22  
We will reflect on our own experiences and analyses of the role of ideology, meritocracy and history in influencing the organization and practice of schooling in the US. In doing so, we will also consider the role of these forces in shaping the identities of all students and the relationship between these identities and students’ school outcomes.  
**Assignment Due:** Short Paper on Meritocracy [2/13]  
**Readings & Engagement Essay Due (by 2/15):**
Week 5: The Role of Racism in Shaping Schooling  
February 27, March 1
We will analyze everyday forms of racism and their impact on schooling as well as how Internalized Racism affects students of Color in schools.

Readings & Engagement Essay Due (by 2/27):

Activity: 3/1 Visit to DCP El Camino Middle School, 1402 Monterey Highway, San Jose [arrive by 12:15pm at the latest]

Reading & Engagement Essay Due (by 3/1):

Weeks 6-7: The Lessons of Critical Race Theory for Future Teachers  
March 6, 8, 13, 15
We will consider the role of issues like White Privilege & Fatigue, Racial Microaggressions & Racial Battle Fatigue in shaping schooling and apply that to other aspects of student diversity. This will inform our work on the School Observations.

Readings & Engagement Essay Due (by 3/6):

Teaching Demo: CCW as a Tool for Transformative Teaching [3/8]

Readings & Engagement Essay Due (by 3/13):

Activity: 3/15 Student Observation, DCP El Camino Middle School, 1402 Monterey Highway, San Jose [arrive by 12:15pm at the latest]

Week 8: Strategies for Working with “Disengaged” Students  
March 20, 22
We will begin developing pedagogical approaches to engaging diverse students by focusing on the students who are least engaged in the classroom.

Readings & Engagement Essay Due (by 3/20):


**Assignment Due:** Student Observation Essay [3/22]

**Spring Break – No Class March 27, 29**

**Week 9: The Ethics of Teaching for Social Justice**

April 3, 5

We will consider how Ethics determines effective and engaging teaching with diverse students and apply this to our work to develop our own teaching frameworks.

**Readings & Engagement Essay Due (by 4/3):**


**Activity:** 4/5 Teacher Observation, DCP El Camino Middle School, 1402 Monterey Highway, San Jose [arrive by 12:15pm at the latest]

**Weeks 10-12: Developing Holistic Strategies for Engaging Diverse Students**

Having built a foundation for understanding the challenges facing teachers with diverse students, we will focus on holistic and comprehensive teaching frameworks for helping students develop voice and take ownership of their schooling, considering the challenge of simultaneously addressing issues like meeting standards and differentiation. We will do this through a series of mini-lectures and workshops on essential facets of any effective social justice, teaching framework.

April 10, 12 – Re-examining our Identities and their Roles in Transformative Teaching

**Guest Professor:** Marissa Kieffer, former MAS 185 student [4/12]

**Assignment Due:** Teacher Observation Essay [4/12]

April 17, 19 – Addressing Trauma & Healing as Transformative Teaching

**Guest Professor:** Mario Ozuna-Sanchez on indigenous ethics and teaching [4/19]

April 24, 26 – Empathy and the Insights from Non-Violent Communication

**Activity:** Film – Girl Like Me [4/26]

**Week 13: Building Our Own Frameworks of Social Justice Teaching in Diverse Contexts**

May 1, 3

We will take the lessons from all of our work in class and apply that to the development of our own pedagogies with a specific focus on the areas each of us most want to strengthen.

**Teaching Demo:** Analyzing & Understanding Community Epistemologies for Social Justice Teaching [5/1]

**Assignment Due:** Teaching Framework Draft [5/3]

**Weeks 14-15: Teaching and Walking Racial and Social Justice in Diverse Communities**

May 8, 10, 15
We will focus on the real classroom challenges we have seen in the schools this semester and the strategies for dealing with them. We will present our Final Projects in class, focusing on the most powerful insights related to our role as future teachers and, in particular, the way these lessons have shaped our ethics as teachers. We will end by integrating the lessons of the class into a collective framework for being effective, transformative teachers.

**Assignment Due:** Teaching Portfolio with Teaching Framework & Final Assessment [5/15]