

**College of Education Mission Statement:** *In a spirit of trust, loyalty, and humanity, we the faculty of the MSU Elementary Education Program embrace the ownership of continuous program development through reflective thought and positive action. This exemplary program banners excellence in teaching, research, and service, and is committed to professionalism, social activism, intellectual rigor, and cultural pluralism.*

## **EDE 3223 MIDDLE GRADES EDUCATION**

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**Office Hours:**           **Mondays, 10:00-12:00**  
                                  **Thursdays, 1:00-3:00**

**Class Meetings:**       **Mondays, 2:00-4:50**  
                                  **Allen 249**

**Field Experience:**     **12 Hours to be completed during the semester at Armstrong Middle School with specified teachers within an allocated time period**

### **Resources/Texts for EDE 3223:**

Powell, S. D. (2005). *Introduction to Middle School*. Pearson Education, Inc., Upper Saddle River, NJ.

### **One of the following:**

- ❖ *Not Much, Just Chillin' : The hidden lives of middle schoolers*, by Linda Perlstein
- ❖ *Because of the kids: Facing racial and cultural differences in schools* by Jennifer E. Obidah and Karen Manheim Teel
- ❖ *36 Children* by Herbert Kohl
- ❖ *Pregnant bodies, fertile minds: Gender, race and the schooling of pregnant teens* by Wendy Luttrell
- ❖ *"Why fly that way?" Linking community and academic achievement* by Katherine Greenley
- ❖ *Teaching stories* by Judy Logan

**Additional Readings provided or available on WebCT.**

**CATALOG DESCRIPTION:**

Understanding the learning needs of middle grades learners (young adolescents between the ages of 10-15); study of appropriate teaching strategies, classroom environments and assessment tools for middle grades children.

**WHAT THIS COURSE IS ABOUT:**

Through this course, *Middle Grades Education*, you will gain an understanding of middle grades learners (young adolescents), their developmental stages, and the diversity that exists among them. The Middle School Concept will be explored as we examine appropriate learning environments for young adolescents. During the course we will build on the learning you have acquired in other education courses as we discuss instructional planning, assessment practices, and classroom management for young adolescents. The role of middle grades educators will also be discussed as we cover the topics of reflective practice, collaboration, and professionalism in the middle school. The class focuses on the following objectives:

\*To help teacher candidates understand young adolescents as individuals and learners.

**CFPO 2, INTASC 2**

\*To help teacher candidates deeply understand the cognitive development and learning needs of middle grades learners. **CFPO 2, INTASC 2**

\*To help teacher candidates understand issues of diversity pertaining to middle grades learners, including issues of racial, ethnic, linguistic, and economic diversity, and learners with varying ability levels and special needs. **CFPO 2, INTASC 2, 3**

\*To help teacher candidates learn how to design appropriate curriculum and classroom learning environments for middle grades learners. **CFPO 5, 7, INTASC 7**

\*To help teacher candidates learn how to effectively organize and manage the middle grades classroom. **CFPO 6, INTASC 5, 6**

\*To help teacher candidates understand how to plan (short and long term) for the middle grades learner. **CFPO 5, INTASC 7**

\*To help teacher candidates understand a variety of purposes and uses for assessments including assessment for planning and teaching, assessment for evaluation of schools and teachers, and assessment for communication about student progress. **CFPO 4, INTASC 8**

\*To help teacher candidates understand and know how to implement a variety of formal and informal assessment tools and use assessment information to improve planning and teaching. **CFPO 4, INTASC 8**

\*To help teacher candidates understand the importance of collaboration with families and develop strategies for working and communicating with the families of middle grades learners. **CFPO 8, INTASC 10**

\*To help teacher candidates understand a variety of community resources that can support classroom teaching and learning. **CFPO 9, INTASC 10**

\*To help teacher candidates develop the skill of reflecting on teaching in order to increase student learning. **CFPO 1, INTASC 9**

**INSTRUCTIONAL STANDARDS FOR THE COURSE:**

The College of Education and NCATE (our accrediting body) have both developed sets of standards for teacher education. It is my responsibility as your instructor to be sure that you can meet the College Framework Program Outcomes and the NCATE Standards when you graduate from MSU. The course is organized around these sets of standards.

### **CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK PROGRAM OUTCOMES (CFPO):**

The College of Education has created a set of “program outcomes.” These outcomes are general statements of the knowledge, skills, and dispositions that we hope you will learn and develop before you graduate from Mississippi State University. These outcomes are listed below. In this class, you will have the opportunity to develop your knowledge and understanding of these outcomes, and to demonstrate your proficiency in performing them through several individual and group projects. In the syllabus, I will refer to these outcomes with the acronym CFPO which stands for Conceptual Framework Program Outcomes.

The College of Education Student meets (or, in our case in this class, is working on) the definition of an “education person” as defined by the specialty area of service through the development and practice of the knowledge, disposition, and performance of the following:

1. *Professionalism: the knowledge and skills in becoming a professional educator*
2. *Understanding Individuals: the knowledge and understanding of human behavior as found in the educational setting*
3. *Knowledge of Content: the knowledge of the content relevant to the major field of education*
4. *Assessment/Evaluation: the basic skills of assessment and evaluation relevant to the major field of education*
5. *Planning: the basic skills of planning relevant to the major field of education*
6. *Managing: the basic skills of management in the educational setting*
7. *Delivery of Service: the basic skills of delivering the educational services relevant to the chosen field of education*
8. *Social/Cultural Skills: the basic social and cultural skills relevant to the field of education*
9. *Resourcefulness: the skills in locating and utilizing the resources at the local, state, regional, national, and international levels, which are relevant to providing educational services*
10. *Technology: the knowledge and basic skills of utilizing the tools of technology in the educational setting*

**You will address these program outcomes as you continue to assess your learning and add to your Program Standard Portfolio while examining your professional growth in meeting the INTASC Standards.**

### **METHODS OF INSTRUCTION:**

On a regular basis, you will construct knowledge (connecting new experiences, readings, and reflections to prior knowledge as you deepen your understanding of Middle Grades Education) by taking part in the following kinds of experiences:

1. reading academic pieces related to Middle Grades Education
2. writing and talking to reflect on and make sense of the pieces you read
3. writing and talking to reflect on your own experiences as young adolescents
4. writing and talking to organize thoughts
5. group work, group projects, and problem-based learning
6. using the phases of a writing process

### **PROFESSIONAL BEHAVIORS AND VALUES:**

Throughout this course, you will read about, write about, reflect upon, and examine your own professional behaviors and values. In particular, you will consider:

- \*your own beliefs about Middle Grades Education, the impact those beliefs make on your practice, and how those beliefs can be informed by research and experience.
- \*your own attitudes toward students of diverse backgrounds. You will challenge your own assumptions that many families of students living in poverty or living with other challenges are “dysfunctional” or “broken.” You will work to develop a supportive and accepting attitude toward families and their differences, always understanding that collaborations with families and assumptions about children’s home lives shape the teaching you provide them.
- \*your own skills as a colleague and a communicator. Because the class is organized around group work, scenarios, problems, and lots of talking with classmates, you will grow as a professional. As you reflect on your performance in group work, and provide feedback to your classmates about their performance, you will develop strategies for strengthening your interactions with colleagues you meet in the future.
- \*your own writing skills—including ways to improve mechanics, organization, reflection and thoughtfulness in your writing.

*As you begin your professional coursework, you start to build your professional reputation; consequently, attendance, punctuality, participation, initiative, respect, and courtesy take on a new meaning. We expect you to be a responsible student now and a responsible, professional educator the first day that you walk into your classroom. We know, however, you will not be a responsible, professional teacher if you are not a responsible student now. CLASS PARTICIPATION is a professional responsibility, as is class attendance, reading assignments before class, completing assignments before class, and completing all assignments in a professional manner. In this class, we are all expected to demonstrate professional behavior. In the teaching profession, school systems will have policies that govern teacher behaviors. Subsequently, there are a few policies that will govern our behavior in this class.*

### **ACADEMIC HONESTY/MISCONDUCT:**

Mississippi State University’s policies on academic honesty are strictly adhered to in the course. The university holds Academic Misconduct as a serious and punishable infraction. University Academic Misconduct policies may be found in the Bulldog Handbook, available from the Student Association or at [www.msstate.edu/dept/audit/1207A.html](http://www.msstate.edu/dept/audit/1207A.html). All work completed for this class must be original. I expect each individual to think, write, reflect, question, and even sometimes struggle through the concepts presented in class. Active engagement in class activities is the only way you will learn and grow as a teacher. Students who commit academic misconduct, including plagiarizing work (copying or borrowing heavily from published materials) or copying or borrowing heavily from another student’s work will fail this class.

### **ATTENDANCE/PUNCTUALITY:**

Instruction will be based on course discussion, group work, group projects, in class writing and reflection, and many other participatory activities. Class participation is a professional responsibility—class attendance is as well. The MSU Bulletin (p. 17) states: “**upon registration,**

**the student accepts the responsibility of attending ALL classes and doing any work the instructor may prescribe. When absence from class is ESSENTIAL, it is the responsibility of the student to make arrangements satisfactory to the instructor with regard to the work missed.” Absences beyond those which are ESSENTIAL will be reported to the student’s advisor and to the Dean of Students.**

**It is YOUR responsibility** to turn in documentation for **ANY** absence when you come to class. I will not ask for it. However, I will need to keep the documentation for my records, so bring a copy that I can keep. **NOTE: Doctor’s notes will be accepted to excuse absences; however, dates must match dates absent from class.**

If you are absent, you are required to consult with another student to find out the details of readings and assignments due for the next class. You must always come to class prepared and ready to turn in your assignments. Absences do not excuse you from being prepared the next time class meets. You are responsible for all materials distributed and discussed. Assignments are due whether you are in class or not.

If students are absent when examination is given, students will receive a grade of “0” (ZERO) for the examination **UNLESS** special arrangements have been approved prior to the absence.

**PROMPTNESS** is also expected. Late arrivers disrupt the learning of everyone. Please be considerate of others. If you are late to class three times, you will receive the notation of one absence. Repeated tardiness (more than 4) will necessitate one or all of the following depending on the situation: reduction of your grade, lock-outs, or withdrawal from class.

Missing more than **30** minutes of a class, at any time during the class, will be considered an absence (e.g., arriving late or leaving early).

### **ASSIGNMENTS:**

In order for you to receive the feedback that you need and to demonstrate a level of professionalism appropriate for beginning teachers, you must turn in assignments on time. **All assignments are due at the BEGINNING of class on the due date.** All assignments turned in later than the day they are due will have 10 percent deducted from the grade for each late day. Assignments more than 3 days late will not be graded. If you are absent the day something is due, it is your responsibility to make sure that I have the item. **Assignments will not be accepted in class the following week. There will be no exceptions-even if you were absent the week before.**

All assignments must be typed and look professionally completed. Technology failures (i.e. a frozen hard drive, an erased floppy disk, an out-of-ink printer, etc.) are not valid excuses for late or missing assignments. It is YOUR responsibility to create multiple back up copies of all written assignments, to keep your printer operational, and to leave enough time to respond to problems. Back up your work!!

While the content of your writing is the most important consideration, proper formatting can make it easier for people to read and understand your writing. Please follow these formatting guidelines, unless otherwise directed:

- Papers should be word processed and printed on a clear, legible printer.
- Your name, the course title/number, and the date should be written in the upper right hand corner, single spaced. Do not add an additional title page.
- The body of the paper should be double spaced.
- All margins—top, bottom, left, and right—should be set to 1 inch.
- Use a 12 point font which is clear and easy to read, such as Times New Roman. Script or cursive fonts are difficult to read and will not be accepted.
- Insert the page number in the upper right hand corner, beginning on the second page.
- Staple the paper in the upper left hand corner. (**Please do not use paper clips, folders, plastic sheet protectors, or plastic binders as these make documents difficult to handle and read.**)
- If any of the content of the paper is taken from a source (textbook, website, journal article, etc.) properly site the source both in the text and in the bibliography using APA style. You may use a handbook or this website:  
[http://webster.commnet.edu/apa/apa\\_index.htm](http://webster.commnet.edu/apa/apa_index.htm)

Professional editing and proofreading are expected. Papers should be written in Standard English and free of grammatical, punctuation, spelling and other editing issues. Papers with frequent grammar issues may not pass, regardless of content. If the assignment calls for you to write 2-4 pages, writing 1 1/2 pages will not be sufficient, and even a brief two pages may not suffice. A paper which does not meet minimum page length is likely to fail. Do not attempt to “increase” the length of your paper by altering margins, font type or size, etc.

Sally Superwriter  
EDE 3223 Middle Grades Education  
August 22, 2005

#### Example of Formatted Paper

Papers written in EDE 3223: Middle Grades Education should follow this format. All of the required elements are here. For example, the margins are the right size, and the author’s name and other information are single-spaced in the upper right hand corner. In addition, the body paragraph is indented and is double spaced. This paragraph is presented in the Times New Roman font, which is the preferred font for writings in this class.

There is no extra credit work allowed in this course.

Any student with a documented disability should notify me immediately so that appropriate accommodation can be made.

### **RESPECT/COURTSEY:**

We will treat each other with respect and courtesy. The professor has the right to teach just as the students have the right to learn. Accordingly, the following behaviors will not be tolerated and after one warning (in private), if the behavior is repeated, such students will be dismissed from class. Specifically example behaviors that are not tolerated are as follows:

1. Disruptive behaviors during class.
  - a. No cell phones or pagers. No text messaging during class. Cell phones or pagers should be turned off during class meetings.
  - b. Please do not disrupt lectures or class activities by talking to each other or aloud to yourself.
  - c. Please do not talk during questions from your peers and subsequent answers.
2. Working on assignments unrelated to EDE 3223, reading newspapers, and any other non-attending behaviors are not permitted in this class.
3. Arriving late or leaving early is highly discouraged. Either of these behaviors is very disruptive to other learners in the class.
4. Other behaviors that are considered rude—being sarcastic, laughing at peers' questions, answers, presentations, etc. You know what it means to behave rudely and I am sure that none of you would think of behaving inappropriately toward yourself, peers, visitors, or the instructor. You will be teachers yourselves in a very short while, and you will expect your own students to behave respectfully and courteously. Model what you will expect in your own classroom.

### **GRADED ASSIGNMENTS:**

**Learning Environments Paper:** Describe an appropriate learning environment for a particular grade level (i.e., 6-8), integrating learning about middle grades learners, learning environment, and effective learning opportunities. The learning environments paper will address the concepts presented in Chapter 11: Managing the Learning Environment—for example, creating a positive and productive learning environment, physical, emotional, and academic safety, prevention, intervention, and understanding your role as the teacher and Chapter 5: Structures of Middle School—for example, structures of time and place. In addition, information regarding community involvement should be included. This paper should be an error-free three to four pages in length.

**Reflective “Case Study” of Yourself as a Learner:** In this assignment, you will reflect on three different learning experiences and the effect those experiences had on your understanding of young adolescent development and middle school teaching. Each of the following three assignments will be represented in this Case Study. The final paper should be six to eight pages in length, error free, and full of connections related to what was learned in this course, in the field, during the teacher interview, through reading your Book Club book, and in other courses.

**NOTE:** *The field experience journal, teacher interview questions and answers (signed and dated by the teacher) and Literature Circle journal MUST be completed and turned in with the Case Study to receive ANY credit for this assignment.*

**Field Experience.** First, you will spend a total of 12 hours observing and interacting with young adolescents in a classroom setting. This initial field experience is intended to introduce candidates to the personalities and learning needs of middle grades learners. You will keep a journal of field experiences (anecdotal notes) connecting field experiences and observations to class topics, discussions, and readings about middle grades learners. Assessment will be based on your ability to describe and reflect on your observations of middle grades learners which should be based on course topics, such as characteristics of young adolescents, diversity, learning needs, etc. **NOTE:** Journal entries (anecdotal notes of the field experience) will be typed (if necessary).

**Teacher Interview.** Second, you will complete a teacher interview with a middle grade teacher (i.e., the teacher from your aforementioned field experience) that includes 20-25 questions (e.g., general information, instructional practices, classroom management, and assessment, etc.). You will compile the list of questions asked. The interview questions and subsequent teacher answers will be typed (if necessary) and turned in with your case study. Please have the teacher you interview sign and date your list of questions and answers. Again, the connections between what has been learned in class, what has been observed in the field experience, and what was discussed during the interview are integral elements related to the success of this section.

**Book Clubs & Literature Circles.** Third, as you participate in the Book Clubs and Literature Circles activity, you will keep a journal of your thoughts and reactions to the sections read as well as document the role (from the Literature Circle activity) that you played. Your documentation should contain 1). Your initial reaction to the section read, 2). Your Literature Circle role, and 3). Your reaction to what you learned from completing your Literature Circle role. Connections to other experiences are crucial—it will be important for you to tie your learning together and represent all aspects of your learning in this activity. In addition, each Book Club group will make a ten minute presentation regarding the content of their book, what was learned, and how it influenced the groups' thinking about middle level education.

**Integrated Instructional Unit Plan with Two Daily Lesson Plans:** Complete an integrated instructional unit plan in a small group. Choose a middle grades content area, grade level, concept to teach from the Mississippi Curriculum Frameworks ([www.mde.k12.ms.us](http://www.mde.k12.ms.us)) and include appropriate assessments. The unit MUST show both short-term and long-term thinking related to planning and assessing instruction. In addition the unit must contain elements of a professional resource file and be connected to the local community resources. Professional presentation of the unit which includes equal participation from all members is expected. The presentation is a separate and individual grade. A template for the unit will be provided.

**Instructional Strategy:** Select a recent, research-based practice strategy or instructional method that has been shown in professional literature to improve learning in middle school students. Complete a summary sheet (template will be provided) and poster to present information to your classmates. Bring copies (number to be determined by number of students enrolled in the class) of your strategy sheet to class for binding into a class book. A professional presentation is expected. The strategy sheet, poster and presentation will be graded separately.

**Chapter Quizzes:**

Quiz 1: Chapters One, Two and Three

Quiz 2: Chapters Five and Eleven

Quiz 3: Chapters Six, Seven and Ten

Quiz 4: Chapter Nine

Comprehensive Final: ALL material from the text, class discussions and activities, guest speakers, and group presentations will be used to construct the final exam.

*\*\*All quizzes and the final MUST be taken to pass the course\*\**

**Grade Distribution:**

A “C” reflects work that is adequate or average. A “B” reflects good, strong work. An “A” reflects work that is superior and will only be given for work that is excellent. This course is based on the accumulation of points earned, but the seven point grading scale is followed (93-100: A; 84-92: B; 76-83: C; 68-75: D; below 67: F). The following point allocations show what amount of points must be earned to achieve each grade.

A = 1,000-930

B = 929-864

C = 863-803

D = 802-746

F = Below 745

**Assignment Point Allocations:**

<i>Assignment</i>	<i>Points</i>
Learning Environments Paper	100
Reflective Case Study	300
Book Club Presentation	25
Unit Plan	100
Unit Plan Presentation	25
Instructional Strategy Summary Sheet	50
Instructional Strategy Poster	25
Instructional Strategy Presentation	25
Four Quizzes @ 50 points each	200
Comprehensive Final Exam	100
Participation	50
*****	
Total	1,000 Points