

**COURSE SYLLABUS**  
**EDF 3423 Exploring Diversity Through Writing**

**Catalog Description:**

EDF 3423 Exploring Diversity Through Writing. (3) (Prerequisite: Admission to Teacher Education. Corequisite: EDF 3333). Using writing to explore issues of diversity in the classroom. Creating a learning community for diverse learners.

**Texts**

- Fulwiler, T. (2002). *Pocket reference for writers*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall. (May be out of stock, obtain when possible.)
- Michie, G. (1999). *Holler if you hear me: The education of a teacher and his students*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Coursepack, available at Copy Cow.
- Subscribe to TaskStream, [www.taskstream.com](http://www.taskstream.com).

**Objectives: The teacher candidate will:**

- Understand how students' learning is influenced by individual experiences, talents, and prior learning, as well as language, culture, family and community values. (INTASC 3)
- Develop a well-grounded framework for understanding cultural and community diversity and know how to learn about and incorporate students' experiences, cultures, and community resources into instruction. (INTASC 3)
- Believe that all children can learn at high levels and persists in helping all children achieve success. (INTASC 3)
- Develop strategies for learning about and understanding students' families, cultures, and communities, and uses this information as a basis for connecting instruction to students' experiences (e.g. drawing explicit connections between subject matter and community matters, making assignments that can be related to students' experiences and cultures). (INTASC 3)
- Bring multiple perspectives to the discussion of subject matter, including attention to students' personal, family, and community experiences and cultural norms. (INTASC 3)
- Creating a learning community in which individual differences are respected. (INTASC 3)
- Understand communication theory, language development, and the role of language in learning. (INTASC 6)
- Understand how differences can affect communication in the classroom. (INTASC 6)
- Use effective verbal, nonverbal, and media communication techniques. (INTASC 6)
- Appreciate the cultural dimensions of communication, respond appropriately, and seek to foster culturally sensitive communication by and among all students. (INTASC 6)
- Use a variety of media communication tools, including audio-visual aids and computers, to enrich learning opportunities. (INTASC 6)

## TOPICS

- 1) Using the Writing Process to communicate well—prewriting, drafting, revising, editing, sharing/publishing. (9 hours)
  - Connecting to the MDE Frameworks for writing
  - Strong focus on revising to improve quality: ideas, organization, word choice, fluency, voice
  - Editing for mechanics
  - Using the writing process to prepare a variety of texts, including both oral (i.e. presentations and speeches) and written texts (e.g. persuasive letters, essays, etc.)
- 2) Examining how culture and experience shape teachers' understanding of their students (6 hrs)
  - Inference vs. observation
  - Subjective vs. Objective interpretations
  - Culture and experience as lenses for understanding experience and shaping learning
  - Culture as a lens for (mis) understanding children's behavior/appearance
- 3) Linguistic and cultural diversity (9 hrs)
  - Understanding how language intertwines with identity
  - Stereotypes about various linguistic patterns/dialects (southern, ebonics, TV News casters, etc.)
  - Access to "standard" English concurrent with valuing linguistic diversity
  - Discourse communities
  - Effectiveness of various forms of English for communicating with others, including public speaking
  - teaching speakers of "non-standard" dialects and ESL learners
- 4) Understanding economically, racially, and culturally diverse students (12 hrs)
  - The achievement gap and other relevant stats about poor, minority, etc. children
  - Cultural knowledge
  - Knowing and understanding children as individuals, members of families, members of cultures
  - The myth of the "savior"
  - Valuing the strengths of families and students
  - Challenging our own and others stereotypes
  - Anti-racist teaching
  - Religious practices and "constitutionality" of various educational practices
- 5) Discourses of power (6 hrs)
  - Participating as a citizen
  - Understanding the audience, crafting language to suit the audience
  - The persuasive letter
  - Evaluating perspective in various texts (media, internet, textbooks, etc.)

- 6) Using technology to communicate learning about diversity (3 hours)
- I-movie and multimedia presentations

**Assignments and Weight:**

Name	Brief Description	Points	Topic
Narrative and reflection	Multiple drafts of a narrative—to learn the writing process and to articulate/understand personal experiences and how they shape learning	Narr: 50 Refl: 50	1
Description of a Child	Students observe and write a description of a child that is “different” from them somehow (and unfamiliar). Analyze description for cultural biased and other subjective interpretations. Reflect on implications for working with diverse learners.	75 pts	2
Linguistic Diversity Project and Presentation	Research linguistic variety. Create a speech or position statement to read before a school board about whether or not a principal should do an in-service on linguistic variation. Present to the rest of class and to an outside audience (e.g. another course, etc.) Reflect on quality of presentation and learning	175	3 and 6
Field Trip Reflective Essay	Conduct a field trip to a “beating the odds” high performing school with large numbers of students placed at risk. Make connections between Linguistic Diversity project, field trip, and Michie; reflect on what observed.	100 pts	4
I-movie project	Create a very brief (90 second) I-movie (or other multimedia format)—that illustrates an important theme in the course using images from the field trip, etc.	100 pts	All 6 topics
Persuasive Letter end project	Write a persuasive letter to an authentic audience (and mail it) which takes a stand and which asks someone powerful to engage in action. Must be supported with facts, figures, reasoning.	100 pts	5
Religion Project	Understand actions which are and are not constitutional	60 pts.	4

Responses to readings	Short responses to chapters/articles read	50 pts.	All 5 topics
Rationales	Due with I-movie and Persuasive Letter	40 pts	Portfolio
Total		800 pts	

**Grading:**

Grades will be based on a cumulative point system. In general, a C indicates acceptable work which meets nearly all standards for an assignment. A C is a passing grade and implies that you have demonstrated comprehensive knowledge and skill. A B indicates work which meets all minimal standards for an assignment. An A indicates work which reaches above and beyond minimum standards for an assignment.

- Numerically, the grading scale is:  
93-100 %: A  
84-92%: B  
76-83%: C  
68-75%: D

Additional readings will be drawn from:

Adams, M., Bluemfeld, W.J., Castaneda, R., Hackman, H.W., Peters, M.L., & Zuniga, X. (2000) *Readings for diversity and social justice: An anthology on racism, antisemitism, sexism, heterosexism, ableism, and classism*. New York: Routledge.

Delpit, L. & Dowdy, J.K. (2002) *The skin that we speak: Thoughts on language and culture in the classroom*. New York: The New York Press.

Giroux, H. (1981) *Ideology, culture, and the process of schooling*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

Kozol, J. (1991) *Savage inequalities: Children in America's schools*. New York: Harper Collins.

Levine, D., Lowe, R., Peterson, B., Tenorio, R. (1995). *Rethinking schools: An agenda for change*. New York: The New York Press.

Perry, T. & Delpit, L. (1998) *The real ebonics debate: Power, language, and the education of African American Children*. Boston: Beacon press.

Current Issues of *Rethinking Schools*, *Language Arts*, current newspapers, coverage of diversity issues in the mainstream and alternative press, etc.