

PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION

Dr. Rachel Skrlac Lo ~ she/her/hers

rachel.skrlaclo@villanova.edu

610-517-7415 (cell)

Tuesday, Thursday: 9:35-10:50 am

Bartley 1001

Office hours: Thursday 11:30 am -1:00 pm

Welcome!

This course is a collaborative inquiry into fundamental concepts of philosophy, education, and teaching. We will explore philosophical trends and traditions in education to consider:

- ▶ The purpose of education and schools;
- ▶ Approaches to building learning communities; and
- ▶ Our own beliefs and biases about education and pedagogy.

We will examine these topics in order to better understand how they manifest in our professional practice. Our guiding question is: How does this course/reading/activity influence me as a future educator? By the end of the semester, you should be able to articulate your evolving philosophy of teaching and how this philosophy fits into the historical traditions of philosophy and the current field of education.

The COVID-19 Impact

This is a hybrid course. It is designed to have flexible instruction in an effort to anticipate and meet all students' needs during this time of uncertainty. Instruction will be a combination of in-person, synchronous, and asynchronous. I will review this regularly and adjust as needed.

At any point, share feedback to ensure your learning needs are met. Come to office hours, email me, or fill out this [form](#).

MY RESPONSIBILITIES

- Provide structure and resources to help you achieve your learning goals.
- Establish clear expectations.
- Model a variety of teaching and learning styles.

YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES

- Attend 1 synchronous class per week. This will start on Zoom but will include an in-person option later in the term.
- Come to class with readings and homework completed.
- Complete 1 asynchronous learning package per week and submit online.
- Complete 5 assignments.

FOUR QUESTIONS

1

Who are you becoming at Villanova and how will this class contribute to this journey?

TO GUIDE

2

How is this course one more normative set of hoops through which you must jump?

OUR JOURNEY

3

What actions, practices, labor does this course and related work value, devalue? (Waite, 2017)

TOGETHER

4

What role does discomfort play in your learning and our collective community?

A NOTE ON WORKLOAD

According to Villanova University guidelines, this requires approximately 8.5 hours of work each week. For this hybrid course, this breaks down into:



- 1 - 75 minute in-person or synchronous online class
- 1 - 75 minute asynchronous class
- 360 minutes of time for readings, weekly homework, and course projects.

For more info: www1.villanova.edu/villanova/provost/resources/student/policies/credit-hour-policy.html).

Course Description

Throughout the course, we will work together to identify underlying philosophical stances on education, on childhood, and on the purpose of schooling. Our goal is be able to identify different philosophical stances and to become aware of our own philosophical stances. We will explore the following questions:

- What is a philosophy of education?
- What is the purpose of education and schooling?
- Why does knowing your philosophical perspective matter to educators?
- What is the relationship between a personal philosophy and a teaching practice?
- How do you know if your philosophy aligns with your practice?

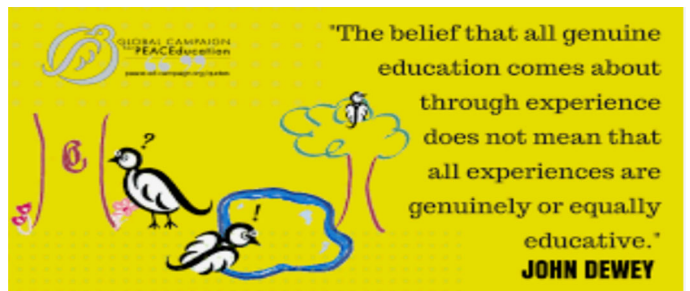
We will do this actively, through in-class activities, asynchronous activities, readings, homework, and a variety of projects. Our goal is to learn together and, in doing so, build community.

Education (def'n): “To nourish, bring up”; “To lead forth, draw out”

Philosophy: “Love of wisdom”

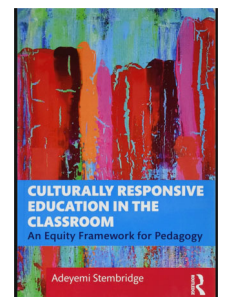
Course Materials

John Dewey's *Experience and Education* (1938) is considered a preeminent text on education. In it, he asks the reader to consider the quality of the educational experience, drawing from different philosophical perspectives on the purpose of education.



Culturally Responsive Education in the Classroom

by Adeyemi Stemberge (2020) emphasizes conscious building as an essential component of education. Through this book, we will deepen our understanding of what a philosophy looks like in practice.



Additional supplementary materials will be posted on Blackboard.

Course Format

For this seminar class, please read and be prepared to discuss assigned materials in all synchronous and asynchronous classes. Your experiences and insights - and thus, your participation is required and essential.

Each of our 14-weeks is comprised of 4 parts:

1. **Learn** (in-person & synchronous class) - together we will address core ideas in texts
2. **Act** (homework & class prep) - application and extension of core ideas
3. **Reflect** (asynchronous class) - readings and activities to build on core ideas
4. **Dig Deeper** (ongoing assignments) - extended activities to more deeply explore core ideas (see note below)

Parts 1-3 are due weekly; you can choose which assignments you complete for Part 4 (see below).

Course Requirements

Your grade for this course is broken down as follows:

- In-Class Participation (25%) - attending and being prepared to engage in all in-class and synchronous-class activities and discussions. This means coming to class prepared to share your homework.
- Online Participation (25%) - engaging in asynchronous work including reflecting on the course using this online resource; <http://bit.ly/3nJg6wZ>.
- Assignments (50%) - complete 5 assignments throughout the semester. See the box below.

“Pedagogy is not delivery and acquisition, but communication” *Mavers, 2011, p. 96*

NOTE ON PARTICIPATION

The heavy weight that participation has on your final grade reflects the importance of being an active contributor in our classroom community. Strong participation is more than talking – it means listening carefully and respectfully to others and responding constructively to their ideas with questions and interpretations of your own.

You are encouraged to share insights and critical interpretations of the readings, to make connections to materials from this and other courses, and to relate the readings to your own experiences in schools and other educational settings.

Not everyone feels comfortable participating in the same way, so I will vary opportunities to participate, including whole group, small group, and individual activities; verbal and written responses; and in-class and online environments.

PARTICIPATION INCLUDES:

Attendance

- ▶ On-time log in to synchronous sessions
- ▶ 2 or fewer unexcused absences from synchronous sessions*

Whole Group

- ▶ Provide evidence of having completed the readings
- ▶ Show courtesy to peers
- ▶ Contribute to the conversation

Small Group

- ▶ Stay on task and ensuring small group objectives are met
- ▶ Report back to whole group

Individual Work

- ▶ Complete assignments and participate in

Excused and unexcused absences: You are allowed up to 2 *unexcused absences* without consequence. Each additional absence will result in a 2-point deduction from your participation grade. *Excused absences* include: approved participation in athletic or academic events, certified serious illness and death in the immediate family, religious holidays (see Student Handbook, 2010, pp. 89-90).

Dig Deeper Options

Because learning varies for each of us - and because of the uncertainty due to COVID-19 - you will choose 4 of the 5 required assignments for this course. This allows you to set your own workload and schedule.

NOTE: You must submit at least 3 Dig Deeper assignments and the Final Reflection to pass the course.

- The **required assignment** will be a final reflection on the course. Details will be provided later in the semester.
- For the **remaining 4 assignments**, you will choose from the "Dig Deeper" table on the following page. Please note, I will note on the weekly agendas which Dig Deeper assignments that align with our weekly guiding questions.
 - ▶ Submit Dig Deeper assignment 2 weeks after the week it is recommended. For example, if you do a "Dig Deeper" activity for week 10, then it is due the Friday (11:59 pm) of week 12.
 - ▶ You must complete 2 by March 12 and the remaining by April 30.
 - ▶ Please do not submit more than one per week.
 - ▶ I will endeavor to provide feedback within 2 weeks of submission to Blackboard.

	Knowledge of Diverse Learners	Classroom Environment	Instructional Delivery	Planning & Preparation
Weeks 1-7 (pick 2)	On decentering assumptions: Week 3's reading discussed assumptions about communities and their impact. How do the authors describe how these assumptions are maintained, how can they be disrupted and why is it important to disrupt them? As you read across these articles, consider who the assumed audience is. Are the authors writing for a reader from the dominant group? How do the articles work to decenter dominant paradigms from education materials.	On conceptions of the child: Consider how constructions of childhood affect your stance toward children. Watch this video (https://youtu.be/FfxlvprMc_Y) and read Haynes & Murriss's chapter (Ch. 9). Why do their ideas of conceptions of the matter in education, and in the classroom?	On conversations: Consider how listening and conversation affects your own learning and understanding of the world. Record two conversations that you have and listen to them. Analyze them for the 10 strategies proposed by Headlee. How does understanding how you engage in conversations help prepare you to be an educator?	On children's and YA literature: Review a selection of children's books for diversity. Read Bishop (1980), Thomas & Stornaiuolo (2016), and then analyze the books. How do they represent the experiences of diverse groups? How do they reproduce norms? Create a 15-minute lesson, following Muhammad's template. NOTE: you may wish to read Bishop's <i>Shadow & Substance</i> to review her model of multicultural children's literature.
Weeks 8-12 (pick 2)	On storytelling: Listen to Lee & Low podcast on Native storytelling, read "Kill the Indian, Kill the Deaf" by Wendy Harris (2016). You may wish to do more research on Native children's and YA literature on the website <i>American Indians in Children's Literature</i> (Reese & Mendoza). Discuss how the podcast and article frame Native experiences. What have you learned in the context of relating to this course and to your future work?	On responding to current events: Watch this webinar, Black Lives Matter at School: Philadelphia Edition (https://youtu.be/zkN_kOrgjSg) and read Kate Taylor's article on school districts responses to COVID (https://www.nytimes.com/2021/01/21/us/schools-coronavirus.html). Discuss responsibility of schools to respond to current moment and what variations in response reveal about how schools acknowledge and integrate students' needs into responses. What will you take from these perspectives and integrate into your own classroom environment?	On being antiracist: Identify 3 antiracist education scholars and do research on their work. Some people include: Bettina Love, Jessie Helms, Beverly Tatum, Ibrahm Kendi, Ali Michaels, Marilisa Jimenez, Gloria Ladson-Billings, Howard Stevenson, or others whose scholarship focuses on opposing racism in education. Review their work - read articles and books they're written, watch lectures, etc. - and then report on their work, their major contributions, their area of focus, and the impact they've had. You may choose the format for your report.	On knowing history: Focus on early 20th century government policy in two contexts. First, study education policy for Native Americans who were forced into residential schools until the mid-to-late 20th century (see resources on Blackboard). Then, read this policy on education in India, which was a British Colony until 1949: (http://resources.theosophical.org/pdf/Authors/Besant/Besant_Principles_of_Education.pdf). Compare and contrast philosophical approaches to educating indigenous populations. Then, reflect on how this relates to the course and to your future work as an educator.

Evaluation & Grading

I consider myself to be a reasonable person, and I understand that things may come up that are beyond your control. If extenuating circumstances make it necessary for you to miss class, arrive late, or leave early, please contact me ahead of time. I recognize that this is an online course, and you will need to be on your computer to be able to participate. **That said, during class, please use computers and electronic devices only for purposes related to the course.**

If you require accommodations for any reason, we can work together to ensure that the learning environment is conducive to your needs (please see additional information on page 6 of the syllabus).

Grades are assigned according to these guidelines:			
Exceptional A+/A	Advanced A-/B+	Adequate B/B-	Inadequate C+ and below
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contributes to class' generation of new knowledge, provides provocative insights, and supports collective inquiry into course themes across in-class and on-line discussions and in written contexts. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Thoughtful, accurate, and thorough discussion in class, on-line, and in written contexts. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limited but accurate discussion in class, on-line, and in written contexts. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lacks understanding and/or not accurate discussion in class, on-line, and in written contexts.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shows evidence of new thinking and understanding of one's belief systems thought articulating a position that draws from key scholarship. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shows emerging evidence of new thinking and understanding of one's belief systems, such as highlighting points of interest or difficulty. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Summary information from texts and resources with limited analysis. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limited summary and analysis from text and resources about the topic.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides evidence of analysis or synthesis of the topic(s). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides evidence of analysis or synthesis of the topic(s). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Most requirements are met as outlined in the syllabus or additional information provided in class and on Blackboard 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Few requirements are met as outlined in the syllabus or supplemental information provided in class and on Blackboard.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All requirements are met as outlined in the syllabus or supplemental information provided in class and on Blackboard. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All requirements are met as outlined in the syllabus or supplemental information provided in class and on Blackboard 		

Fine print for all coursework:

- ▶ I am happy to provide extensions when necessary; any extension must be approved at least 48 hours in advance of due date. Half a letter grade will be deducted for each day an assignment is late past the approved deadline (e.g.: B+ to B).
- ▶ Remember to include for all submissions the assignment and your last name. Do this for the file name (e.g., Final_SkrlacLo) and on the actual document.
- ▶ As with all submitted work, you are expected to carefully proofread and edit your writing. Grammar and syntax (as well as citations, as necessary) are expected and will be factored into your grade.
- ▶ For any formal, written assignment, please use APA format.

- ▶ “What do you imagine your teaching practices to be?”
- ▶ “How will your teaching practices change the world?”
- ▶ “How can we make this journey together?”

Other Important Information

Statement of Inclusion: Controversial and charged topics may be discussed throughout the semester. I expect you to approach every topic discussed in class with sensibility and open-mindedness. I expect you to respect everyone in the classroom at all times.

Office of Disabilities and Learning Support Services: It is the policy of Villanova to make reasonable academic accommodations for qualified individuals with disabilities. Go to the Learning Support Services website (<http://learningsupportservices.villanova.edu>) for registration guidelines and instructions. For physical access or temporarily disabling conditions, please contact the Office of Disability Services at 610-519-4095 or email Stephen.mcwilliams@villanova.edu. Registration is needed in order to receive accommodations.



Academic Integrity: All students are expected to uphold Villanova’s Academic Integrity Policy and Code. Any incident of academic dishonesty will typically result in an “F” for the assignment and will be reported to the appropriate university officials. See the statement of the full policy on the [Graduate Arts and Sciences website](#). You can view the Academic Integrity Policy and Code, as well as other useful information related to writing papers, at the Academic Integrity Gateway web site: <http://library.villanova.edu/Help/AcademicIntegrity>

Teacher Dispositions in the Undergraduate Teacher Education Program: The Undergraduate Teacher Education Program aims to prepare teachers to be ethical leaders in their profession. One essential element of this process is the development of teacher *dispositions*, or tendencies for individuals to act in a particular manner under particular circumstances, based on their beliefs (Schussler, 2006). Over the course of your tenure in the program, you will reflect on your dispositions across four domains: *Planning and Preparation*; *Classroom Environment*; *Instruction*; and *Professional Responsibilities*. These domains will serve as touchstones as you actively engage with your beliefs about teaching, learning, and students, and develop your skills as a reflective practitioner.

Additional support: I recognize that our backgrounds and circumstances widely vary and, in some cases, personal circumstances may affect your ability to fully participate or perform in this class. If you believe your circumstances – for example, financial needs or providing care for your family – may impact your participation, please meet with me so we can work together to ensure you achieve your learning goals. Additionally, any student who has difficulty affording groceries or accessing sufficient food to eat every day, or who lacks a safe and stable place to live, and believes this may affect their performance in the course, is urged to contact Tom DeMarco, the Dean of Students, for support. Villanova offers the Nova Nook, a toiletry and food pantry located on the ground floor of HSB. For more information or to address specific needs, see Kathy Byrnes or Alicia Dunphy-Culp in Student Life, 202 or 207 Dougherty Hall. Finally, please notify me if you are comfortable in doing so. This will enable me to provide any resources that I may possess.

Acknowledgements: I wish to thank Christa Bialka, Glenn Bracey, Jerusha Conner, Edward Fierros, Krista Malott, Edwin Mayorga, Ghody Muhammad, Donna Sabis-Burns, Victoria Ford Smith, and many others for inspiring my teaching and pedagogy. My cats get credit for typos.



Proposed Schedule

At the start, all **Tuesday** classes will be **synchronous** () , and **Thursday** classes will be **asynchronous** (). Asynchronous sessions typically require you to review a lecture and/or complete an online activity related to the readings. All asynchronous work must be completed by Tuesday @5:10 pm.

In early February, I will re-assess how we meet. My goal is to shift to synchronous online classes on Tuesdays and then a repeat of the class but *in person* on Thursdays. You are required to attend one of these classes. You will still have an asynchronous class each week. We will watch COVID numbers and make adjustments throughout the semester.

Because of uncertainty about our schedule and because learning requires continuous, ongoing reflection by students and teachers, the schedule below is subject to change. I will endeavor to post each week by the previous Friday. My goal is to be responsive to the work that we are doing together and design classes that allow us to grow together.

Questions? Please email me!

Week 1. Learning Together		January 26 & 28
Learn 	Language and conversations: What do they have to do with philosophy of education?	
Act	READ <ul style="list-style-type: none">• hooks (2010) "Teaching 8: Conversation" <i>Teaching Critical Thinking</i>, pp. 43-47.• Warren & Lessner (2014) "Who has family business?" <i>Perspectives on Urban Education</i>, 11(2), pp. 122-131 OBSERVE <ul style="list-style-type: none">• In the next 1-2 days, pay attention to your conversations with other people. Where do you have conversations (in person, online, phone) and with whom? Do you notice differences in your conversational style? Do you tell anyone about the strategies in the TED talk? If so, what do they say?	
Reflect 	You should plan to spend about 45 minutes on the independent work and 30 minutes engaging with each other on Blackboard. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• All work for this self-guided class must be completed by Thursday at 5:10 pm.• All responses to peers must be completed by Sunday at 11:59 pm. There are two tasks to complete, some of them are independent, some of them require you to share with others. <ul style="list-style-type: none">Part 1: Conversations, critical thinking, and classrooms (individual work)Part 2: Weekly check-in (individual work)	
Dig Deeper	Conversation Study (recommended for this week, see p. 4 of syllabus for more details on this portion of the course)	

Week 2. Defining “Philosophy of Education”

What does “philosophy of education” mean to you?

READ

- Kauchuk & Eggen (2021) “Educational Philosophy & Your Teaching” (article on Blackboard)
- Eisner, E. (1994). Five basic orientations to the curriculum in the educational imagination: on the design and evaluation of school programs.
- Nieto, S. (2018). *Language, Culture, & Teaching*, 3rd ed. Ch. 1 (pp. 19-28).

Week 3. Identifying Assumptions

February 9 & 11

Why does understanding how (and why) we teach matter?

READ

- Baldwin, J. (1963). A talk to teachers. <http://sites.utexas.edu/lajcs/files/2017/07/A-Talk-to-Teachers-Baldwin.pdf>
- Laura, C. (2018). Find freedom in the classroom: A love letter to my babies’ teachers. In E. Moore Jr., A. Michael, & M. W. Penick-Parks (Eds.), *The guide for white women who teach black boys* (pp. 278-285). Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin.
- Ashley & Deborah. (2010) How to curse in sign language. In *Readings for diversity and social justice* (2nd ed.) Adams, M., Blumenfeld, W., Castañeda, Hackman, H., Peters, M. and Zúñiga, X. Routledge
- Campano, G., & Low, D. (2011). Multimodality and Immigrant Children, *12*(4), 381-384.
- Nodelman (no date) “Some common assumptions about children” <https://perrynodelman.com/some-common-generalizations-about-children/>

Week 4. Dewey, *Experience & Education* 1-2

February 16 & 18 (work break 1)

Work break Feb. 18. No asynchronous class work this week

Complete your weekly check-in by Friday, 11:59 pm

What is the difference between progressive and traditional education?

READ

- Dewey, Ch. 1-2
- hooks (2010) “Teaching 2: Democratic Education” in *Teaching Critical Thinking*, pp. 13-18)

Week 5. Dewey, *Experience & Education* 3-4

February 23 & 25

What does a working philosophy of education do (even if we don’t realize it)?

READ

- Dewey, Ch. 3-4
- hooks, *Teaching* 31: Teaching as Prophetic Vocation

Week 6. Dewey, *Experience & Education* 5-6

March 2 & 4

How do we move from impulse to purpose?

READ

- Dewey, Ch. 5-6
- hooks, *Teaching* 6: Purpose

Week 7. Dewey, *Experience & Education* 7-8**March 9 & 11**

Have we achieved Dewey's desire for experiential education?

READ

- Dewey, Ch. 7-8
- hooks, Teaching 3: Engaged Pedagogy

Week 8. Stembridge, *Culturally Responsive Education*, part 1**March 16 (work break 2) & 18**

Work break March 16, no in person class this week. Only asynchronous. Extra office hours during Tuesday's synchronous class time.

Two "Dig Deeper" assignments due by Friday, March. 19.

How do our beliefs inform our educational approaches?

READ

- Stembridge, Ch. 1

Midterm grades due: 5/19**Week 9. Stembridge, *Culturally Responsive Education*, part 2****March 23 & 25**

What theories inform or guide culturally responsive education?

READ

- Stembridge, Ch. 2

Week 10. Stembridge, *Culturally Responsive Education*, part 3**March 30 & April 1**

What do CRE themes look like in practice?

READ

- Stembridge, Ch. 3

Week 11. Stembridge, *Culturally Responsive Education*, part 4**April 6 & 8**

How do guiding questions connect philosophy to practice?

READ

- Stembridge, Ch. 4

Week 12. Stembridge, *Culturally Responsive Education*, part 5**April 13 & 15**

How do we ensure our practices are rooted in our purpose for teaching?

READ

- Stembridge, Ch. 5

Week 13, Stembridge, *Culturally Responsive Education*, part 6**April 20 & 22**

How will I ensure my theory and practice are aligned?

READ

- Stembridge, Ch. 6

Week 14, Celebration**April 27 & 29**

What have we learned and what will we take with us?

READ

- Diller, A. (1998). Facing the torpedo fish: Becoming a philosopher of one's own education. In S. Tozer (Ed.) *Philosophy of education yearbook*.

Final reflection due May 7 @11: 59 pm

