Identity, Access, and Innovation in Education

**Education 270**

**Fall 2014**

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Tues. & Thurs., 2:25-3:45, Taylor G

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Meetings by appointment

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**The course**

An elective offered through the Education Program, this course is designed for students to examine identity in relation to educational access, and in the context of in/equities, and to investigate how communities can and do create innovative ways to work with identities and access both inside and outside schools. We will develop ourselves as a community of learners who read and create texts and engage in field experiences and reflection to widen and deepen our understandings of multiple identities, kinds of knowledge, and ways of engaging in positive action for change.

During the first section of the course, we develop conceptual frameworks to elucidate the coupled notions of “identity” and “access,” specifically in relation to education. We examine and question identity as a social construct, the self as a cultural and psychological construct, and the politics of and beyond identities in a context Lennard Davis calls “dismodern.” Using key decisions in the courts and in public policy, we investigate identity named in terms of such categories as race, class, gender, sexuality, dis/ability, language, and religion, and educational access conceptualized in terms of (un)equal opportunities, processes, and outcomes.

In the second section of the course, we focus on educational institutions and the ways that educators and students understand and renegotiate the relationship of students’ identities to curriculum and pedagogy in school. We address questions such as: Who are students at school and in their communities, and what does/might it look like to bring students’ identities more fully into their education? How does such an approach impact diverse students’ learning and outcomes? What are the challenges and limitations of seeking to address access through the channel of schooling, and what kinds of larger institutional policy changes are also needed to address this?

In the final stretch, we investigate ways that people in communities – including students, parents, and people that Freire would call “cultural workers” – resituate knowing, learning, and acting, creating new avenues for working with identities and for defining and achieving access and success. Settings here include higher education, after school programs, and youth organizing.

Field placements in educational settings and conversations with urban educators and students offer us opportunities to explore the relationship of macro-conditions to particular people, places, and programs. Students engage in a Praxis field placement, which provides us with practice-based experiences to extend and deepen our knowledge. The Praxis dimension of the course ensures that we interact with students and educators, using our experiences to inform and revise our evolving understanding of core issues, and that we use our resources to address felt needs in the field.

**Class requirements**

The course is demanding in terms of reading, writing, and participation in both class and field site. The course is limited to 25 students; priority goes to students enrolled in the Education Program.

We are fortunate to be working with Anne Bradley at the Praxis Office:

[abradley@brynmawr.edu](mailto:jlee05@brynmawr.edu" \t "_blank), Civic Engagement Office, by appointment.

**Attendance and preparation**: This course will involve students as critical readers and writers of texts, active participants in class discussions, and participants in urban schools and other education-related settings. Your presence and active engagement are essential. If you must miss a class, please email me ahead of time if possible. Missing more than 3 classes will impact your grade; excellent attendance and participation will enhance your grade.

**Lateness/Extensions**: If there is a reason that you cannot complete an assignment by the due date, speak to me about an extension BEFORE that date.

**Special Accommodations:** Students who think they may need accommodations in this course because of the impact of a learning difference are encouraged to meet with the course instructor early in the semester. Students who attend Bryn Mawr should also contact Access Services Coordinator Deborah Alder at dalder[@brynmawr.edu](mailto:sbell@brynmawr.edu) or 610-526-7351 as soon as possible, to verify their eligibility for reasonable accommodations. Haverford Students should contact Patty Rawlings at the Office of Disabilities Services, prawling[@haverford.edu](mailto:rwebb@haverford.edu) or 610-896-1290.

**Assignments:**

**IMPORTANT NOTE:**

All course writings referring to your field placement **must use pseudonyms for schools, programs, and all participants**. All sources must be cited completely and properly, using APA, MLA, or Chicago style guidelines. (For specific instruction in citation style, please consult [www.brynmawr.edu/Library/Docs/citation.shtml](http://www.brynmawr.edu/Library/Docs/citation.html). Within this web site, be sure to distinguish between print and electronic sources.)

**1. Field-based writings**: These will provide a series of opportunities for you to examine what’s going on in your field site in the context of our readings and discussions. You will share these with members of our class and with me, and in some cases you may share them with partners at your site.

When you are posting about the field, SELECT THE **PRIVATE POST** OPTION and USE **PSEUDONYMS**!

***(a) Field log***: You will keep a regular log in relation to your field site that will act as an ongoing record of what you are seeing, doing, thinking about, and so on; it will also be a source for your field-based posts and work in class.

***(b) Field description #1***: Use visual and textual means to sketch your early impressions of your field placement site, based on your first visit(s) as well as the school’s website and any other material available to you. Consider such questions as these: Where is your site located/what are some “landmarks” that provide a context for the physical space of the building? What does the classroom/learning space look and feel like? How is the space organized or managed? Who’s there and how are participants – including you - situated in relation to each other? To time and space in the classroom?

***(c) Identity vignette(s):*** Write one or several vignettes that explore identities through relationships at your site. For example, you might tell several stories about yourself in relation to someone else at the site, and work with these to glean insights into identities of the participants. What can you learn here about identities in relationships?

(d) ***Final field paper:*** Read across your own (and others’, as relevant) field-related blogs as well as other site-based documents in the context of your experiences at your placement over the course of the semester. Write a paper in which you explore both what’s happening and what’s possible at this site. What’s happening: How do you see issues of identity, access, and/or innovation playing out at your site? What’s possible: How might you envision these issues playing out in other or additional ways? Use shared texts and/or additional research as relevant. (6-8 pp.)

**2.**  ***Representing your “identit(ies) and access”***: This will involve creating and reading/discussing a four-week series of blog posts with your working group, and then developing and sharing some kind of representation of what your group learns with our class.

To begin thinking about this project, consider the dynamic relationships of individual, family, neighborhood, community, and society as a backdrop to representing (some aspects of) your identity in relation to your access to education. You may define “education” in terms of schooling and/or less institutionally, more broadly. Essentially, you are offering a (partial) portrait of yourself at the intersection of multiple avenues that have a bearing on your access to education.

You’ll see below that this project is broken down into a series of separate blog posts; these can be text-based or you can use other means – e.g. visual, auditory, movement-based…

After posting and sharing for four weeks, your group will devise a way of pulling together what you’ve learned from and with each other: possibilities include a group mapping of identity and access, a performance, a visual representation… we’ll discuss.

**3. *Legal/policy analysis paper*:** Bring the lens of “identity, access, and innovation in education” to the realm of legal decisions and policies related to education. Significant legal decisions and policies emerge from and reflect a socio-political, legal, cultural, and economic context and help to create/generate a new set of directions and possibilities. Select a legal decision or a policy related to education, either a decision that we’ve already examined in class or one that we haven’t yet attended to. Examine the significance of the decision/policy using the lens of “identity, access, and innovation.” Address such questions as the following: What is the significance of this law/policy in terms of the context from which is emerges? Who does the law/policy intend to impact? How are others also impacted by this decision and its ramifications? In what ways does this law/policy reflect, perpetuate, and/or shift what is possible in the educational playing field?

Or

Analyze the role of the courts more broadly in shaping our notions of educational access for diverse students. How have the courts contributed to, complicated, and/or obfuscated educational equity? Given your perspective on these questions, what are the implications for how we move forward in achieving educational equity?

(5-7 pages)

**4.**  ***Curriculum assignment***: Develop a short (2-3 week) unit in which you design curriculum that takes on some of the issues of “identity and access” that we’ve addressed—or not addressed—in this class. You may use either a school-based or an extracurricular setting. In either case, it would be advantageous to design your curriculum with a particular group of learners in mind, either a group that you’re working with now or people you have interacted with in the past or plan to interact with in the future. Keeping in mind the inequitable distribution of resources, you can nevertheless take the liberty to explore the use of non-traditional media and strategies. Include a rationale that explains how your curriculum and pedagogy suggest innovative work with identity and access and challenges and questions that arise for you in envisioning this work.

**5. *“Unfinishedness” course project***:

Consider: What you have learned; where your learning is yet unfinished, leaving space for further exploration; and what insights and questions you’d like to convey to others about such matters as identities, gatekeepers and entry points, and future directions: about education as it is and as it could be. Take this project as an opportunity to deepen your own understanding of an aspect of the course that is compellingly “unfinished” for you, a place where you would like to intervene to instigate greater understanding and perhaps some change. Pursue greater knowledge about your focal area through appropriate means, including library/internet research, interviews, observations… Select medium(s) of expression that promise effective communication with an audience including the Bi-Co and beyond. We will discuss ways to share this work.

**7.** ***Course portfolio***: You’ll create a course portfolio on our serendip site. This will include all your work for the class plus a checklist and self-evaluation.

**Assigned Texts (available at Bryn Mawr Bookstore and on reserve at Canaday Library)**:

Campano, Gerald. *Immigrant Students and Literacy: Reading, Writing, and Remembering*

Minow, Martha. *In Brown’s Wake: Legacies of America’s Educational Landmark*

**All other assigned readings will be available on our serendip oneworld site.**

\* Bring readings and/or reading notes to class on the day they are due. You will be asked to draw on them actively during most class periods.

**\*\*\*\* Class Meetings and Assignments**

All assignments are due on the day they are listed.

I. **Examining identity and access in education**

**Week 1: What do we mean by “identity” and “access”?**

***Tues., Sept. 2***:

Orienting/disorienting

***Thurs., Sept. 4***:

Reading due:

Markus, “Identity matters: Ethnicity, race, and the American dream”

McDermott, Goldman, and Varenne, “The cultural work of learning disabilities”

**Week 2**

**By Sunday @5, post to your blog group: Representing your identit(ies) and access, #1:** Tell a story about one or several facets of your identity: Who are you, and how have you come to see/know your identity in this way? You may describe your identity via a story or a reflection; you may include visual or other modes of expression.

***Tues., Sept. 9***:

Reading due:

Davis, “The end of identity”

Chicago and Luci-Smith, excerpt from *Women and Art: Contested Territory*

Moreno, “Three questions”

***Thurs., Sept. 11***:

Reading due:

Butler, “Performative acts and gender constitution”

[Title IX Implications of Trans-Inclusion in Women's Colleges](http://freedominwickedness.tumblr.com/post/45189261347/on-title-ix-implications-of-trans-inclusion-in-womens" \t "_blank). Tumblr.

<http://triburgo.com/portfolios.html>

**Week 3**

**By Sunday @5, post to your blog group: Representing your identit(ies) and access, #2:** What (if anything) does your identity have to do with your access to education, either in school or more broadly in life? Again, tell this as a story or a reflection; you may also use another mode of representation.

***Tues., Sept. 16***:

Reading due:

Hall, “Who needs identity?”

***Thurs., Sept. 18***:

Drabinski and Harkins, “Introduction: Teaching inside carceral institutions”

Praxis orientation

**Week 4**: **Politics, and Policies: Investigating un/equal opportunities, processes, outcomes**

**By Sunday @5, post to your blog group: Representing your identit(ies) and access, #3:** Now consider another person’s/people’s identities and access. Also take into account how your view of what constitutes “identity” and “access” may be shifting as we inquire into these ideas.

***Tues., Sept. 23***:

Reading due:

Minow, chap. 1, “What Brown awakened”

“After Fisher…”

***Thurs., Sept. 25***:

Reading due:

Minow, chap. 2, “Expanding promise, debating means…”

Stromquist, “Gender Equity Education Globally”

**Week 5**

**By Sunday @5, post to your blog group: Representing your identit(ies) and access, #4:** Consider the question of identity and access from an institutional standpoint, e.g. in the context of the Bi-Co, or elsewhere.

***Tues., Sept. 30***:

Reading due:

Minow, chap. 3, “Making waves…”

Bazelon, “The next kind of integration,” http://www.nytimes.com/2008/07/20/magazine/20integration-t.html?pagewanted=all&\_r=0

***Thurs., Oct. 2***: **Politics and policies at the state and district level**

Reading due:

Buras, “Race, charter schools, and conscious capitalism”

**Week 6:**

**\*\* By Sunday, Oct. 5 at 5 pm, post your legal/policy analysis**

***Tues., Oct. 7***:

Heilig et. al, “The illusion of inclusion”

**II. Identity, access, and seeds of innovation**

***Thurs., Oct. 9***:

Reading due:

Jayakumar, “Pathways to college for young black scholars”

**\*\*\*\*\*Fall break!\*\*\*\*\***

**Week 7: Looking inside and outside schools**

**By Mon. @5, post field description #1. Remember to select private post and use pseudonyms!**

***Tues., Oct. 21***:

Reading due:

Tuck, Part II, Introduction to youth resistance work and theories of change, pp. 1-23

Marinell, “Voices inside schools”

***Thurs., Oct. 23***:

Reading due:

Roy and Roxas, “Whose deficit is this anyhow?”

**Week 8: Innovations on the margins of classroom life**

***Tues., Oct. 28***:

Reading due:

Ghiso and Campano, “Coloniality and education”

Campano, *Immigrant students and literacy*

***Thurs., Oct. 30***:

Reading due:

Campano, cont.

**Week 9:** **Innovation in the classroom**

***Tues., Nov. 4***:

Hill, *Beats, Rhymes, and Classroom Life*, chaps. 1 & 3

***Thurs. Nov. 6***: **Innovation and “choice”**

Reading due:

Minow, chap. 5, “School choice and choice schools”

**III:** **Beyond schools: Creating alternative spaces, resources, and knowledge**

**Week 10**

**\*\* By Sun., Nov. 9 @ 5pm, post your curriculum project**

***Tues., Nov. 11***:

Reading due:

Scott, “Distinguishing radical teaching from merely having intense experiences while teaching in prison”

Pinkert et. al, “The transformative power of Holocaust education in prison: A teacher and student account”

***Thurs. Nov. 13***:

Reading due:

Ginwright, *Black Youth Rising*, Introduction and chap. 3

**Week 11**

**By Sun. @ 5 pm**, **post your field vignette. Remember to select private post and use pseudonyms!**

***Tues., Nov. 18***:

Reading due:

Abu-El Haj, “Imagining Postnationalism”

Ewald, excerpt from *Secret Games*

***Thurs., Nov. 20***:

Reading due:

Alissa Quart. [When Girls Will Be Boys](http://www.nytimes.com/2008/03/16/magazine/16students-t.html" \t "_blank). New York Times Magazine. March 16, 2008.

Kiera Feldman. [Who Are Women’s Colleges For?](http://www.nytimes.com/2014/05/25/opinion/sunday/who-are-womens-colleges-for.html" \t "_blank) New York Times. May 24, 2014.

**Week 12**

***Tues., Nov. 25***:

Reading due:

Huber, “Challenging racist nativist framing”

Salas, thesis excerpt, “Findings from the United States: Social capital and official campus organizations”

***Thurs., Nov. 27: Thanksgiving***

Week 13

***Tues., Dec. 2***:

Reading due:

View *Echoes of Brown*

**By Wed. Dec. 3 @5, post “unfinishedness” project**

***Thurs., Dec. 4***:

Week 14

***Tues., Dec. 9***:

Praxis sessions

***Thurs., Dec. 11***:

Praxis sessions

**COURSE PORTFOLIO: This will be on our serendip site and should include all work for the class—including your field paper—plus a checklist and self-assessment. It will be due on the last day of finals.**