

## Webster University

### **COURSE SYLLABUS**

**EDUC 5220**

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Course Number

**Dr. Peggy Holton-Hall**

Instructor

314-469-6363 (H)

**Contemporary Educational Issues Summer, 2003**

Course title

term

**3**  
credit hours

**WEBG**  
site

#### **Course Description**

This course is an introduction to educational foundations and will provide an overview of important educational topics past and current. The major goal is to identify and analyze educational issues through reading, writing, discussing, and presenting ideas in oral and written form. The course will explore relationships between current issues and historical perspectives, philosophical theories, and sociologic influences. Class participants will utilize higher level thinking skills of analysis, synthesis, and evaluation as well as the skills of listening to and considering various points of view.

#### **Learning Outcomes**

Class participants are expected to:

1. become familiar with, and demonstrate knowledge of, important thinkers who have influenced education philosophies and practices, MoStep 1.2.1.3, 1.2.2.2;
2. examine historical issues and relate them to current ones, MoStep 1.2.1.4, 1.2.4.1, 1.2.5.2, 1.2.7.1, 1.2.7.2;
3. read, analyze, and synthesize written and electronic materials on current issues, MoStep 1.2.1.2, 1.2.1.3, 1.2.1.4, 1.2.2.2, 1.2.5.2;
4. conduct an in-depth investigation of an educational issue and present findings and recommendations in written and oral form, MoStep 1.2.2.2, 1.2.5.2, 1.2.7.1;
5. participate individually in class discussions and activities, and collaborate with classmates on assigned tasks, MoStep 1.2.1.2, 1.2.2.3, 1.2.7.1, 1.2.7.2, 1.2.9.1, 1.2.10.1

#### **Topical Overview, Activities, and Readings** (subject to change)

##### **Week 1. June 3, 2003**

Introduction, expectations, and overview of course; effective discussion strategies; developmental discussion; perspectives on a current issue; discussion of news articles; historical figures selection.

DUE: selection of historical figure

##### **Week 2. June 10, 2003**

Education in Colonial America and the Revolutionary Era; The Changing Landscape of U.S. Education.

Relevance to current issues; group discussion of news articles; individual reports; resource exploration and library research.

DUE: Gutek chapters 1 & 2

term project topic under consideration  
newspaper assignment (in progress)

##### **Week 3. June 17, 2003**

The Common School; Alternative Education; Charter Schools  
group discussion of readings and articles; individual reports.

DUE: Gutek chapters 3 & 4  
Newspaper assignment (in progress)  
Article analyses (in progress)  
Trends/patterns of current issues (in progress)  
Term project topic approved

**Week 4. June 24, 2003**

American Higher Education and Teacher Education; School Culture and Climate; School Safety; School Violence

group discussion of readings and articles; individual reports.

DUE: Gutek chapters 5 & 6  
Assigned articles  
Newspaper assignment (in progress)  
Article analyses (in progress)  
Trends/patterns of current issues (in progress)

**Week 5. July 1, 2003**

Education Reform; School Improvement; Accountability; Standards and Assessment

group discussion of readings and articles; individual reports.

DUE: Gutek chapter 7  
Newspaper assignment (due)  
Article analyses (due)  
Trends/patterns of current issues (in progress)

**Week 6. July 8, 2003**

Education Reform; Effective Schools; Change; Accountability; Standards and Assessment

group discussion of readings and articles; individual reports.

DUE: Gutek chapter 9 & pp. 229-233 “A Nation at Risk” & pp. 315-318 “Effective Schools”  
Trends/patterns of current issues (due)

**Week 7. July 15, 2003**

The Recent Past; Desegregation; Diversity; Poverty

group discussion of readings and articles; individual reports.

DUE: Gutek chapter 8 & pp. 299-302, *Brown vs. Board of Education*

**Week 8. July 22, 2003**

Legal Issues; Special Education; Current Trends; Looking Ahead; Leadership

discussion of term projects; course summary.

DUE: Gutek chapter 10  
term project paper

**Resources**

**Required Text:** G.L Gutek, An Historical Introduction to American Education. Prospect Heights, IL: Waveland, 1991. Supplemental readings will be assigned from library materials, newspapers, journals, handouts, and other relevant materials.

**Audio visual/other resources used by Instructor (not required for students):** Annual Editions Education 03/04, Education Week, Educational Leadership, "Eyes on the Prize" film.

### **Assessment**

Class participants will be evaluated on:

1. Class attendance, preparation, and participation including reading and discussion of all assigned materials = 5 points per session
2. Oral presentation of an historical figure pertinent to educational issues = 50 points
3. Ongoing newspaper assignment = 35 points
4. Two article analyses = 80 points (40 points each)
5. Trends/patterns of current issues = 55 points
6. Term project = 200 points

Total = 460 points

Deductions will be taken for late assignments.

Attendance at 7 of the 8 sessions is necessary in order to complete course requirements.

**Grades in the M.A.T. program** are A, A-, B+, B, B-, C, I, and W; or CR, NC, I, and W. Grades reflect the following standards:

A, A-	superior graduate work
B+, B, B-	satisfactory graduate work
C	marginal graduate work
CR	satisfactory graduate work (the equivalent of B- or better)
NC	unsatisfactory graduate work
I	incomplete
W	withdrawn from course

### **Supplements**

Outlines/requirements for the following tasks are included in this syllabus:

(1) News Analysis, (2) Historical Figures Presentation, (3) Term Project

## **(1) NEWS ANALYSIS**

The News Analysis assignments are designed to:

- increase awareness of current events and issues relevant to education,
- encourage analysis of events, issues, and trends relevant to education,
- examine news media coverage of events and issues in education.

**1. Ongoing newspaper assignment:** For 2-3 consecutive weeks, read and collect 15-20 articles about issues pertaining to education from newspapers or news media. Organize into a notebook, binder, scrapbook, etc. Record the following:

- a. your name
- b. name of newspaper or news media
- c. dates of monitoring
- d. total number of articles pertaining to education
- e. list of all educational issues addressed in your articles
- f. Narrative: Can you link any of these issues with any historical issues from readings and/or class discussion? (Hint: "No" would not be a good answer to this question!) Give evidence from the articles and readings/class discussions to support the "Linking." It is expected that you will be able to link 2-3 issues in the articles with one or more historical issues.
- g. Include a reference page citing all articles collected. Use APA format.

**DUE: Week 5.** Be prepared to share and discuss your findings.

**2. Article Analyses #1 and #2:** Select 2 major articles from your newspaper clippings to analyze in depth. Submit a one-page (double-spaced) analysis on each article, and address each point below.

- a. Identify the article by publication, date, title, and page number.
- b. Summarize the article's content.
- c. Describe how schools currently address the topic.
- d. Speculate on how schools might need to change in order to fully respond to the issues raised by the article. Give rationale for your speculation.
- e. Evaluate the national priority of this topic. Cite evidence to support.
- f. Evaluate the reporting. Is there evidence of balanced reporting? biases and/or faulty reasoning by the reporter? Support your observations by citing word choices, style of reporting, placement of the article, etc.

**DUE: Week 5.** Be prepared to share and discuss your findings.

**3. Trends/Patterns of Current Issues:** After 2-3 weeks of clipping articles, review the material you have collected, and submit an analytical summary (2 pages) addressing the points below.

- a. Name 2 major issues relevant to education covered in the material you collected.
  - Briefly summarize the issues.
  - Explain your rationale for selecting these issues by citing the frequency of coverage, length of articles, or by describing the depth and balance of the reporting.
- b. Analyze the coverage.
  - Describe what kind of image of education the news media is projecting by their coverage of these major issues.
  - Give evidence from the articles to support your contention.
- c. Recommendations
  - What recommendations for action can you suggest for an individual to create a greater impact on information the public receives about these issues?
  - What recommendations can you suggest for a school?
  - What recommendations can you suggest for a school district?
- d. Include Reference page. (You may use same reference page as used for assignment #1.)

**DUE: Week 6.** Be prepared to share and discuss your findings.

## **(2) HISTORICAL FIGURES PRESENTATION**

The purposes of this assignment are:

- to explore the biography of and issues faced by significant historical figures in education,
- to determine their contributions to education,
- to make connections with current educational issues.

The assignment involves an oral presentation and a one-page outline based on research. The steps below will help in preparing the report.

1. Select one historical figure from the list provided by the instructor (Week 1).

2. Find and review material about your historical figure. Use any reference materials including biographies, original writings by the historical figure, and histories of education. Develop a reference list using APA format.
3. Study the individual's life for information pertinent to educational issues dealt with by that person in his/her time period. Use the following questions as guidelines:
  - a. What were the important factors in this person's life?
  - b. What was the nature of the national debate on education and other important issues of that time?
  - c. What was the involvement of the historical figure in education and/or national issues?
  - d. Why was this person's work on the issues significant then, and why is it significant today?
4. Speculate on the following questions. (Note that these questions are inferential, thus you may not find answers to them in your materials.)
  - a. What evidence of this historical figure's work/influence do you see in education today?
  - b. Identify one or more contemporary educational issue(s) similar to issues faced by this historical figure. Speculate on how your historical figure would respond to this (these) current issue(s). Give reasons/evidence to support your conclusions.
  - c. In what ways are the characteristics of contemporary American education (or culture) similar to and different from the educational or societal context during the period of this historical figure?
5. Summarize using any personal understandings you may have reached after studying this person.
6. In preparing your presentation, be creative about the format. Do not read your report to the class. Be sure (a) the format effectively communicates your materials, (b) it is interesting to the class, (c) you have a one-page outline and reference list with copies for each class member, and (d) you keep within the 15-minute time limit.

There will be peer review as well as the Instructor's evaluation of each presentation.

### **(3) TERM PROJECT**

The term project gives you the opportunity to explore an issue of interest to you in education. The project should take the form of a research paper, i.e. an in-depth analysis of a specific question or issue, using books, journal articles, web sites and other resources. Use the guidelines below for selecting a topic and organizing your report.

#### **Guidelines for term project**

**1. Select a topic and develop a research question.** Be specific in your topic selection so that the issue is not vague, yet may apply to various situations. In other words, the topic must be broad enough to cover a variety of situations and be generalizable, but narrow enough to be

accomplished in an eight week course. A topic that is too broad may result in data overload, while one that is too narrow may yield insufficient data from which to draw your research. The topic may be a current, historical, or philosophical issue relevant to the field of education. The topic and research question must be approved by the Instructor by week 3.

**2. Develop a reading list on the topic.** Include books, journal articles, and information from the world wide web. Various bibliographies and ERIC CIJE (Current Index to Journals in Education) in the library will assist you in finding relevant materials. Use the content from the original articles, not summaries or abstracts. (See <http://library.webster.edu/database.htm>.)

**3. Format** - The paper should be a total of 12-15 pages in length including title page and reference pages. It should be typed (word processor), double-spaced with 12-point font, 1-inch margins on all sides, and stapled. (No plastic covers, no faxed papers.) Use APA format.

### **Outline of Term Project**

**A. Graphic organizer** (semantic web) of the ideas/contents of the project (1 page)

**B. Introduction** (1 page or so)

1. Describe your topic and research question.
2. Rationale: Why is this topic personally compelling? Why is the topic important to the field of education?
3. Nature of the controversy: Describe the debate regarding your topic, and state the various opinions.

**C. Review of the Literature** (5-7 pages)

Describe the viewpoints on your question from the literature review. Limit the review to points relevant to your topic. Organize your literature review in some consistent fashion, e.g., themes, sources, historical time periods, pro versus con, etc.

**D. Critique and discussion** (4-6 pages)

1. Analysis and synthesis:
  - Analyze the content of the Literature Review.
  - Answer your research question citing evidence from your study.
  - Synthesize a position on the issues based on your study.
  - Cite evidence/examples from the research to support your thinking.
2. Link the historical issues and historical figures discussed in class with your topic where they naturally fit. This should be two to four references and should comprise only one page of the discussion.

**E. Conclusions and Recommendations** (1-2 pages)

1. Based on your study, what conclusions can you draw?
2. What recommendations can you make for educators, educational systems, and other persons of influence?

**F. Bibliography** (1-2 pages) of at least 10 sources including books, periodicals, historical research, and current research. Use APA format.

**G. Optional:** Any appendices if necessary or appropriate, including diagrams, charts, etc.

**Note:** Grammar, sentence structure, spelling, and accurate reference citations are very important. Be sure to proofread and edit.

### **Final Projects**

The term project paper is due week 8, July 22, 2003. You have several options:

a. If turned in by week 7 (July 15), your paper will be graded and returned to you during the last class.

b. If turned in Week 8 and you would like to have your graded paper mailed to you, please include a self-addressed stamped envelope with sufficient postage.

c. If you do not wish to have your paper returned but would like a postcard with final grades mailed to you, please provide a stamped, self-addressed postcard.

d. You may elect to wait for the university grade report.

**Note: Papers will not be available for pick-up from the School of Education Office.**

This syllabus is subject to change at the discretion of the Instructor.

Regular class attendance is required.

Inclement Weather: In the event of hazardous weather conditions, the following radio stations will announce school-closing information for Webster University: WIL 92.3 FM, Y98 98.1 FM,

KMOX 1120 AM, WRTH 1430 AM, KTRS 550 AM, and TV Channels 2, 4, 5, and 30.