Instructor Information

Instructor: Paige J. Gardner, Ph.D., Adjunct Faculty  
Scholar-Practitioner: Assistant Dean of Students & CARE Case Manager  
Email: pgardner@luc.edu  
Office Hours: Fridays 12:00pm – 2:00pm (Schedule by email)  
Class Zoom Link: https://luc.zoom.us/j/3973623756

Responsiveness

You can expect responses to your emails within 24hrs on business days. Responses to weekend email will be replied to by the following Monday. Please note, if, for pedagogical reasons, a change to the syllabus is necessary, I reserve the right to move forward with such changes. If changes are made to the syllabus, I will notify the entire class community either verbally or in writing.

School of Education Commitment - COVID-19

Loyola’s School of Education (SOE) recognizes that this is an unprecedented time. We understand that moving into the 2020-2021 academic year while living in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic may stir feelings of uncertainty, fear, or anxiousness. We want you to know that your safety, health, and well-being, as well as that of our faculty and staff, remain our primary concern. We want to be able to support you in any way that we can. We ask you to embody the Jesuit value of Cura Personalis, or care for the whole person, as we prepare to learn together. We ask that you consider your way of being in this community, to act with care, and treat all with dignity to keep yourself and others safe.

The University understands that you may encounter obstacles that make reaching academic goals more difficult. We strongly encourage you to access the Student Resources on Loyola’s COVID-19 Response webpage for information, supports, and resources on basic needs such as housing, food, financial aid, and medical and mental health. This webpage also offers information on official University communications, access to technology, and student services. All Loyola University Chicago administrators, faculty, and advisors are also here for you.

The SOE is committed to working with all students to address any challenges that may arise during the semester. Please reach out to your professor as early as possible to discuss any accommodations you think may be necessary in order for you to successfully complete your coursework. We know this will be a semester like none other, but through collaboration, communication, and shared responsibility, we will not only get through this difficult time; we will thrive.

KEY COVID-19 Resources for your Spring – 2021 Return

Spring 2021 RETURN to CAMPUS Checklist  
Spring 2021 RETURN to CAMPUS Guidance  
Required Personal Safety Practices  
COVID-19 Testing and Reporting Protocol  
COVID-19 Campus Updates
Course Information

Required Texts


Liberatory Book Club Texts - you will only read one of the books listed below


Course Description

This course examines the notion of curriculum and will allow you to consider the following central questions: What is curriculum? What has curriculum looked like in your schooling experiences? What is curriculum in the context of higher education & student affairs? What are the explicit and implicit curricula of higher education & student affairs? How is higher education & student affairs curriculum created, by whom, and for what purpose? What is your own understanding and experiences with curriculum in your own life?

Course Objectives

This course aims to model effective curricular design course activities, assignments, readings, and relationships. While the explicit nature of such items is critical, the implicit framings of this course should prove even more impactful.

This course has been designed to meet the following general goals. Students will:

1. Engage in rigorous discourses about the role of curriculum in higher education & student affairs.
2. Become familiar with key theoretical readings and related readings about curriculum.
3. Learn to effectively facilitate and participate in discussions around critical issues in curriculum in higher education & student affairs.
4. Examine your own intersectional positionality as a scholar/researcher/educator by applying the concepts of our readings to your own understandings of curriculum.
5. Explore the ways in which identity, education and agency intersect and interact with one another in educational contexts with a focus on curriculum.

Course Pedagogy

Our pedagogical approach to teaching and cultivating a learning environment is grounded in decolonization and anti-oppressive pedagogy. Zinga and Styres (2019) argue that it is essential that educators engage in self-reflection to effectively aid students to immerse themselves in challenging and complex course content. This course is designed for students to learn and disseminate knowledge within a historical-critical lens in higher education. Using decolonization and anti-oppressive as a pedagogy framework will help students understand underlying assumptions and embrace differences among one another to have critical dialogue around social justice issues in the course. Using a student-centered approach, we will build community by "calling each in" rather than "calling each other out." We are all experts only on our lived experience and should value each other perspectives throughout the course. As co-learners, we will work in a collaborative and brave space environment to create a holistic learning process. The classroom environment encourages active learning, critical feedback, and diverse ways of learning and knowing. Centering education as a liberating experience that situates as Paulo Freire (2000) shares the "teacher" and "student" as co-learners and as co-teachers. Using this pedagogical approach to teaching, this course will act as a conduit in addressing the course readings, assignments, discussions, and activities to evoke change in our communities respectively and in the field of higher education.

Conceptual Framework and Conceptual Framework Standards

For your reference, our conceptual framework is described here, www.luc.edu/education/mission/.

The following SOE Conceptual Framework Standards (CFS) will be addressed in this course:

- CFS1: Candidates critically evaluate current bodies of knowledge in their field.
- CFS2: Candidates apply culturally responsive practices that engage diverse communities.
- CFS3: Candidates demonstrate knowledge of ethics and social justice.
- CFS4: Candidates engage with local and/or global communities in ethical and socially just practices.

Dispositions

All courses in the SOE assess student dispositions. As a result, your syllabus is required to have a statement describing which SOE dispositions will be assessed in the course: Professionalism, Inquiry, and Social Justice. Full transparency is critical to ensure that students are able to meet the expectations in this area. Please be sure to state the dispositions that are assessed in the course and direct students to where they can locate the rubric on LiveText. A description of how we use disposition data in the SOE is included in the SOE syllabus addendum.

IDEA Course Evaluation Link for Students

Each course you take in the School of Education is evaluated through the IDEA Campus Labs system. We ask that when you receive an email alerting you that the evaluation is available that you promptly complete it. To learn more about IDEA or to access the website directly to
complete your course evaluation go to: http://luc.edu/idea/ and click on STUDENT IDEA LOGIN on the left-hand side of the page.

School of Education and University Guidelines

Principles of Community
In support of the course description, goals, and pedagogy, the expectation is for students and instructors to craft an equitable, healthy learning community. Everyone enters this course with unique backgrounds, experiences, and perceptions related to our personal and professional selves. As such, our inquiry into the foundations of higher education will elicit dialogue and debate as we all make sense of how our new knowledge reshapes understanding of self and our field. The goal of our community should not be to shy away from healthy expressions of doubt, clarity, and/or convictions, but to hold each other to principles related to a practitioner-scholar of higher education.

These principles include:
- Timely arrival to class and prepared to discuss weekly readings
- Active listening and attentiveness during discussions and presentations
- Attention to both the intent and impact of language
- Giving space for all community members to participate
- Understanding that we are all “works-in-progress"

Writing Expectations
Graduate education places a strong emphasis on developing writing skills and the ability to communicate effectively. All papers should be submitted in APA 7th Edition format. For this course, the expectation is that all papers (are):
- Cover Page: Title and author on the first page (not counted toward page length)
- Margins: 1-inch on all sides of the paper (top, bottom, left and right)
- Font: Times New Roman, 12-point
- Spacing: Double-spaced throughout (including all quotations)
- Citations: If you reference another person’s ideas or quote from an outside source, you must include the last name(s) of the author(s) the year of publication, and the page number (if you used a direct quote) in parenthesis at the end of the sentence or quotation. Examples (hooks 2005, p. 5) (Lattuca and Stark, 2016) (Gordon, 1990)
- Reference List: Included at the end of the paper (not counted toward the page length). Please include the author’s names, the title of the article/chapter, the title journal/book, the name and location of the publisher (for books). See the list of class readings for examples.

Should paper have significant errors in APA formatting, they will not be accepted as complete.

Use of Technology (including cell phones, laptops, tablets, etc.)
This class is designed so that learning will be optimized through discussion and our powerful interactions through sharing ideas from our life experiences, professional expertise, and other funds of knowledge with each other. Therefore, it will be important that all of us be willing to share our screens so that we can make a human connection. Though our entire class will take place online, students are expected to focus through out the duration of our class time and engage with
the content to their fullest ability. Please minimize distractions as much as possible. If students are “on call” as part of your professional responsibilities or have other personal/family obligations that may require emergency contact, please inform the instructor at the start of the semester (or at the beginning of a particular class). It is also a good idea to for students to have a conversation with their supervisors, colleagues, and family to help them understand that interruptions during class time should be on an emergency-basis only. Given the circumstances of this global pandemic, don’t hesitate to communicate your needs for support with the instructor.

Email/Sakai

Email will be used as the primary mode of correspondence for this course. I will respond to/be available for email communication between Monday and Friday and get back to you within 24 hours during the work week. It is imperative that you activate your Loyola University Chicago account and check it daily. Please also check your Loyola spam mail and mail foundry to ensure course related messages are not misdirected. Additionally, Sakai will be used extensively to conduct forums, turn in assignments, and as a source to update the class about course material.

Managing Life Crisis and Finding Support

Should you encounter an unexpected crisis during the semester (i.e., securing food or housing, addressing mental health concerns, managing a financial crisis, and/or dealing with a family emergency, etc…), I strongly encourage you to contact the Office of the Dean of Students by submitting a CARE referral (www.luc.edu/csaa) for yourself or a peer in need of support. If you are uncomfortable doing so on your own, please know that I can submit a referral on your behalf--just email me or schedule a meeting with me during office hours. To learn more about the Office of the Dean of Students, please find their website here: https://luc.edu/dos/services/.

Special Circumstances--Receiving Assistance

Students are urged to contact me should they have questions concerning course materials and procedures. If you have any special circumstance that may have some impact on your course work, please let me know so we can establish a plan for assignment completion. To receive formal accommodations, register with Student Accessibility Center (SAC). Once you’ve registered with SAC, you must submit your formal accommodations to me so that I can best support your success in this course. Keep in mind that formal accommodations are not retroactive. Please provide me with an accommodation notification from the Student Accessibility Center, preferably within the first two weeks of class. If you have any special circumstance that may have some impact on your course work, please let us know so we can establish a plan for assignment completion.

Smart Evaluation

Towards the end of the course, students will receive an email from the Office of Institutional Effectiveness as a reminder to provide feedback on the course. Students will receive consistent reminders throughout the period when the evaluation is open, and the reminders will stop once the evaluation is completed.
• The evaluation is completely anonymous. When the results are released, instructors and departments will not be able to tell which student provided the individual feedback.
• Because it is anonymous and the results are not released to faculty or departments until after grades have been submitted, the feedback will not impact a student’s grade.
• The feedback is important so that the instructor can gain insight into how to improve their teaching and the department can learn how best to shape the curriculum.

Academic Integrity
Loyola University Chicago takes seriously the issues of plagiarism and academic integrity. Below is an excerpt, quoted directly, of the university’s statement on integrity:

“The faculty and administration of Loyola University Chicago wish to make it clear that the following acts are regarded as serious violations of personal honesty and the academic ideal that binds the university into a learning community:

Submitting as one's own:
1. Material copied from a published source: print, internet, CD-ROM, audio, video, etc.
2. Another person's unpublished work or examination material.
3. Allowing another or paying another to write or research a paper for one's own benefit.
4. Purchasing, acquiring, and using for course credit a pre-written paper.

The critical issue is to give proper recognition to other sources. To do so is both an act of personal, professional courtesy and of intellectual honesty.”

Assignments & Grading

Assignments (Points, Due Dates)

1. **My Name Vignette** (6 points, due Monday Jan. 25 by 5:00pm)
The purpose of this assignment is for you to think about the implicit and explicit meanings (the curriculum) of your name and to introduce yourself to the class in a meaningful way. Drawing from Sandra Cisneros' vignette, My Name, you will write a vignette of your own name in 250-500 words (it can follow Cisneros' structure, or it can take on a different format of your choice). On the first day of class (1/25), you will project your written vignette onto the screen so that others can have a visual of it, then share it aloud with the class. If you need some prompting, here are some questions/ideas to consider (you don’t need to answer all of these questions – they are simply to be used as motivational sparks). Sample of “My Name Vignette” is found at the end of the syllabus.

2. **Gratitude Letter** (10 points, due Monday, Mar. 1 by 5:00pm)
The purpose of this assignment is for students to reflect on their personal experiences with positive teaching and learning environments. Students are to identify an influential educator (teacher, administrator, faculty) that supported a positive educational experience and write an extended letter (4-6 pages) to the identified individual. The letter should include the following – a) background introduction; b) brief summary of overall educational experiences; c) description of the influential educator and why their approach
had such a lasting impact; d) Using course readings, consider how this approach reflects caring, healthy aspects of pedagogy and learning; e) how your personal experiences and course readings shape your future goals for teaching and learning as a higher education professional.

3. **Group Syllabus** (15 points, due Monday, Apr. 12, by 5:00pm)
The purpose of this assignment is for students to collaboratively design a high-impact program initiative or course seminar. Assume that you will have 15 students who come from a variety of majors, demographic backgrounds, and skill levels; the program initiative or course meets once a week for one hour over 14 weeks. Your group will design a program schedule or syllabus with the intention of potentially implementing it in your role as an educator. You will have 30 minutes to present your group syllabus and reflection to the class along with time at the end for Q&A. You will upload an electronic copy of the syllabus for students to follow along with in the Sakai folder entitled “Syllabi Group Presentations”. Your presentation will include: • An overview of the syllabus including program/course description, objectives, learning outcomes, applicable policies/program expectations (attendance, activity engagement, late assignments, grading, etc.), and a course outline including supplemental readings and assignments. (15 minutes) • A reflection on the benefits and challenges of this assignment (5 minutes) • A Q&A session (10 minutes). You may choose one of the examples below or request to use a different program initiative/seminar theme.

**Examples of program initiatives**: Cultural Mentorship Programs, Emerging Leadership Curriculum, Residential Assistant Training Curriculum, etc.

**Examples of course seminars**: First Year Seminar, First Generation College Student Seminar, Black Student Seminar, Activism & Grassroot Organizing Seminar, etc.

4. **Critical Analysis Paper** (20 points, due Wednesday, Apr. 28 by 5:00pm)
Based on the group syllabus you co-authored, you will utilize Latucca and Stark (2009) to write a 10-12 page analysis of a current program initiative or course curriculum and provide recommendations for future changes. You report should include the following: a) summary of your group syllabus – content, sequence, delivery, and intended outcomes; b) identification of external and internal influences impacting current curriculum structure; c) curricular comparisons to at least two other higher education program initiatives or course seminars; d) recommendations for adjustment and evaluation. The assignment requires APA formatting (9th or 10th edition).

5. **Class Attendance and Participation** (13 points, due weekly)
This course is designed to provide students with multiple opportunities to participate including blogging, general class discussions and small group activities. In order to take advantage of these opportunities, students are expected not only to read the assigned materials, but should critically assess the arguments, practices, and ideas espoused by the authors. Effective participation also requires listening and constructive responses to one another. Comments, whether fully developed or still under construction, are encouraged as we work together to understand the strengths and limitations of specific ideas and their utility for understanding of the foundations of higher education. Students are expected to
attend each session, however if a lateness or absence is anticipated, please inform the instructor as early as possible. You will receive 1 point for attendance and participation.

6. **3-2-1 Weekly Blog Posts** (36 points, due weekly)

   **Due Date:** You will submit your blog post in the Sakai “Blogs” tab each Friday by 11:50pm. You will then respond to at least two of your classmates’ blog posts each Saturday by 11:50pm. There are 12 blogs total.

   **The Assignment:** Every week, students are expected to critically review and reflect on assigned course readings. Please post your blog using the following header: Week#[InsertYourTitle]. Students will be required to write one blog post and respond to two of their peers’ blog posts. While blogging offers students a flexible avenue to engage with course materials, students are expected to follow the 3-2-1 blog model for their individual posts:

   3 paragraphs, *with at least 2 quotations and at least 1 discussion question*. Blog responses do not need to follow any specific format however, they must include ALL elements of the 3-2-1 blog model. In building reflection and readings, students may consider the following questions when writing blog posts: What are the main points the author is making in the reading? What do you agree with? What do you disagree with? What is missing? How does this connect to your personal and professional contexts? How does this connect to your social identities?

   **Please Note**

   - No post required for 1/18, 3/8, 4/26
   - Students are encouraged to write and save their blog posts as Word documents prior to submitting via Sakai, as we cannot guarantee that posts/writing will be available after the end of the course, when the Sakai site is closed.
   - Blog posts are less formal in tone than scholarly papers to allow for less anxiety and more freedom in expression. Still, students are expected to submit writing that is cogent, professional, and free of grammatical, spelling, or other typographical errors. Furthermore, students should utilize APA format for any in-text citations or direct quotes, as well as include a full reference for any sources cited within the paper that have not been directly introduced/covered in this course (but a full reference list is not required).
   - Grading: You will earn 2 points for successfully completing your individual weekly blog and ½ point for each peer blog response for a total possible 3 points. Sample 3-2-1 Blog Posts/Responses are at the end of the syllabus.

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**Assignment Summary**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
<th>Points</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>My Name Vignette</td>
<td>Jan. 25</td>
<td>6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gratitude Letter</td>
<td>Mar. 1</td>
<td>10</td>
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Group Syllabus

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
<th>Points</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Critical Analysis Paper</td>
<td>Apr. 12</td>
<td>15</td>
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<tr>
<td>Attendance &amp; Participation</td>
<td>Apr. 28</td>
<td>20</td>
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<tr>
<td>3-2-1 Blog Posts &amp; Responses</td>
<td>Weekly</td>
<td>13</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total Points</td>
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<td>100</td>
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**Grading Scale**

The grading/evaluation policy for this course is consistent with Loyola University, Chicago policy. The final grade will be determined by each student’s performance on all assignments, participation and attendance.

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<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>90.0 - 100.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>85.0 - 89.9</td>
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<td>C</td>
<td>80.0 - 84.9</td>
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<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>75.0 - 79.9</td>
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<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>0.0 - 74.9</td>
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**Late Work**

Assignments are expected to be completed and turned in on the due date. If you anticipate needing more time to submit your work, please notify Dr. Gardner via email at least 48 hours in advance of the due date and time. If you do not notify the professor 48 hours in advance, there will be a 10% deduction per day for each late assignment.

**Weekly Schedule**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic &amp; Readings</th>
<th>Assignments Due</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Week 1</td>
<td>Jan. 18</td>
<td>Take care of yourself and prepare for first day of class.</td>
<td>No Blog Post/Response</td>
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<td></td>
<td>(No Class)</td>
<td>Take time to listen and reflect on Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Speech</td>
<td><em>King, M.L. (1963)</em> Syllabus Recording</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>Activities</strong></td>
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<td>“My Name Vignette” Activity</td>
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<td>Syllabus Q&amp;A</td>
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<td>Week 2</td>
<td>Jan. 25</td>
<td>Introductions and Community</td>
<td><strong>My Name Vignette</strong></td>
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<td><em>Chang (2018)</em> pp. 1-26</td>
<td>Blog post due Jan. 22</td>
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<td><strong>Readings Due</strong></td>
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<td>Chang (2018) pp. 1-26</td>
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<td><em>O’Donnell (2015)</em></td>
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<td>Week 3</td>
<td>Feb. 1</td>
<td>Deciphering the Hidden Curriculum in Education &amp; Student Affairs</td>
<td><strong>Readings Due</strong></td>
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<td><em>Giroux (1978)</em></td>
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<td>Week</td>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Topic</td>
<td>Readings Due</td>
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<td>Week 4</td>
<td>Feb. 8</td>
<td>Philosophy of Teaching and Learning:</td>
<td>Blog post due Feb. 5&lt;br&gt;Blog response due Feb. 6&lt;br&gt;<strong>Readings Due</strong>&lt;br&gt;Freire, forward &amp; preface&lt;br&gt;Smidt, Preface and Chapter 1&lt;br&gt;Acevedo (2015)&lt;br&gt;Zamudio (2009)</td>
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<td>Examining our positionalities and</td>
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<td>Dialogue and action</td>
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<td>Problem-posing education</td>
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<td>Week 8</td>
<td>Mar. 8</td>
<td>Spring Break</td>
<td>No Blog Post/Response</td>
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<td>(No Class)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 9*</td>
<td>Mar. 15</td>
<td>Philosophy of Teaching and Learning</td>
<td>Blog post due Mar. 12&lt;br&gt;Blog response due Mar. 13&lt;br&gt;<strong>Readings Due</strong>&lt;br&gt;</td>
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| Week 10* | Mar. 22 | Curriculum Development: Internal and External Influences | Blog post due Mar. 19  
Blog response due Mar. 20  
**Readings Due**  
hooks (2000), p. 103-221  
Rendon (2014), p. 91-151 |
| Week 11 | Mar. 29 | Curriculum Development: Learner-centered design | Blog post due Mar. 26  
Blog response due Mar. 27  
**Readings Due**  
Latucca & Stark 1-4  
Pope, Reynolds, and Mueller (2019) |
| Week 12 | Apr. 5 | Curriculum Development: Reflection, Evaluation, Adjustment | Blog post due Apr. 2  
Blog response due Apr. 3  
**Readings Due**  
Latucca & Stark, 5-6  
Gaston-Gayles & Kelly (2007)  
Perez, Robbins, Harris, & Montgomery (2019) |
| Week 13 | Apr. 12 | Adapting and Embracing Change  
**Activities**  
Group Syllabus Presentations | **Group Syllabus**  
Blog post due Apr. 9  
Blog response due Apr. 10  
**Readings Due**  
Latucca & Stark, 7-8  
Serrano, O’Brien, Roberts, & Whyte (2018) |
| Week 14 | Apr. 19 | Testimonios as Official Knowledge  
**Activities**  
Community Writing Workshop | Blog post due Apr. 16  
Blog response due Apr. 17  
**Video Due**  
“Right to Write” by Dra. Chang |
| Week 15 | Apr. 26 | Envision and enact a liberatory curriculum | **Final Paper Due**  
No Blog Post/Response |
Joint classes with Dr. Baber

Important breaks to note:

- Spring Break, February 10-14 and March 6-9
- Spring Holiday, April 1-5 (we have class on April 5)
- Weeks 7, 9, & 10 will be in collaboration with Dr. Baber’s section

References


Samples of “My Name Vignette”
My Name
by Sandra Cisneros

In English, my name means hope. In Spanish, it means too many letters. It means sadness, it means waiting. It is like the number nine. A muddy color. It is the Mexican records my father plays on Sunday mornings when he is shaving, songs like sobbing. It was my great-grandmother's name and now it is mine. She was a horse woman too, born like me in the Chinese year of the horse--which is supposed to be bad luck if you’re born female--but I think this is a Chinese lie because the Chinese, like the Mexicans, don't like their women strong. My great-grandmother. I would've liked to have known her, a wild, horse of a woman, so wild she wouldn't marry. Until my great-grandfather threw a sack over her head and carried her off. Just like that, as if she were a fancy chandelier. That's the way he did it. And the story goes she never forgave him. She looked out the window her whole life, the way so many women sit their sadness on an elbow. I wonder if she made the best with what she got or was she sorry because she couldn't be all the things she wanted to be. Esperanza. I have inherited her name, but I don't want to inherit her place by the window. At school, they say my name funny as if the syllables were made out of tin and hurt the roof of your mouth. But in Spanish my name is made out of a softer something, like silver, not quite as thick as sister's name Magdalena--which is uglier than mine. Magdalena who at least-can come home and become Nenny. But I am always Esperanza. would like to baptize myself under a new name, a name more like the real me, the one nobody sees. Esperanza as Lisandra or Maritza or Zeze the X. Yes. Something like Zeze the X will do.

My Name
by Paige J. Gardner

My parents decided to name me Paige Justina Gardner. The literal interpretation of my name is: young assistant. A page in medieval households was usually a young boy whose service was the first step in his training as a knight”. I’ve also seen my name mean “young assistant”. The literal interpretation of my name still carries a connection to my destined path. Over the years I have been a Resident Assistant, Assistant Resident Director, Assistant Director of SDMA, and now Assistant Dean of Students - as you can see, I was destined to assist students on their educational journey. Another way I would like to share my name is by telling the story of why my parents picked Paige. Music has always been a huge part of life; it brought my parents together, it served as my passion when I didn’t care much about school, and music ties me to my spiritual practice. Back in the day, my parents (not knowing each other), both joined a national choir directed by James Cleveland. In the 1970s-1980s, this was a big deal. During their time singing with this choir, a woman by the name of Dorris Paige introduced my parents. Once they had me, they decided to give me her middle name. My parents continued to sing together in choirs and my dad even became a choir director in church. My mom always tells me stories of how I was in the womb grooving to music, even when I was an infant sitting in choir rehearsal with my parents, I would be moving on beat to the music. As they continued to grow the family, my siblings and I also became choir singers, directors, etc. Our love for music as a family still remains strong and deeply integrated into our lives.
Sample “3-2-1 Blog Post”

This week’s readings challenged me to evaluate my own privileges and reminded me of how oblivious I am to them on a daily basis. I related to the way Watt (2013) examines her identity. “My marginalized status as a racial being is prominent to my sense of self. Simultaneously, I am not fully conscious of the centrality I enjoy as a heterosexual and as a cisgender female” (p. 45). Interestingly, I also read both of Janet Mock’s books and was deeply impacted by them. At the time, I was reading memoirs by several other writers of color, and unlike Watt, was not consciously seeking out a trans voice. While Mock’s books describe realizing her identity and gave me a deeper understanding of her experience as a trans woman, I realized that after reading them I just identified with her as a fellow black woman.

Watt (2013) describes reading Mock in order to “learn about this Difference”, and while I learned a great deal, I mostly felt the same sense of connection I have felt after any memoir by a woman of color. Part of that is due to Mock’s style of writing, and the way being trans is one of many layers of her identity. Mock’s gender expression and sexual orientation are also similar to my own – use of she/her pronouns, feminine style of dress, in a heterosexual relationship, etc. In reading Watt, I wondered whether I was being willfully ignorant, overlooking Mock’s identity as a trans woman and focusing on the aspects that I found most relatable. What bothers me is the way Watt describes reading this one trans author, and engaging in dialogue with one trans colleague. I see many benefits to practicing privileged identity exploration, however, I cannot help but wonder how this impacts people from marginalized populations. This trans faculty member is likely one of few, and has probably thought about pronouns and various gender inclusion practices for many years. It feels presumptuous of Watt to expect them to continue having these conversations with her just because she is trying to resituate herself. This feels like an example of the internalized superiority that Sensoy and DiAngelo (2017) describe in Chapter 6.

I certainly would not want to be singled out by white and/or male colleagues whenever they wanted a perspective from someone who shares my identity. Rather, I think there is value in seeing, acknowledging, even celebrating difference in people without categorizing them as other, or using their lived experiences for your benefit. Sensoy and DiAngelo (2017) describe how marginalized groups “have always tried to get dominant groups to see and understand their experiences, but dominant groups often aggressively resist this information” (p. 96).

During a recent workplace equity training, I had to check my privilege as an able-bodied person. Two colleagues, one who has disabled children, and another who is blind, talked about how able-bodied people tend to avoid interaction with disabled people. Rather than awkwardly acknowledging difference, or saying something problematic, people are more comfortable ignoring them altogether. I felt especially guilty about having done this because I have felt overlooked myself, and know how someone choosing to say nothing can feel worse than someone saying the wrong thing. In centering experiences of d/Deaf women of color, Stapleton (2015) focuses on individuals who are often ignored even within their own communities and families. Although her work is highly specific, the way she
gives voice to those who have never been encouraged to examine their own identities is incredibly powerful. One of the students, Tiara, describes her newfound community: “I found my identity of who I am. I chose the deaf world; I can communicate in sign language rather than struggle to understand what everyone is saying...I have finally found myself, and I love it, being able to communicate with all my [peers] perfectly and can really be myself in the [Deaf organization]. I wanted my family to respect my deaf identity” (Stapleton, 2015, p. 579) This serves as a reminder that no matter how specific, every level of an individual’s identity matters, as does the importance of truly diverse and inclusive communities on all university campuses.

**Sample Blog Response**

Hi Jane - I really appreciate the introspection and thoughtfulness of your responses. I, too, often have trouble with what I think you were insinuating – the idea of tokenization – being the one or one of the few from a marginalized background. It’s so frustrating and lonely!! When I work with students, I am also acutely aware of the way I am receiving their identities and making judgments without even knowing it. What’s the solution to this? Is there a solution?

I also like the way you talked about intersectional identities. So often, we end up essentializing folks based on one of their identities without taking account for the fact that we are all complex beings and that not one single identity makes us who we are. Student Affairs work is hard because it requires lots of sensitivity and awareness. I hope I continue to learn and become my best self in this process.

-Paige