



EDUC 422 | Education for Social Change

Units: 4

Term: Spring 2025

Day—Time: Tuesdays & Thursdays 10:00-11:50 AM

Location: SOS B49

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IT Help: Brightspace Help for Students

Hours of Service: 24 hours a day, 365 days a year

Contact Info: Call 213-740-5555 and choose option 2. Send an email to Brightspace@usc.edu.

Course Description

This course examines the relationship between education and society. This course is grounded in educational theory and practice from sociological, political, and societal perspectives for the purpose of understanding the complexities of public schooling in U.S. national and local contexts. Intractable issues blocking access to quality education in urban, high-needs contexts are examined across student difference indexed by race, class and gender. Educational change will be examined from historical and contemporary perspectives, with emphasis on the potential of current efforts.

Learning Objectives

At the conclusion of this course students will be able to describe key educational theories on the role of education in society, social change and difference and understand how these theories impact issues of educational access and equity. Students will examine and problematize the relationship between social context, learning environment, and educational outcomes through the lens of policy and practice in K-12 U.S. public schools. The course will strengthen your ability to:

- Critically examine the issues in U.S. public schooling and the relationship of varied perspectives in advancing or limiting social and educational justice.
- Analyze authentic educational contexts and apply theory to describe implications for change.

Master of Arts in Teaching-Progressive Degree Program (MAT-PDP):

This course, when completed, will allow students enrolled in the MAT-PDP in the Rossier School of Education to waive EDUC 671, *Contexts for Educational Equity, Access and Agency*. The course meets the Teacher Performance Expectations (TPEs) at the introductory level for the state of California’s credentialing requirements. TPEs are noted below in the course weekly breakdown.

Course Notes

Letter grade awarded. This course is Web-Enhanced using Brightspace. Resources will all be posted to Brightspace. Technology-enhanced learning strategies will be used. Students will engage in designing and producing web-enhanced presentations using free apps such as Prezi, Infographic Maker, and others.

Required Readings and Supplementary Materials

Texts can be purchased online.

- One book on education and change for Mid-term 1; note that for students enrolled in the Progressive Degree Program in the MAT@USC, and using this course to waive EDUC 671, there is a requirement to read a specific title – see directions for Mid-term 2, below.
- Course Readings available in ARES, Brightspace, and web links. You can access ARES at: <https://reserves.usc.edu>

Description of Assessment Rubric

The following rubric provides a general guide as to how assignments in this course will be evaluated:

	Excellent	Acceptable	Unsatisfactory
Depth of thought	Shows evidence of depth of thought in preparation, organization, and clarity.	Evidence of depth of thought could be increased in some areas.	Lacks overall depth of thought, clarity, or preparation.

	Excellent	Acceptable	Unsatisfactory
Connection and reference to course readings and other relevant literature	Assignment shows engagement with course readings and other relevant literature and integrates this in an appropriate manner.	Some parts lack connection to course readings or other sources, or they are not integrated in an appropriate way.	Fails to relate to course materials and other relevant literature.
Completeness, adherence to guidelines	All parts of the assignment are done completely and according to guidelines.	All parts of the assignments or presentation are done completely, however, lacks adherence to guidelines in some areas.	Assignment is not entirely complete, and/or shows marked lack of adherence to guidelines.

Description of Assignments

1. Critical Reflection Journal Entries— (20%)

During the course, you will have two critical reflective journal entries due: 1-2 pages in length (single-spaced), aligned to course content. (See the LMS assignments for more details) Journal entries are due weeks 3 & 6 and are worth up to 10 points each.

Upload to the LMS by 11:59pm on the date of class (even if finalizing/uploading after class, please be prepared to discuss in class the day it is due).

2. Mid-Term 1: Autoethnography - (20%)

Parts 1-3 are due in the LMS by 11:59pm on the date of class, week 8. Submissions should be 3-4 pages (single spaced) in length.

This assignment examines the ways students “experience, exist and explain their identities – who they are, what they stand for, and why – and to recognize their racial, cultural and gendered social relations (Camangian, 2010).” Autoethnography “is a way of reading between the lines of {our} own lived experiences (Alexander, 1999)” and the experiences of those who share similar experiences, in order to gain insight of oneself and others who share those experiences.

The assignment is based on two readings: “Starting with Self: Teaching Auto ethnography to Foster Critically Caring Literacies (Camangian, 2010) and “Culturally Relevant Pedagogy: Ingredients for Critical Teacher Reflection” (Howard, 2003). Its purpose is to synthesize the relationship of self, community, and approaches leading to equity for diverse student populations. Construct a narrative that shares something you have learned *about yourself* (auto), from within your *cultural context* (ethno), *written about yourself* as “a member of a larger social group” (graphy). **This means that within the paper you actually tell a story, which shares a time when you have experienced or observed marginalization due to race or ethnicity, language, gender, religion, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, age, physical or mental disability, or other potential individual vulnerability.**

Prompt: Briefly describe your experience with marginalization due to an aspect of

your identity. Explore the power dynamics and hidden assumptions about marginalized peoples. What did you learn about yourself through this assignment? What did you learn about yourself as a member of a larger community through this assignment? Briefly share the implications for K-12 education, that you identified. What is the importance and/or role of critical reflection and autoethnography in K-16 education? (e.g., developing student agency; positive identity; culture of caring)

Part 1: You as an individual. As you reflect and write, consider how you personally experience the world? What is your salient identity? What part of yourself do you consider most influential when interacting with others and the world at large? Is it your gender? Race? Culture? Religion? Something else? Think back to our identity activity in week 1. Examine the ways you relate to the world through elaborating on your own primary lens.

Part 2: You as a member of cultural, linguistic, racial/ethnic, social, gender-identified group. Broaden your realizations from Part 1 to include the social group(s) with the greater society with which you identify; explore the *conflicting, discriminating and/or alienating set of effects on traditionally marginalized communities by a dominant society*. Explore connections across cultures oppressed by this effect of a dominant culture. Would you consider yourself part of the dominant or marginalized part of society? Explain.

Part 3: Your understandings and application to equity in schooling. In what ways might the narratives in Parts 1 & 2 impact educational outcomes for minoritized, marginalized youth in K-12 public schooling? Think in terms of empowerment, empathy, and classroom context. Theorize how use of auto ethnographies and pedagogies of caring, cultural relevance, and critical literacy have potential to develop student agency.

Part 4: Critical Reflection. In class week 8. Prepare to discuss key aspects of learning from the process of writing your autoethnography: what you learned about yourself and power relations impacting assumptions about minoritized, marginalized students; hidden power dynamics and hegemonic assumptions about equity and access; assumptions about perspectives other than your own in approaches to education for social change.

3. **Mid-Term 2: Book Review – (20%)**

The book should be read before class time, week 13 for an in-class Socratic Seminar activity. The written book review is due in the LMS by 11:59pm on the date of class, week 13. Submissions should be 3-4 pages (single spaced) in length.

Students will read a book, outside of class time, that aligns to course content. For students taking this course and planning to waive EDUC 671 for the Progressive Degree Program in the MAT@USC, the following book is required for this assignment: Fergus, E., Noguera, P., & Martin, M. (2014). *Schooling for resilience: improving the life trajectory of Black and Latino boys*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard Education Press.

Students not interested in the Progressive Degree Program (or not intending to waive EDUC 671) may read this or another selection of their choice aligned to education and social change.

The book review should include the following elements:

1. Citation in APA format
 2. Include the purpose of the book, including its intended audience.
 3. Evaluate the success of the book in delivering on its purpose, and adequately addressing the needs of its intended audience. Provide ample evidence from the book to support your evaluative claims.
 4. Summarize the arguments and evaluate them for strength and ability to address social change through education.
 5. Situate the book within the wider context of the topic, making connections to relevant stances on the topic.
 6. Provide a concluding summary.
4. **Final Project: Connecting Students Across Differences in Pursuit of Educational Equity - (20%)**
The Final Project is due by 11:59pm on the date of class, week 15.

You have THREE options in this class for the final project.

Option 1: Freedom Dream Manifesto OR Social Justice Advocacy Statement

Freedom Dream Manifesto

Building on your topical understanding of the climate and conditions within which change occurs within, beyond, and as result of education and school, as well as the course readings from this semester, this assignment invites you to radically re-imagine education and the society within which schools and educational institutions operate. Because reform and revolution are ontologically different, it is important to envision imaginatively rather than incrementally of how we might do both. education and society differently. Recognizing expressions of the imagination are many and varied, this assignment can be completed in a variety of forms, which may include but are not limited to:

- Audio Production (~5 minutes)
- Essay (no more than 1000 words)*
- Graphic Illustrations or Design Image(s)
- Photographic Essay
- Poetry/Spoken-Word
- Short Film or Video (no longer than 6 minutes)
- Short Story (no more than 1250 words)

Option 2: Social Justice Advocacy Statement

Drawing from class discussions, course readings, and experiences from this semester's course, clearly and cogently articulate your own philosophy as an advocate for social justice as a student affairs or other professional, either in your current or prospective role(s) within the field of education, society, and in subsequent life. Your statement should be no more than 1000 words and should discuss your perspectives on the importance and usefulness of social justice and social change in education work, discuss your current and/or anticipated approaches to incorporating social justice perspectives as an advocate, and commitment to supporting the organizing and activist work of students, parents and families, policymakers, and/or education colleagues.

Option 3: Policy Analysis

Develop a detailed plan to improve access to schooling and quality education in U.S. public schooling. Discuss the challenges and promising approaches presented in the readings and from your background knowledge and experiences regarding U.S. public schooling. Where possible, reference the problems and possibilities suggested by a particular policy, such as restorative justice or state law banning books for example. The final format for this option is a 6-10 minute poster or powerpoint presentation shared the last week of class as part of our poster presentations. There is no other requirement. However, analysis should include the following.

Include recommendations for change at the local level: (student, teacher, school, and/or community) as well as regional and national levels. The goal of the assignment is to apply course concepts and data towards greater educational access and equity in the pursuit of social change. Therefore, an understanding of the type of social change sought, with rationale, and how your plan will address the seemingly intractable issues maintaining the status quo.

Local Plan: Outline detailed and concrete actions that students, teachers, school leaders and local communities can take to address specific challenges in access to schooling and quality education in this context.

National and Regional Plan: Outline detailed and concrete actions that nation-state and regional leaders can take to address specific challenges in access to schooling and quality education in this context. Summarize how the two plans (local and national) might work together in terms of policy, legislation, and practice.

5. Class Participation (20%)

This class relies on active participation by students. Students are expected to complete and be able to discuss the readings assigned for each class period. Students are also expected to complete assigned deliverables on time.

Course Structure

Course readings are assigned for the week. Students are expected to have read readings for week by time of class on Tuesday. On Tuesdays, there will be a brief lecture on readings, followed by an activity. On Thursdays, we will connect readings to current events by discussing brief news article (read in class) or listening to podcasts. During the second half of class, students will meet in assigned reading groups facilitated by TA to summarize/discuss two interesting facts from the week and one question.

Grading Breakdown

Students will earn grades based on the following assignments. Specific instructions for each assignment will be provided in class.

Final course grades are assigned on the following scale:

94-100 % = A	80-83 % = B-	67-69 % = D+
90-93 % = A-	77-79 % = C+	64-66 % = D
87-89 % = B+	74-76 % = C	60-63 % = D-
84-86 % = B	70-73 % = C-	59 % and below = F

Assignment	% of Grade	Due
Class Participation	20	Weeks 1-15
Critical Reflection Journal Entry #1	10	Week 3 (January 28)
Critical Reflection Journal Entry #2	10	Week 6 (February 18)
Midterm 1: Autoethnography	20	Week 8 (March 4)
Midterm 2: Book Review	20	Week 13 (April 15)
Final Project: Connecting Students Across Differences in Pursuit of Educational Equity	20	Week 15 (May 1)
TOTAL	100	

Late & Unfinished Work – Students must complete all assignments in order to earn a grade in the course. Any material turned in late will be reduced one letter grade per calendar day late. Each presentation must be given on the day assigned.

Grievance Procedure - Occasionally, students are dissatisfied with some dimension of a course. In such cases, students should first provide a written argument in support of their

position to the instructor and request a meeting with the instructor. All grade appeals on specific assignments must be made within one week of the return of the assignment.

Incompletes

IN represents a grade of “incomplete.” This is work not completed because of documented illness or some other emergency occurring after the 9th week of the 12-week semester; arrangements for the IN and its removal should be initiated by the student and agreed to by the instructor prior to the final exam.

Conditions for Removing a Grade of Incomplete: If an IN is assigned as the student’s grade, the instructor will fill out the Incomplete (IN) Completion form which will specify to the student and to the department the work remaining to be done, the procedures for its completion, the grade in the course to date and the weight to be assigned to the work remaining to be done when computing the final grade. A student may remove the IN by completing only the portion of required work not finished because of a documented illness or emergency occurring after the twelfth week of the semester. Previously graded work may not be repeated for credit. It is not possible to remove an IN by re-registering for the course, even within the designated time.

Time Limit for Removal of an Incomplete: One calendar year is allowed to remove an IN. Individual academic units may have more stringent policies regarding these time limits. If the IN is not removed within the designated time, the course is considered “lapsed,” the grade is changed to an “IX” and it will be calculated into the grade point average as 0 points. Courses offered on a Credit/No Credit basis or taken on a Pass/No Pass basis for which a mark of Incomplete is assigned will be lapsed with a mark of NC or NP and will not be calculated into the grade point average.

Please see the Document tabs on the left for the Course Schedule and Policies and Support documents.