

**Kutztown University of Pennsylvania  
College of Education  
Secondary Education  
Foundations of Urban Education**

**Instructor:** Dr. Amber Pabon

**Location:** online

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### **Course Description**

Urban schools are complex social, historical and political constructs. Historically, there have been many attempts to create, reform, eliminate, restructure and reassess urban schools. These efforts to shape urban schools reflect broader efforts to shape American society, in general, and American schools particularly. Some of the profound effects on urban schools reflect decisions that on the surface were not about education at all but about immigration, housing, zoning, health concerns, global competition, social justice initiatives and constitutional interpretation. At a deeper level these initiatives have had a profound effect on urban schooling. As a means of exploring urban schools, we will utilize a single question throughout this course: How do urban schools mirror the search for equity among all people in the United States? Utilizing this question, we will explore equity in attendance, school funding, pedagogy including tracking and de-tracking initiatives, assessment including the standardized test movement, curriculum with an emphasis on the Common Core Standards, classroom management and family involvement. The course will introduce the students to the historical, sociological, economic, and political background that has led to today's urban schools so that the student can participate as a teacher leader in urban education.

### **Required Texts**

1. Gorski, P. & Pothini, S. (2018). Case studies on diversity and social justice education. **Second Edition**. Routledge, New York.
2. Milner, R. Start where you are, but don't stay there: Understanding diversity, opportunity gaps, and teaching in today's classrooms. **Second Edition**. Harvard Education Press.
3. Other texts as provided by the instructor on D2L.

## Course Rationale

Teachers who teach in urban schools face challenges in curriculum, instruction, assessment, classroom management and leadership that are different from those challenges faced by teachers in suburban and rural districts. This course supports those teachers and helps them prepare for the challenges of urban education.

## Course Objectives

Upon successful completion of this course, the student will be able to:

1. *Explore racial and cultural diversity across the history of public education and the ways that implicit and explicit bias functions to maintain social hierarchies.*
2. *Identify the federal government's complicity in creating interlocking systems of oppression that permeate the design of public institutions including schools, social services, and jails.*
3. *Describe the demographics of the U.S. public education labor force and understand how raced and gendered oppression contribute to the underrepresentation of Black Indigenous Teachers of Color.*
4. *Examine language diversity within urban school communities and practice linguistically and culturally responsive modalities for discourse with learners, educators, leaders, and families.*
5. *Develop asset-based approaches about school communities toward socially just classroom organization, norms, and protocols.*
6. *Understand and draw from educational research to craft evidence-based arguments regarding urban educational policies and practices including school funding, standardized testing, teacher preparation, and school-community partnerships.*

## Essential Questions

1. What is the typical schooling experience for students in urban schools?
2. What are the components to racism and other forms of discrimination in urban schools including sexism, classism, ableism, and gender bias? How is the role of intersectionality in school-based oppression?
3. What efforts can teachers in urban schools make to develop the dispositions and mindsets required for successful teaching? Where are you regarding these efforts?
5. What are key frameworks and specific methods that critical urban teachers will enact in their practice? How will you apply these to your specific content area?

## Working Reference List

- Anyon, J. (2005). *Radical possibilities: public policy, urban education, and a new social movement*. Routledge: New York, NY.
- Davis, B. (2012). *How to teach students who don't look like you: culturally responsive teaching strategies*. Corwin: New York, NY.

hooks, b. (1994). *Teaching to transgress: Education as the practice of freedom*. Routledge: New York, NY.

Ladson-Billings, G. (1995). But that's just good teaching!: The case for culturally relevant pedagogy. *Theory into Practice*, 34(3), 159-165.

Milner, H. R. (2012). But what is urban education? *Urban Education*, 47(3), 556-561.  
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0042085912447516>

Milner, H. R., Lomotey, K. (Eds). (2014). *Handbook of urban education*. Routledge: New York, NY.

Milner, H. R., McGee, E., Pabon, A., Woodson, A. (2013). Teacher education and black male students in the United States. *Multidisciplinary Journal of Educational Research*, 3(3), 235-263.

Oakes, J. (2018). Teaching to change the world.

Paris, D. (2012). Culturally sustaining pedagogy: a needed change in stance, terminology, and practice. *Educational Researcher*, 41(3), 93-97.

Sensoy, O., DiAngelo, R. (2012). *Is everyone really equal: An introduction to key concepts in social justice education*. Teachers College Press: New York: NY.

Valenzuela, A. (1999). *Subtractive schooling: U.S.-Mexican youth and the politics of caring*. SUNY Press: Albany, NY.

#### Digital Links:

- <https://www.nytimes.com/video/opinion/100000003575589/a-conversation-with-my-black-son.html>
- <https://www.edweek.org/leadership/inside-latino-parents-push-for-healthy-culturally-appropriate-school-lunches/2022/04>
- <https://www.edweek.org/leadership/video-its-not-been-easy-how-one-asian-american-principal-is-modeling-inclusivity/2022/01>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ax5jSCUru6s>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BEIG3joieUE>