

## **EDC G 643 Fostering Equitable and Affirming Classroom Environments**

University of Massachusetts Boston  
College of Education and Human Development  
Fall 2021  
Location: Wheatley W01-0010  
Time: Mondays 7-10 pm

*If our everyday repetitive, mundane life decisions are made by race, racism, and Whiteness, and sexism, then so are our ... discipline policies. ... As long as teachers turn to gimmicks, not [freedom and healing], ... they will never understand how they are being fooled.*

-Bettina Love

*Culturally relevant teaching honors the students' sense of humanity and dignity. Their complete personhood is never doubted. Self-worth and self-concept is promoted in a very basic way, by acknowledging the individual's worthiness to be part of a supportive and loving group.*

-Gloria Ladson-Billings

*The number one problem in the classroom is not discipline; it is the lack of procedures and routines.*

-Harry and Rosemary Wong

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### **General Course Description:**

This course explores a diverse range of dispositions and strategies that lead to equity-based and affirming classrooms and support all students' abilities to grow and thrive. The course focuses on the role of social inequity in the history of school discipline, examines routines and structures that create positive classroom environments, and offers ways to build better connections between the classroom and students' home lives and families. All students in this class should have a field placement in a public school classroom or be a teacher of record in a public school.

### **Course Overview:**

This course examines how teachers can make intentional choices and create certain classroom structures to better facilitate a positive climate and culture in their classrooms. As Bettina Love reminds us, there is a long history of school "discipline" being unfairly used on Black and Brown students. Instead, we must build caring classroom communities that support all students. As Harry and Rosemary Wong remind us, classroom problems are not discipline issues, but rather the result of a lack of teachers' fair procedures and routines for students. To create a classroom where all students can learn, as teachers, we must start by examining our own decisions, home cultures, and ideas about discipline. Next, we must consider ways to create a classroom that feels more like a family and encourages all students to grow and thrive. Finally, we must avoid relying on tricks or recipes for managing the behavior of students. Rather, we must rely

on the advice of experienced colleagues for ways to build relationships and structure our classrooms in humane ways that work from asset-based assumptions that all students want to and can learn, as well as be successful in school and life.

EDC 643 introduces important educational concepts related to creating a positive classroom climate for *all* students. The focus of this course is on helping future teachers understand ways of self-examination and reflection that will ultimately lead to better classroom structures and routine, and importantly better relationships with their students. This course is organized into six themes: *the troubling history of school discipline, classroom culture and relationship building, culturally relevant classroom community, restorative justice, classroom structures, instructional routines*. Through these six themes we will strengthen your knowledge and understanding of ways to create strong teacher-student relationships and positive classroom environment.

Because students taking EDC G 643 are diverse racially, ethnically, socioeconomically, and in gender, sexual orientation, language, and physical ability, it is important we create a climate where everyone feels comfortable sharing their experiences and perspectives, as well as offering and receiving constructive feedback or advice. At all times we will give each other respect, confidentiality, and confidence in each another.

Students are required to complete readings in preparation for each class session. These readings will be discussed in class (various strategies will be used to assess the readings). Students will also be required to complete regular assignments.

### **Objectives:**

Students will be able to:

- Reflect on ways that teachers' school experiences and family cultures have framed their understanding of the classroom.
- Explore ways to develop teacher-student relationships that connect and respect students' families and cultures.
- Evaluate classroom structures for relevance to students' lives and ways to listen and learn from students.
- Examine the use of instructional routines as a way to productively engage students in academic content.
- Identify and evaluate different approaches to creating a positive classroom environment for students.
- Understand ways that classroom management methods have traditionally been rooted in racism and other forms of oppression, and how they can be re-envisioned to be culturally relevant and affirming.

### **Required Texts and Readings:**

- Course Reading Packet (on course Blackboard site). Students must bring digital or printed copies of readings to each class session. For sustainability reasons, I no longer photocopy handouts or readings. Please bring a laptop, digital tablet, or phone to access readings and course handouts. If you prefer hard copies and do not have access to a photocopier, I suggest you bring the documents on a CD to a print shop (i.e. CopyCop, FedEx Office) and they can print it into a reading packet for under \$40. If you do not have access to a digital device, please see Chris. UMass Boston also has a laptop loan program:  
[www.umb.edu/it/labs/laptops](http://www.umb.edu/it/labs/laptops)

**Assignments***Assignment 1: Student Experiences Reflection*

Points: 30

Description: You will write a reflection on your own experiences with classroom discipline and culture in your PreK-12 schooling, with a focus on your own cultural, linguistic, and economic identity. This will serve as a starting point for understanding your own positioning in relation to your students.

*Assignments 2A, 2B, 2C: Classroom Journal*

Points: 30

Description: You will keep a journal recording various aspects about how teachers and students interact in the classroom and answer three specific prompts to guide your reflection on the classroom.

*NOTE: Students who are taking EDC G 643 during their pre-practicum or as teachers of record will use their school sites for this journal. If you are not in a school placement, please see Chris for other options.*

*Assignment 3: Positive and Affirming Classroom Plan*

Points: 100

Description: You will design a “model” classroom with an accompanying routines and visual plan for the classroom space to help set them up students for success. In addition, you will detail three routines to be implemented in the classroom to ensure a productive learning environment and three guidelines for making your classroom more culturally relevant and affirming.

*Participation: Readings, Class Discussions, Group Work, and Activities*

Points: 40

Description: Class participation is important for successful learning. Students should regularly contribute to class discussions and participate during group work and class activities. The instructor will be informally assessing if students have read the material by their participation in reading related activities. Points will be deducted for cell phone or laptop use unrelated to the class activities.

Attendance: It is expected that students will attend every class session. If you miss class, points will be deducted from your participation grade. Students are allowed one excused absence for extenuating circumstance (illness-, family-, or work-related) with a make-up assignment. Please see the instructor in advance if you believe this will be an issue or let him know as soon as possible if there is an emergency and you cannot attend class.

**Evaluation**

There are 200 points total for the social studies section of the course. All assignments will be graded using a rubric (all rubrics are posted on the Blackboard site) on Blackboard. Assignments will be uploaded before class on the due date listed in the syllabus (unless otherwise noted). Late assignments will have the grade decreased by 10% for each day late. Students may gain an extension in advance with permission of the instructor or when extenuating circumstance do not allow for forewarning.

Below is the UMass Boston grade scale.

| Grading Scale |            |        |
|---------------|------------|--------|
| Grade         | Percentage | Points |
| A             | 93-100%    | 4.00   |
| A-            | 90-92%     | 3.70   |
| B+            | 87-89%     | 3.30   |
| B             | 83-86%     | 3.00   |
| B-            | 80-82%     | 2.70   |
| C+            | 77-79%     | 2.30   |
| C             | 73-76%     | 2.00   |
| F             | 0-72%      | 0.0    |

| Grading Policies |  |     |
|------------------|--|-----|
| NA               | <a href="#">Not Attending</a> (student appeared on roster, but never attended class). NA has no effect on cumulative GPA. Student is still responsible for tuition and fee charges.  | N/A |
| W                | Received if <a href="#">withdrawal</a> occurs before the withdrawal deadline (see the <a href="#">academic calendar</a> ). Student is still responsible for tuition and fee charges.   | N/A |
| INC              | <a href="#">Incompletes</a> are given at the discretion of the instructor and only when satisfactory work has been accomplished in the majority of the course work, i.e. a passing grade at the withdrawal deadline, but the student is unable to complete course requirements as a result of circumstances beyond his/her control. The student must sign a contract with the course instructor to receive a grade of incomplete. Incompletes will turn into F's if the work is not completed within one year. | N/A |

### TaskStream

Students in the Middle/Secondary Ed Initial licensure program will upload the core assignments (the Unit Plan and Unit Plan Flowchart) into their program portfolio in TaskStream. To capture Instructor Feedback in Blackboard, you can either take a screenshot of the rubric (google screenshot and the name of your device if you don't know how to do this) and paste it into a word document OR right-click and print it as a PDF, however, if you do this, you need to change the rubric to List View and make sure you check off "show descriptions" and "show feedback". To upload your core assignment into Taskstream, log into TaskStream at <https://www.taskstream.com> (If you don't have an account yet, contact Gary Chan at [gary.chan@umb.edu](mailto:gary.chan@umb.edu)), click on the "My Middle/Secondary Ed Program Portfolio" link (if it's not there, scroll to the bottom of the home page, click "Enter Code" and enter the code RBKPJF), click on the EDC G 660 Core assignment (it is in two places: Well-structured Lessons AND Adjustments to Practice), and then click on the attachment button at the bottom. Follow the instructions to browse your computer and upload the file. Then, click on the "submit work" button.

**Accommodations**

The University of Massachusetts Boston is committed to providing reasonable academic accommodations for all students with disabilities. This syllabus is available in alternate format upon request. Students with disabilities who need accommodations in this course must contact the Ross Center for Disability Services to discuss needed accommodations. Students must be registered with the Ross Center for Disability Services, CC UL 211, [www.umb.edu/academics/vpass/disability](http://www.umb.edu/academics/vpass/disability), [ross.center@umb.edu](mailto:ross.center@umb.edu), 617.287.7430 before requesting accommodations.

**Academic Integrity and The Code of Student Conduct**

It is the expressed policy of the University that every aspect of academic life not only formal coursework situations, but all relationships and interactions connected to the educational process shall be conducted in an absolutely and uncompromisingly honest manner. The University presupposes that any submission of work for academic credit indicates that the work is the student's own and is in compliance with University policies. In cases where academic dishonesty is discovered after completion of a course or degree program, sanctions may be imposed retroactively, up to and including revocation of the degree. Any student who reasonably believes another student has committed an act of academic dishonesty should inform the course instructor of the alleged violation. These policies are spelled out in the Code of Student Conduct. Students are required to adhere to the Code of Student Conduct, including requirements for academic honesty, as delineated in the University of Massachusetts Boston Graduate Catalogue and on their Website and in relevant program student handbook(s) or websites:

[http://www.umb.edu/life\\_on\\_campus/policies/code/](http://www.umb.edu/life_on_campus/policies/code/)

You are encouraged to visit and review the UMass website on Plagiarism:

<http://umb.libguides.com/plagiarism>

**Course Schedule**

| <b>Class</b>                | <b>Topic(s)</b>  | <b>Readings Due<sup>1</sup></b> | <b>Assignments Due</b>                          |
|-----------------------------|--|---------------------------------|---|
| <b>1</b><br>Monday<br>9/13  | <b>INTRODUCTION</b><br><br>Introductions/Syllabus/<br>Blackboard Site<br><br><b>THE TROUBLING<br/>HISTORY OF SCHOOL<br/>DISCIPLINE</b><br><br>Overview: The History of<br>Classroom “Discipline” |                                 |   |
| <b>2</b><br>Monday<br>9/20  | <b>THE TROUBLING<br/>HISTORY OF SCHOOL<br/>DISCIPLINE</b><br><br>Abolitionist Teaching<br><br>Undoing the Cradle-To-<br>Prison Pipeline  | 1-Love*<br>2-Milner et al. (1)* | Assignment 1: Student<br>Experiences Reflection |
| <b>3</b><br>Monday<br>9/27  | <b>CLASSROOM<br/>CULTURE AND<br/>RELATIONSHIP<br/>BUILDING</b><br><br>Relationships: Respect<br>and Dignity  | 3-Ferlazzo*<br>4-Benn*          |   |
| <b>4</b><br>Monday<br>10/4  | <b>CLASSROOM<br/>CULTURE AND<br/>RELATIONSHIP<br/>BUILDING</b><br><br>“Don’t Smile Before<br>Christmas” Is a Lie<br><br>How Should Classroom<br>Look?  | 5-Metzger*<br>6-Kohn*           | Assignment 2A: Classroom<br>Journal (Entry 1)   |
| 10/11                       | <b>NO CLASS;<br/>INDIGENOUS<br/>PEOPLE’S DAY</b>   |                                 |   |
| <b>5</b><br>Monday<br>10/18 | <b>CULTURALLY<br/>RELEVANT<br/>CLASSROOM<br/>COMMUNITY</b><br><br>Classroom As a Family  | 7-Ladson-Billings*<br>8-Emdin*  | Assignment 2B: Classroom<br>Journal (Entry 2)   |

<sup>1</sup> All readings with a star must be read. Readings without a star are part of a choice, which students will chose in the prior class.

| <b>Class</b>                 | <b>Topic(s)</b>  | <b>Readings Due</b>  | <b>Assignments Due</b>                        |
|------------------------------|--|--|---|
| <b>6</b><br>Monday<br>10/25  | <b>CULTURALLY<br/>RELEVANT<br/>CLASSROOM<br/>COMMUNITY</b><br><br>Creating a Loving and<br>Caring Classroom  | 9-Milner et al. (2)*<br>10-Albert (1)*                           | Assignment 2C: Classroom<br>Journal (Entry 3) |
| <b>7</b><br>Monday<br>11/1   | <b>RESTORATIVE<br/>JUSTICE</b><br><br>Indigenous Ways of<br>Justice<br><br>Restorative Justice<br>Circles  | 11-Davis*  |   |
| <b>8</b><br>Monday<br>11/8   | <b>RESTORATIVE<br/>JUSTICE</b><br><br>Restorative Discipline   | 12-Milner et al. (3)*  |   |
| <b>9</b><br>Monday<br>11/15  | <b>CLASSROOM<br/>STRUCTURES</b><br><br>Preparing for the First<br>Days of School<br><br>Arranging Your Room  | 13-Wong & Wong (1)*<br><br>14-Jones (1)*<br>15- Wong & Wong (2)* |   |
| <b>10</b><br>Monday<br>11/22 | <b>CLASSROOM<br/>STRUCTURES</b><br><br>Engagement: "The Best<br>Classroom Management<br>is a Well-Planned<br>Lesson"<br><br>Humane Classroom<br>Procedures | 16-Saphier & Gower<br>17- Wong & Wong (3)*                       |   |
| <b>11</b><br>Monday<br>11/29 | <b>INSTRUCTIONAL<br/>ROUTINES</b><br><br>Ain't Misbehavin'<br><br>Prevention   | 18-Albert (2)*<br>19-Jones (2)*                                  |   |

| <b>Class</b>                 | <b>Topic(s)</b>   | <b>Readings Due</b>              | <b>Assignments Due</b>                                 |
|------------------------------|---|----------------------------------|--|
| <b>12</b><br>Monday<br>12/6  | <b>INSTRUCTIONAL<br/>ROUTINES</b><br><br>Reacting to Negative<br>Behaviors<br><br>Positive Behavioral<br>Interventions and<br>Supports<br><br>Functional Behavior<br>Assessments/<br>Behavioral Intervention<br>Plans | 20-Albert (3)*<br>21-Albert (4)* | Assignment 3: Positive and<br>Affirming Classroom Plan |
| <b>13</b><br>Monday<br>12/13 | Course Evaluations<br><br>Final Thoughts and End<br>of Course Celebration   |                                  |  |

## READING LIST

### Reading 1

Love, B. L. (2019). *We want to do more than survive: Abolitionist teaching and the freedom pursuit of educational freedom*. Boston, MA: Beacon Press. (Chapter 6: Theory Over Gimmicks: Finding Your North Star)

### Reading 2

Milner, H. R., Cunningham, H. B., Delale-O'Connor, L., & Kestenberg, E. G. (2018). *"These kids are out of control": Why we must reimagine" classroom management" for equity*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press. (Chapter 2: Connecting Classroom Management and the Cradle-to-Prison Pipeline)

### Reading 3

Ferlazzo, L. (2019). Classroom Q&A: Classroom management 'Is all about relationships'. *Education Week*.

### Reading 4

Benn, G. (2018). Relationships and rapport: "You don't know me like that!". *Educational Leadership*, 76(1), 20-25.

### Reading 5

Kohn, A. (1998). *What to look for in a classroom*. New York, NY: Wiley and Sons.

### Reading 6

Metzger, M. (2002). Learning to discipline. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 84(1), 77-84.

### Reading 7

Ladson-Billings, G. (2009). *The dreamkeepers: Successful teachers of African American children* (2nd ed.). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass. (Chapter: We Are Family)

### Reading 8

Emdin, C. (2016). For white folks who teach in the hood... and the rest of y'all too: Reality pedagogy and urban education. Boston, MA: Beacon Press. (Chapter 1: Camaraderie)

### Reading 9

Milner, H. R., Cunningham, H. B., Delale-O'Connor, L., & Kestenberg, E. G. (2018). *"These kids are out of control": Why we must reimagine" classroom management" for equity*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press. (Chapter 4: Classroom Management Is About Creating a Caring Environment)

### Reading 10

Albert, L. (1996). *Cooperative discipline*. Circle Pines, MN: American Guidance Service. (Introduction: The Approach: Practical and Positive)

### Reading 11

Davis, F. (2019). *The little book of race and restorative justice: Black lives, healing, and US social transformation*. New York, NY: Good Books. (Chapter 2: Ubuntu: The Indigenous Ethos of Restorative Justice and Chapter 4: Race, Restorative Justice, and Schools)

### Reading 12

Milner, H. R., Cunningham, H. B., Delale-O'Connor, L., & Kestenberg, E. G. (2018). *"These kids are out of control": Why we must reimagine" classroom management" for equity*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press. (Chapter 4: Classroom Management Is About Restorative Discipline)

**Reading 13**

Wong, H. K., & Wong, R. T. (1997). *The first days of school: How to be an effective teacher*. Mountain View, CA: Harry K. Wong Publications. (Chapter 11: How to Have a Well Managed Classroom and Chapter 12: How to Have Your Classroom Ready)

**Reading 14**

Jones, F. H. (2000). *Tools for teaching: Discipline, instruction, motivation*. Santa Cruz, CA: Fredric H. Jones & Associates. (Chapter 4: Arranging the Room)

**Reading 15**

Wong, H. K., & Wong, R. T. (1997). *The first days of school: How to be an effective teacher*. Mountain View, CA: Harry K. Wong Publications. (Chapter 14: How to Arrange and Assign Seating)

**Reading 16**

Saphier, J., & Gower, R. (1997). *The skillful teacher: Building your teaching skills*. Carlisle, MA: Research for Better Teaching. (Chapter 2: Attention)

**Reading 17**

Wong, H. K., & Wong, R. T. (1997). *The first days of school: How to be an effective teacher*. Mountain View, CA: Harry K. Wong Publications. (Chapter 20: How to Have Students Follow Classroom Procedures)

**Reading 18**

Albert, L. (1996). *Cooperative discipline*. Circle Pines, MN: American Guidance Service. (Chapter 2: The Need to Belong and Chapter 3: The Four Goals of Misbehavior)

**Reading 19**

Jones, F. H. (2000). *Tools for teaching: Discipline, instruction, motivation*. Santa Cruz, CA: Fredric H. Jones & Associates. (Chapter 2: Focusing on Prevention)

**Reading 20**

Albert, L. (1996). *Cooperative discipline*. Circle Pines, MN: American Guidance Service. (Chapter 4: Characteristics of Attention-Seeking Behavior, Chapter 6: Characteristics of Power-Seeking Behavior, and Chapter 7: Characteristics of Revenge-Seeking)

**Reading 21**

Albert, L. (1996). *Cooperative discipline*. Circle Pines, MN: American Guidance Service. (Chapter 8: Avoiding and Defusing Confrontations)