

# Syllabus

## **CRCRTH 615: Holistic and Transformative Teaching**

**Spring 2017, hybrid format (Class #5320 online, #5327 face-to-face);**

**Mondays, 4:00-6:45pm ET, January 30 – May 1, 2017**

**Location: UMass Boston, Wheatley Hall 4<sup>th</sup> Floor, Room W04-170**

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Office/phone call hours: contact the instructor for an appointment

### **Course Format**

Instructor-led, hybrid course, with weekly meetings at UMass Boston and through web conference for online students.

### **Catalog Description**

This course explores approaches which tap both teachers' and students' potential for learning, thinking, and creativity. Its primary focus is on integrative, holistic strategies to engage students creatively in literature, writing and the arts. Participants are actively involved in preparing practical applications and demonstrations of concepts emerging from the class.

### **Notes about Preparation Assumed for this Course**

This course has no formal prerequisites. Students may enter the course with some interest in developing your own teaching/learning forums by applying tools and practices of holistic and transformative education.

### **Course Overview**

This course helps students to explore how theory and practice of holistic and transformative teaching can inform and support critical and creative thinking as we look to develop change in our schools, workplaces, and lives. Holistic education refers to an approach that recognizes the multiple layers and complexities of an individual's development, where learning serves the whole self and brings an integrated perspective to the educational process. Transformative learning is a concept that seeks to increase understanding about what is especially meaningful in the learning process, and what factors contribute to a learning experience that leads to genuine change and transformation. Various descriptions of holistic and transformative learning at times have positioned these areas of study as a response to the fragmentation of subjects often attributed to traditional school and other environments

and to the disconnections between what is learned and an individual's need to relate their learning to the realities of who they are and how they are positioned in the world.

By shifting our perspective to holistic and transformative teaching, we are establishing a connection with how practitioners might use these concepts to develop approaches to their own situations. Throughout the course, we seek to experience, examine, and reflect upon practices to be implemented beyond the course. As part of the main project of the course, students identify an area of importance to them and build connections between concepts of holistic and transformative teaching and the development of practices within that area, leading to a curriculum project. This curriculum project might be framework for revising an existing classroom unit, workshop, community education course, or similar experience, or it might be a plan for developing a new experience through the lens of holistic and transformative teaching, with the expectation that this project can be integrated into one's lifelong journey as a teacher-learner as well as be applied through one's formal or informal roles as an educator across various settings. Class meetings will involve various discussions and exercises that bring focus on more specific aspects of holistic and transformative teaching and support students to work toward the curriculum project.

The course description refers to literature and the arts, and while these areas may provide unique insight into certain creative processes, students interested in applying holistic and transformative methods of learning to any life or workplace setting are welcome. Additionally, while some students may be professional educators and wish to focus on applications in that setting, this is not expected or required. Students in other areas may use holistic and transformative teaching as a perspective from which to teach themselves and others, in a broader sense of teaching as *engaging in the deliberate process of guiding others toward change (in thinking or behavior)*. This extends teaching to mean not necessarily a profession but instead developing capacities and creating environments that support oneself and others to reach personal transformation or lead holistic lives.

## Texts and Materials

Readings for the course will be provided, although you'll need to identify and get access to a book that will be used for the reflection journal (to be described further during the course meetings).

Online students will also need a technology setup for online meetings (microphone and speakers/headphone, and webcam; reliable Internet connection for web conferences).

## Key Links

**Course wiki (central source for all course materials; requires login with your umb.edu account):**  
<http://crcrth615.wikispaces.umb.edu> (accessible when the course begins).

**Academic Calendar** (for online courses offered through Critical and Creative Thinking/College of Advancing and Professional Studies; please note registration, Add, Drop, and Withdraw deadlines):  
<http://www.umb.edu/academics/caps/credit/spring/calendar>

## Learning Objectives

By the end of the semester, you will have:

1. Examined and evaluated your own educational experience and practices with respect to holistic/transformational teaching, through an understanding of the range of perspectives from key theories across the field and ongoing controversies.
2. Practiced using tools for supporting holistic and transformational teaching and learning through class exercises, reflective writings, and peer interactions.
3. Developed a final project that applies principles of holistic and transformational teaching relevant to your own practices and prepares you to establish this work as a foundation for your ongoing development as a lifelong learner.

## Weekly Schedule

Week	Meeting Date (Mondays, 4:00-9:45pm ET)	Summary of Topic/Themes
1	January 30	Course Orientation, and Introduction
2	February 6	History and Philosophical Foundations of Holistic and Transformational Education
3	February 13	Foundations, continued
4	February 20 – <i>NO MEETING</i> (independent work this week)	Controversies Around Transformational Learning Theory
5	February 27	Controversies Around Transformational Learning Theory
6	March 6	Critical Reflection in Teaching and Learning
	<i>March 13: NO MEETING – Spring Break</i> (no new work assigned)	
7	March 20	Critical Reflection, continued.
8	March 27	Transformational Spaces
9	April 3	Studio Thinking and Teaching Practice
10	April 10	Alternative Teaching and Learning Models and Schooling
11	April 17 – <i>NO MEETING</i> (independent work this week)	Holistic & Transformational Teaching Toward Social Change
12	April 24	Teaching and Learning in Workplace and Community
13	May 1	Ecopedagogy; Taking Stock, and Extending Holistic & Transformational Teaching

## Assessment and Requirements

### GRADED REQUIREMENTS:

#### Written assignments and presentations:

- **W1 (a,b,c):** Teaching and Learning Statement (3 items, 4 points each: Educational Biography (a) draft and (b) revision; (c) Manifesto).
- **W2:** Work-in-progress presentation (2 items, 3 points each).
- **W3 (a,b,c):** Critical Reflection Journal with weekly entries (3 items, 4 points each. Submit every four weeks, based on your chosen foundational text).
- **W4:** Final project (1 item, 20 points).

Total possible: 50 points

Certain written items may require revisions based on instructor feedback to be considered complete. Feedback will generally be returned (on the course wiki) within one week of initial submission of assignments (when submitted on time). Assignments completed appropriately are generally given full points.

#### Participation Items:

- **P1:** Prepared class attendance, including participation in weekly activities and CIQ (13 items, 2 points each). Includes completion of all readings and some minor “homework” activities.
- **P2:** Case study analysis and guided follow-up discussion (1 item, 2 points).
- **P3:** Design and facilitation of holistic/transformational learning activity (in small teams), plus briefing (1 item, 3 points).
- **P4:** Mid-semester self-assessment (in class). (1 item, 1 point).
- **P5 (a,b,c,d,e,f):** Peer commentary/feedback on selected assignments (a,b,c): Teaching and Learning Statements; (d,e): Presentations; (f) facilitated activity) (6 items, 1 point each).
- **P6 (a,b):** Instructor conferences (2 items, 1 point each).
- **OPTIONAL P7:** Permission to share pieces of your work as examples for future generations of the course (up to 2 points).

Total possible: 40 points (+ up to 2 points for optional P7)

### RUBRIC

Beyond the points achieved for the written assignments and participation, additional points come from the following rubric, completed by you and then compared with the instructor’s own evaluation.

2 = did this quite well; often went beyond minimum expectations

1 = generally met the minimum expectation, perhaps with occasional room for improvement

0 = not a particular strength of mine for this course

Quality Statement	0	1	2
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1. Timely submission of written assignments (where total days late across all submissions is $\leq 10$ ).			
2. Revisions of written assignments that take into account instructor and peer feedback, where applicable (including integrating the feedback into later installments of certain assignments that are submitted multiple times during the course, such as the Educational Biography and Journal).			
3. A Critical Reflection Journal that shows thoughtful reflection on ways that your real experiences connect with your reading; strong attention to the development of your own thinking as it builds over the course of the semester, where you seek to make your own reasoning clear and include supporting explanations beyond broad or general statements.			
4. Mid-term self-assessment that shows awareness and earnest acknowledgement of what has been working well and what needs development as you move into the second half of the course.			
5. Active participation during class meetings, including frequently speaking up during class discussions, seeking clarification when needed, and taking initiative to try out activities/workshop experiences that may be unfamiliar.			
6. Initiative taken in keeping up with the course, making up for missed sessions, and asking for help or guidance in a timely way and communicating quickly to inform the instructor about any issues that affect your full participation in the course. (Includes being proactive about addressing any technology-related problems that arise.)			
7. Commitment to supporting others in the class; includes contributing to the class as a community of learners and offering substantive peer commentary that stimulates thinking beyond superficial praise or reactions.			
8. Final project (all parts of W4) is well-structured, organized, and serves as a foundation for practical extensions beyond the course term.			
9. Written work is almost entirely free from mechanical, grammatical, formatting, and spelling errors, uses consistent academic standards, and is presented professionally.			
10. Participation in the course shows a constructive spirit toward helping us improve the running of a hybrid course, where this sometimes requires patience and willingness to experiment with imperfect technologies as we engage in-person and virtually.			

Total possible: 10 points (sum of rubric points divided by 2)

### LATE SUBMISSION POLICY

Formally, there are no specific extensions granted for due dates of written assignments, and assignments will generally be accepted after the due date. Note, though, that late submission of assignments will be reflected in the rubric above and also delays feedback related to requested revisions, which may affect final grading of work. The exception is the Critical Reflection Journal, which will received a reduced grade for late submissions, as this is submitted periodically throughout the course term as a series of installments where new ideas build upon previous ones.

### GRADING

Overall points are converted to letter grades as follows: The minimum grade for A is 94 points, for A- is 87, for B+ is 81, for B is 74; for B- is 68; for C+ is 61; and for C is 50 points.

## Reflective Practice Portfolio

*This only applies to students in the Critical and Creative Thinking MA Program:* Selected excerpts from the Critical Reflection Journal, the Manifesto, and/or the curriculum project are appropriate and recommended for inclusion in the program's required Reflective Practice Portfolio. Other options might also be acceptable based on directions taken to fulfill your project.

## Course Evaluation

At the end of the course, you will be asked to complete an anonymous, online course evaluation (<http://bit.ly/CCTEval>) as required by the Critical and Creative Thinking program. Note that the question in the evaluation referring to a statement of synthesis about the course as a whole may be shared widely, so that the instructor, the program, and other parties may appreciate the course's strengths and weaknesses and contribute more effectively to continued development.

## Accommodation Statement

Sections 504 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 offer guidelines for curriculum modifications and adaptations for students with documented disabilities. If applicable, students may obtain adaptation recommendations from the Ross Center (617-287-7430). The student must present these recommendations to each professor within a reasonable period, preferably by the end of the Drop/Add period.

## Syllabus Version

January 2017; This syllabus is subject to change and updated versions may be distributed after the course begins, but the workload expectations will not be increased after the semester starts.