

Syllabus

CRCRTH 615: Holistic and Transformative Teaching

Spring 2015, hybrid format (Class #7314 online, #7315 face-to-face);

Wednesdays, 4:00-6:45pm ET, February 4 – May 6, 2015

Location: UMass Boston, Wheatley Hall 2nd Floor, Room W02-157

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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 Google+ Hangout 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 education to any fields 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 view holistic and transformative teaching as a perspective from which to teach themselves, i.e., a way to view teaching as a methodology for learning and to gain clarity about how to support a lifelong process of their own self-directed learning.

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).

Key Links

Course wiki (central source for all course materials; requires login with your umb.edu account):

<http://crcrth615.wikispaces.umb.edu>

Online students: Google+ Community (you'll need to accept the email invitation to join):

<https://plus.google.com/u/0/communities/118025467054339891541>

(then click on Events on the left to see links for the Google+ Hangout sessions).

Academic Calendar (for online courses offered through Critical and Creative Thinking/College of Advancing and Professional Studies; please note registration 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/transformative 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 transformative teaching and learning through class exercises, reflective writings, and peer interactions.
3. Developed a final project that applies principles of holistic and transformative 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 (Wednesdays, 4:00-9:45pm ET) | Summary of Topic/Themes |
|-------------|--|--|
| 1 | February 4 | Course Orientation, and Introduction |
| 2 | February 11 | History and Philosophical Foundations of Holistic and Transformative Education |
| 3 | February 18 | Foundations, continued |
| 4 | February 25 | Controversies Around Transformative Learning Theory |
| 5 | March 4 | Critical Reflection in Teaching and Learning |
| 6 | March 11 | Critical Reflection, continued. |
| | <i>March 18: No meeting – Spring Break</i> | |
| 7 | March 25 | Transformative Spaces |
| 8 | April 1 | Studio Thinking and Teaching Practice |
| 9 | April 8 | Alternative Teaching and Learning Models and Schooling |
| 10 | April 15 | Holistic & Transformative Teaching Toward Social Change |
| 11 | April 22 | Teaching and Learning in Workplace and Community |
| 12 | April 29 | Ecopedagogy |
| 13 | May 6 | Taking Stock, and Extending Holistic & Transformative Teaching |

Assessment and Requirements

GRADED REQUIREMENTS:

Written assignments and presentations:

- **W1(a, b, c):** Teaching and Learning Statement (3 items, 2 points each: a: Educational Biography, b: Self-Evaluation, c: Manifesto).
- **W2:** Work-in-progress presentation (2 items, 2 points each).
- **W3(a, b):** Critical Reflection journal with weekly entries (2 items, 4 points each: a. Mid-semester, b: End of Semester). (includes personal reflections/observations related to weekly topics and your chosen foundational text, and ideas about your final project.
- **W4:** Concept map of final project (1 item, 2 points).
- **W5:** Final project (1 item, 25 points).

Total possible: 45 points

Certain written items may require revisions based on instructor feedback to be considered complete.

Participation Items:

- **P1:** Prepared class attendance, including participation in weekly activities and CIQ (13 items, 2 points each).
- **P2:** Case study analysis and guided follow-up discussion (1 item, 3 points).
- **P3:** Design and facilitation of holistic/transformational learning activity (in small teams), plus briefing (1 item, 4 points).
- **P4(a,b,c,d,e,f):** Holistic and Transformational Example Posts (6 items, 1 point each).
- **P5(a,b,c,d,e):** Peer commentary/feedback on selected assignments (a. first presentation, b. second presentation, c. facilitated activity, d. map, e. Manifesto) (5 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: 45 points (+ 2 optional for P7)

GRADING

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 expectation, perhaps with some room for improvement

0 = not a particular strength of mine for this course

| Quality Statement | 0 | 1 | 2 |
|--|---|---|---|
| 1. A sequence of assignments submitted by the due date (no more than one written assignment missed, no more than two participation items missed, and where the total days late of all other submissions is ≤ 10) | | | |

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|--|--|--|--|
| 2. A critical reflection journal that shows thoughtful reflection on your actual experience and 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 avoid broad or general statements that don't include supporting explanations. Includes evolving the journal in response to feedback given on the mid-semester submission. | | | |
| 3. Initiative taken in keeping up with the course, making up for missed sessions, and seeking out clarification around the course process and expectations in a timely way when you are not clear about something. | | | |
| 4. 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. | | | |
| 5. Final overall curriculum project (all parts of W5) is well-structured, organized, and serves as a foundation for practical extensions beyond the course term. | | | |
| 6. Written work is almost entirely free from mechanical, grammatical, formatting, and spelling errors, uses consistent academic standards, and is presented professionally. | | | |
| 7. Participation in the course shows a constructive spirit toward helping us understand how to improve the running of a hybrid course, and participation includes some willingness to experiment with, and patience for, new or imperfect technologies as we engage in-person and virtually. | | | |

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: The Reflection Journal, and/or the curriculum project (or selections from them), 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

February 2015; 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.