

Syllabus

CRCRTH 688: Reflective Practice

**Spring 2015 hybrid section (Class #6785 for online students, #7220 for face-to-face students)
February 2 – May 8, 2015**

Instructor: Jeremy Szteiter

email: Jeremy.Szteiter@umb.edu

Phone: (617) 942-3580, or Skype: jeremyszteiter

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

Catalog Description

Reflective practitioners in any profession pilot new practices, take stock of outcomes and reflect on possible directions, and make plans to revise their practice accordingly. They also make connections with colleagues who model new practices and support the experimenting and practice of others. Students in this course gain experiences and exposure to tools for reflective practice through presentations, interactive and experiential sessions, and, optionally, supervised pilot activities in schools, workplaces, and communities.

Course Format

Hybrid course (instructor-led) involving six required class meetings scheduled throughout the semester. At least four of the class meetings usually overlap with open house events of Critical and Creative Thinking graduate program, and others will be scheduled separately and only involve those in the Reflective Practice course. Participants attend the events and complete preparation and follow-up assignments.

The course may be taken for 1, 2, or 3 credits, where 2- and 3-credit section involve additional requirements in the form of a semester-long project developed around the piloting of a new practice in a professional or personal environment. The course may be repeated, up to a total of 6 credits.

CCT open house events may be either held on campus or arranged as virtual meetings where everyone joins an online session synchronously, and the events are designed to engage participants in a range of types of discussions and activities. Students at a distance may join both types of events via web conference, typically using Google+ Hangout. Students should have a Gmail account to be used to gain access to the live online meetings and the recordings of these sessions. Skype may also be used as a backup.

Open house events are open to the general public, and so other CCT and university students, faculty, alumni, prospective applicants, and other guests may be present.

Key Links

Course Wiki: the central place for course documents, materials, and links. Start here and following links to get to all other items related to the course.

<http://crcrth688.wikispaces.umb.edu/>

(Requires UMB username and password).

Google+ Community: for Written Discussion Posts, and Briefings to Other Students (generally, all other assignments are private and will be emailed to the instructor).

<https://plus.google.com/u/0/communities/116814094254742060005>

(Use your gmail account to accept the invitation to the community before getting access to the postings. Also, the link to access the Google+ Hangout session to join events from a distance will be posted here).

Schedule of Sessions

The schedule below reflects the expected schedule for the semester, although the specific times of each meeting listed here may be adjusted occasionally in response to the program open house events. Any changes will be confirmed as early in advance as possible.

Open houses are currently scheduled as follows:

- Monday, February 2, 2015
7:00-9:00pm, online meeting
CCT (virtual) open house event. Tentative theme: Reflecting and Connecting for Lifelong Learning
- Monday, March 2, 2015
7:00-9:00pm, online meeting
CCT (virtual) open house event. Tentative theme: Teaching and Learning Critical and Creative Thinking.
- Monday, April 6, 2015
6:30-9:00pm, on campus meeting, room TBD.
CCT open house event. Tentative theme: Extending Critical and Creative Thinking – presentations and reflections by CCT program graduates
- Monday, May 4, 2015 OR Tuesday, May 5, 2015 (subject to confirmation)
Approximately 6:00pm-9:00pm and confirmed later. On campus meeting, room TBD.
CCT open house event. Theme: Reflective Practice and Synthesis Presentations
- The two additional meetings will be scheduled based on availability of those in the course. These are usually online only and take 1-1.5 hours, more directly focusing on the Reflective Practice course itself. These will most likely happen around mid-February and mid-April.

Course Overview:

- 1 credit option: Students participate in six sessions and complete associated assignments.

- 2 credit option: Participation in sessions above plus students undertake 20 hours of supervised preparation and piloting of new practices in their schools, workplaces, or communities.
- 3 credit option: Same as 2 credit option, except 40 hours of supervised practice, not 20.

Students undertaking supervised practice will have a consultation with the instructor outside of the scheduled sessions to discuss and initiate a proposal for the project. Please note that even if a student has previously taken the 1-credit option, there is no option to undertake supervised practice only; that is, supervised practice students always also participate in the scheduled open house and other sessions.

During the open house sessions, 1) guest presenters reflect on their own personal and professional development and/or introduce tools and practices that the students may adopt and adapt to their own work and lives; and 2) supervised-practice students report on their progress and plans. Between sessions: students submit reflection papers on the sessions; build a community of support for each other through email discussion; develop and revise their plans for experimenting with and adopting new practices; and, in the case of students piloting new practices, meet regularly with the instructor.

A distinctive feature of this course is the involvement of graduates of CCT as guest presenters and participants in the sessions. The graduates model to current students a commitment to personal and professional development, community building, and educational innovation beyond the formal CCT program of studies. (The involvement of graduates is made possible by collaboration with the CCT (alum) Network, <http://cct.wikispaces.umb.edu/CCTNetwork>.) It is hoped that students from the course return as guest presenters at a future date after graduation.

The contribution of the course to producing Thoughtful and Responsive Educators centers on the Commitments of Ethical behavior, Lifelong learning, Dedication, and Modeling and mentoring; the Practices of Caring, Collaboration, Reflection; and Understandings about Pedagogy in the broad sense of instruction and facilitation. In addition to its role in the field of school and college education, the course is intended to serve the range of practitioners who study in CCT (such as educators, artists, musicians, scientists, organizational leaders, and group facilitators) as well as interested professionals from other graduate programs at UMass Boston.

Pointers about the preparation assumed for this course

There are no special requirements to participate in this course. Students may begin the course with project ideas in early form to be developed into full project proposals, if taking the 2- or 3-credit version of the course. Students from outside the Critical and Creative Thinking program should consult with the instructor before signing up for the supervised practice credits.

Course Goals

Students in this course will:

1. gain experiences and up-to-date tools for reflective practice and, for supervised practice students, pilot new practices in their schools, communities and workplaces;
2. grow as a community of learners through making connections with colleagues who model new practices and supporting the experimenting and practice of others, especially through participation in program;
3. take stock of experiences and outcomes and reflect on possible directions that build on such evaluation; and
4. make plans to revise their practice so as to incorporate new tools they learn about (goal 1) and their reflections (goal 3).

Required Texts and Materials

Readings may be distributed/shared over the semester as appropriate to themes related to student projects and CCT open house events. No books need to be purchased. Students will need to have a Gmail account, a computer setup including a headphone/microphone, a webcam, and a working knowledge of online conferencing. Information about using Google+ Hangout will be distributed as needed early in the course.

Grading and Summary of Requirements

Please see the document "Course Notes and Instructions" for full details of all of the assignments summarized below.

1. Attendance and participation in each session of this course (6 sessions x 5 points = 30 points). [related to objective 1]

2. Written Online Discussion Posts - using our Google+ Community, we'll communicate by contributing ideas and sharing experiences in Reflective Practice. Approximately once per week (schedule varies, sometimes less often), the instructor will pose a question, prompt, or brief reading related to Reflective Practice, and we'll address these by sharing responses in the form of written discussion posts. Respond to 10 of these prompts throughout the semester (10 weeks x 1 point each = 10 points) [related to objective 2]. This requirement may be adjusted depending upon the interests and number of students in the course.

Kinds of posts that may be requested may cover items such as the following:

- Reactions and reflections based on short readings (provided as needed throughout the course)
- Commentary on issues and challenges related to reflective practice
- Exploring or offering resources or stories of experiences that support reflective practice and workplace change

3. Reflection papers, after each open house, 500 words each, due 2 weeks after the session. (4 papers x 10 points = 40 points). [related to objective 3]

Specific guidelines and assessment rubrics will be distributed for each session if appropriate, but the general themes will include:

- What did you learn about developing as a reflective practitioner? What parts resonated for you? What new insights do you have? How were you challenged?
- Based on the speakers and their presentations, what successes and challenges were apparent with respect to creating workplace and other change? How did examples and ideas get you to think about how you might develop your work and life practices?
- Other connections you see among the sessions, and possible applications to your work, personal life, studies, and community involvements.

4. Plan for Practice (2000-3000 words), and accompanying presentation (20 minutes), building on reflection papers (and, for supervised-practice students, their briefings/updates), demonstrating:
- a) how and when the student plans to put into practice the skills and tools from all sessions of the course - in their work, personal life, studies, and community involvements, and/or how they could adapt and practice using those tools for opportunities in the future. (The plan should include a process for evaluating the outcome so the student learns from experience and practice);
 - b) for supervised students, how their plans builds on their experience preparing for and piloting new practices.

Students will make brief presentations of their plans for practice during the final open house meeting. (20 points) [related to objective 4].

Supervised piloting of new practices

(for 2- and 3-credit option only; 20 hour option (expect to spend about 1.5 extra hrs/week) [the first figure in items below] or 40 hour option (about 3 extra hrs/week) [the second figure])

1. Log of hours in meetings, practice sessions, and piloting of new practices, adding up to 20 or 40 hours. (2 points for each hour = 40 or 80 points) [related to objective 1]
2. Individual supervisory meetings, 3 or 5 during the semester (3 or 5 meetings x 10 points = 30 or 50 points). [related to objectives 1-4]
3. Email progress reports, submitted to instructor (for at least 3 or 8 weeks during the semester), providing plans and reports on preparation for piloting of new practices and reflection on progress, setbacks, and outcomes (3 or 8 emails x 5 points = 15 or 40 points) [related to objective 1, 3, 4]
4. Briefings/updates to fellow students (using our Google+ Community), distributed by meetings 2, 3, and 4: 200 words. These are submitted as posts on the Google+ Community discussion board but are in addition to, and separate from, the Written Online Discussion Posts mentioned above (3 briefings x 5 or 10 points = 15 or 30 points) [related to objectives 2 & 3]

Total course points are divided by the number of credits taken, then converted to letter grades as follows: the minimum grade for A is 95 points, for A- is 87.5, for B+ is 80, for B is 72.5; for B- is 65; for C+ is 57.5; and for C is 50.

THE CODE OF STUDENT CONDUCT governing students' rights and responsibilities, including academic honesty, is given in the Graduate Studies Bulletin.

Schedule of Supervision

(for 2- and 3-credit option only)

The schedule depends on the specific project of the student. An initial proposal (300-400 words describing the practices, site(s)/location(s), collaborators, timeline) may be requested before the first supervisory meeting, which takes place during the first or second week of the semester. The structure of the project may, of course, end up being substantially developed and revised through conversation with the instructor.

Additional Background, Examples of Tools, and Optional Resources

Past sessions have included activities, discussions, presentations, and experimentation with tools. These may be developed through the semester based on student interest and types of supervised practice for those taking the 2 or 3 credit option. Examples of topics used for such activities are listed below:

- online social networking as support for practice
- reflective practice portfolios
- research and writing tools and techniques
- dialogue process
- focused conversations
- small-group sharing and discussion
- storytelling
- collaborative knowledge building, including online tools such as wikis
- student and alum presentations and discussion

A Brief List of Suggested Readings

(For background only; to be supplemented each semester with readings specific to the sessions, as described above.)

Dominicé, P. (2000). *Learning from our lives: Using educational biographies with adults*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Ghaye, T., & Ghaye, T. (2011). *Teaching and learning through reflective practice: A practical guide for positive action*. London: Routledge.

Hargreaves, J. (2013). *Reflective Practice*. Polity.

Holman, P., & Devane, T. (1999). *The change handbook: Group methods for shaping the future*. San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler Publishers.

Jenkins, M. (2000). "Action learning: Taking the time it takes." Presented to the International Association of Facilitators, Toronto, April 27 2000.

Schön, D. A. (1983). *The reflective practitioner: How professionals think in action*. New York: Basic Books.

Schuman, S., Ed. (2006). *Creating a Culture of Collaboration: The International Association of Facilitators Handbook*. San Francisco, Jossey-Bass.

Senge, P., A. Kleiner, et al. (1994). *The Fifth Discipline Fieldbook*. New York, Currency.

Stanfield, R. B. (2002). *The Workshop Book: From Individual Creativity to Group Action*. Toronto, Canadian Institute of Cultural Affairs.

Taylor, P. J. (2008). *Developing Critical Thinking is Like a Journey. Teachers and Teaching Strategies, Problems and Innovations*. G. F. Ollington. Hauppauge, NY, Nova Science Publishers.

Taylor, P. J., S. J. Fifield, et al. (2008). "Cultivating Collaborators: Concepts and Questions Emerging Interactively From An Evolving, Interdisciplinary Workshop." Manuscript.

Syllabus Version

January 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.

Reflective Practice Portfolio

This only applies to students in the Critical and Creative Thinking MA Program: the final paper (Plan for Practice) is appropriate and recommended for inclusion in your MA program's Reflective Practice Portfolio, although other assignments may be appropriate as well based on your directions throughout the course.

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. This evaluation is in addition to any other general evaluations requested of you by the university or College of Advancing and Professional Studies.

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.

Instructor Background and Experience

Jeremy Szteiter is a graduate of Carnegie Mellon University (Cognitive Science) and University of Massachusetts Boston (Critical and Creative Thinking) and now serves as the Assistant Director of the graduate program in Critical and Creative Thinking at UMass Boston. His work has centered on program and organizational development, particularly in adult education in community-based human services and has involved managing, developing, and teaching programs to lifelong learners, with an emphasis on a learning process that involves the teaching of others what has been learned and supporting the growth of individuals to become nonformal teachers of what they know. Jeremy's work draws upon principles and practices of social change pedagogy, technology-enhanced collaboration, instructional design, and participatory theater.