

AES 340: Race, Ethnicity and Education

Winter 2017 • University of Washington

Instructor: Rick Bonus

Overview

This course focuses on the critical social and political dimensions of race and ethnicity in the ways they relate to issues and practices of pedagogy and power in American education. It seeks to explore these issues within an American ethnic studies framework by considering how schooling may be understood as a site in which contemporary politics of diversity and the dynamics of power relationships are played out especially against the backdrop of the changing and increasingly diverse demographics of students, teachers, and parents.

The primary goal of the course is to enable students to comprehend the connections between racial/ethnic inequalities and learning/teaching in the American public school system by examining the following items: the historical contexts within which schools are organized, the changing roles of education and effects of schooling in society, philosophies of learning and the social construction of curricula, the schooling experiences of minority students, and the ongoing debates about effective pedagogy, affirmative action, bilingual education, and cultural competence.

This course is specifically designed for, but not limited to, upper-level undergraduates who are interested in careers as P-12 teachers or considering education as an area of graduate study. We will also attempt to imagine the classroom as a “laboratory” for applying a variety of pedagogical strategies. Therefore, there will be opportunities for linking “knowing” and “doing” (as in, knowing about the benefits of cooperative learning and then doing such in class) as well as “learning” and “teaching” (as in, learning about pedagogical strategies for a diverse classroom and then applying such strategies through in-class teaching exercises and/or on-site teaching presentations).

Role of Service-Learning in the Course

Service-learning is offered as an option for this course, with the hope that students would be able to link theories and ideas they learn in the classroom with real-world experiences and service in the community, including schools.

Assignments Related to Service-Learning

Students who opt to do service-learning in AES 340 will receive a grade in lieu of the class quizzes, that will be worth 10% of their course grade. For their service-learning grade, they are expected to:

1. Work in the agency of their choice a minimum of 2-4 hours per week. A site supervisor and I will monitor this work.
2. Write a journal entry every approximately two weeks, due on the Sunday after every two weeks, of one to two pages each, detailing the service learning experience, submitted into our Class Dropbox.
3. Meet with me in class or in my office at least two times during the quarter to discuss your service learning work.
4. Write a paper at the end of the quarter (3 pages) reflecting on and evaluating the service learning work as it pertains to the academic issues raised in AES 340. Submit on the last day of class into the Class Dropbox.

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