

**Department of Music and Performing Arts Professions  
Program in Music Education  
The Steinhardt School of Education, New York University**

**E85.2010: Current Readings in Music Education:  
Curriculum and Critical Pedagogy**

**Professor Cathy Benedict**

**Syllabus**

**Course Description**

This class provides a multi-disciplinary examination and application of the implications of critical theory for curriculum and pedagogy and the ways in which the educative environment can reflect this framework. Particular attention will be paid to the performing arts and the ways in which our marginal status provides a powerful entry point into the narrative of "general education." Students will engage in examining and creating curriculum models and new ways of conceptualizing music and performing arts education in the context of general education.

The goal of the class will be to attend to music education, curriculum development and the teaching/learning process through the lens of a critical perspective. Our assumptions will be called to task as perspective develops and evolves. During each class students will be expected to respond to readings as well as teach short learning experiences that demonstrates a commitment toward critical pedagogy. Students will also be required to design a short curriculum unit.

**Course Objectives**

Students will grapple with an understanding of critical theory  
Students will critique existing curriculum and pedagogical models  
Students will begin to apply critical theory tenets to an arts framework  
Students will begin to apply critical theory tenets to pedagogy and curriculum development  
Students will demonstrate a lesson in which is embedded tenets of critical pedagogy

**Topics under discussion (but not limited to)**

What is general education?  
What is music education?  
What is critical theory?  
What is pedagogy?  
What is critical pedagogy, liberatory pedagogy, etc?  
What is curriculum?  
What does it mean to know in and through music?  
What evidence can we accept of knowing?

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What is experience?

Are we victims or is there power to be found in the margin?

What are the limitations of 'teaching to" (i.e. tests, standards, etc)

**Assignments**

**Journal:** You will be asked to read material and then respond to specific guiding questions. I will read your responses and respond with a narrative with the intent of pushing your thinking and my own on the topic. The responses will usually not be more than 2 typed pages. 20%

**Group Project:**

You will be expected to present as a member of a group a book of the group's choice. 30%

**Reflection Paper:**

You will be asked to write a 10-15 page paper addressing one of the topics we address in class. You will also be expected to present a shortened version of this paper to the class. 20%

**Assessment:**

While I would rather you not focus on what you need to do in order to "get a grade," assessment is a valid part of any educative process. That said, each of you will need to keep a record of your observations of the Tuesday classes, a journal and build a song notebook. Assignments are due the following week and will be discussed in class. Your final grade will be based on a self-assessment process. This will be explained in detail.

**Mid-term and Final Interview:** Mid-way through the semester I want to meet with you just to get feedback about the class. I will ask each of you an open ended question. It Is Not A Test. I view the learning environment as a two way street; this is a way for us to engage on a one-to-one basis. This will also happen at the end of the semester. 10%

**Attendance and Class Participation:** I expect you to be at every class. There is a particular flow to the class that makes sense only if you are in attendance. That said, come to me if you have a problem. We will talk about what we all think class participation means, what our culture has indicated it to mean, and the ways in which particular participation gets rewarded while other forms do not. 20%

**Self-evaluation Protocol:**

See attachment

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**Preliminary Reading List**

<http://www.maydaygroup.org/>

Selected Source Readings in Music Education

Apple, M. (1990). *Ideology and curriculum* (2nd ed.). New York, NY: Routledge.

Bohm, D. (1996). *On dialogue*. New York, NY: Rotledge.

Delpit, L. (1995). *Other people's children: Cultural conflict in the classroom*. New York: New Press.

Dewey, J. (1934). *Art as experience*. New York, NY: Perigee Books.

Eisner, E. (Ed. 1985). *Learning and teaching the ways of knowing*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Freire, P. (1993). *Pedagogy of the oppressed*. (Rev. ed.). New York, NY: Continuum.

Giroux, H. (1988). *Teachers as intellectuals: Toward a critical pedagogy of learning*. New York, NY: Bergin & Garvey.

Gruenewald, D. (Fall 2003). Foundations of Place: A Multidisciplinary Framework for Place-Conscious Education. *American Educational Research Journal*, 40, 3, pp. 619-654.

hooks, b. (1994). *Teaching to transgress: Education as the practice of freedom*. New York, NY: Routledge.

hooks, b. (2000). *Feminist theory: From margin to center*. Cambridge, MA: South End Press.

*National Standards for Arts Education: What Every Young American Should Know and Be Able To Do in the Arts*. (1994). Consortium of National Arts Education Associations. Reston, VA: Music Educators National Conference.

The New Handbook of Research in Music Education. (eds. Colwell, R. & Richardson, C.) (2002). Reston, VA: Music Educators National Conference.

Woodford, P. (2005). *Democracy and music education: Liberalism, ethics, and the politics of practice*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press.