Education and Diversity: Historical and Comparative Perspectives  
NYU-Ghana, Summer 2014

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Office hours:

This course compares the way that contemporary societies have addressed differences of race, ethnicity, religion, and gender in their educational systems. We will examine these questions through the lens of history, exploring how these societies—and their schools--have changed across time. We will place special emphasis upon Ghanaian education, interspersing our classes with site visits to schools, state agencies, and non-governmental organizations. At the end of the course, we will ask how Ghana and the United States might learn from each other in a globalizing world of flux, opportunity, and danger.

Course Requirements
1. Attendance: I expect all students to be present and on time for class. If you must be absent or late, please contact me beforehand.
2. Weekly readings in Ghana: I expect you to complete all of the readings for each class. A few of the readings will be posted on “Blackboard”; the remainder you can access via “JSTOR,” or will come from three books:

3. Point of View (POV) papers: For each class session, I ask that you submit a SHORT (2-3 pages, maximum) response to a question that appears on the syllabus. Please note: I do not accept late papers.
4. Final paper: On August 1, two weeks after our return to the United States, I will ask you to email me a final paper on the following theme:

   You have been asked to deliver a lecture at the U.S. Department of Education entitled: “Diversity in Education: What the United States Can Learn From Ghana, And Vice Versa.” Please submit a draft of
your lecture, which should provide specific examples of ideas and institutions that the nations might adapt or borrow from each other.

We will exchange outlines and other ideas as the semester progresses. Please note: I do not accept late final papers, either.

Grading:
Weekly questions/answers: 40%
Term paper: 40%
Class participation: 20%

Course Schedule

June 30: Teaching and Learning: International Perspectives

**POV PAPER DUE:** How do concepts of “good” teaching vary across cultures and societies? If you were an American teacher in another society, how might these readings affect your decisions and behavior in the classroom?

July 1: “Practical” education? Vocationalism, Class, and School
Zimmerman, *Innocents Abroad*, ch. 2

**POV PAPER DUE:** Should schools prepare children for future employment? If, so, how?

July 3: Questions of Inclusion: Race, Gender, and More
Zimmerman, *Innocents Abroad*, ch. 3

Hannah Warren, “... the donor community, they are not sensitised about these kinds of gender things”: Incorporating ‘gender’ into the work of a Ghanaian NGO,” *Gender and Development* 20:3 (November 2012), 505-516.

**POV PAPER DUE: Should schools around the world promote equality across race and gender? Why? As an American teacher overseas, what steps might you take to fulfill this goal?**

July 7: Teachers and Teacher Professionalism
Zimmerman, *Innocents Abroad*, ch. 4


**POV PAPER DUE: How do concepts of the “professional” teacher vary across the globe? What might Americans learn from the rest of the world—and vice versa—about teacher professionalism?**

July 9: History Wars


Helen Yitah and Mabel Komasi, “Authenticity, Past and Present in Ghanaian Children’s Literature” *Children’s Literature in Education* 41 (March 2010), 1-11.

**POV PAPER DUE: Compare the purpose of history instruction in the United States and Ghana. Why does history “do,” in schools? Most of all what should it do?**

July 11: Language Wars

POV PAPER DUE: Why does school language policy cause controversy in so many societies? What might the United States learn from the ways that other nations address language in their schools?

July 14: Religion in the Schools
Zimmerman, Whose America, 131-185.

POV PAPER DUE: How does American policy regarding religion in schools differ from Ghana and from other parts of the world? Should the United States become more like the rest of the world, in this regard? Or should it try to retain its own pattern?

July 16: Speaking of Sex
Zimmerman, Whose America, 186-211.

POV PAPER DUE: How did sex education develop in the United States? What could or should we learn from the rest of the world?

July 18: Doing Good? International aid organizations and education
Julie Resnik, “International Organizations, the ‘Education-Economic
Growth’ Black Box, and & the Development of World Education Culture,” Comparative Education Review 50 (May 2006), 173-95.

POV PAPER DUE: How have international non-governmental organizations (NGOs) tried to influence education in the developing world? What advice or suggestions would you give an NGO about education in Ghana, in light of your experience here?