

**Education 311: Field Work Seminar**  
**Spring 2012**  
**Bryn Mawr College and Haverford College**

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**Course Overview**

This is the culminating seminar for students completing the Minor at Bryn Mawr or Haverford Colleges, and is open only to students completing the minor. Drawing on the diverse contexts in which participants complete their fieldwork, this seminar will explore how images and experiences of practice emerging from students' fieldwork inform and are informed by cross-cutting issues in the field of education.

The focal themes of the course are theories of change and pathways of action. Each student will, individually and in collaboration, develop his/her own theory of change; recognize and analyze the theories of change underlying their field sites; and develop skills and strategies for persisting in creative independence and interdependence with institutions and systems of education.

We begin by exploring the concept of theory of change, culminating in the construction of students' own. We then move to a consideration of several topics as theories and pathways of change; these include love, healing presence, contemplation, and social networks. Taking these topics seriously as tools for education is a deliberate challenge to countercultural education discourses dominated by impersonal representations of learning and "achievement." We bring these considerations to a reading of a current education reform initiative, Harlem Children's Zone, as a means of exploring the intersections of personal and structural change/growth.

Throughout, we address these three interconnected goals:

To facilitate multiple perspectives on and ways of *learning from an ongoing field placement*, including (where possible) gaining additional practical experience as an educator;

To empower students in exploring and enacting theories of change and pathways of action in *educational institutions and systems*;

To help students *gather together, communicate, own, and extend their learning across the courses and contexts that have comprised the minor* for them in a variety of ways, including through the completion of a final portfolio.

### **Assigned Texts**

The following books are available in the Haverford College bookstore and are also on reserve at Magill Library. Other materials will be passed out in class and/or made available on our course Blackboard site. Film/Video may be assigned for outside viewing, with selections shown in class.

Baker-Doyle, Kira. *The Networked Teacher: How New Teachers Build Social Networks for Professional Support*

Miller, James and Cutshall, Susan. *The Art of Being a Healing Presence*

O'Reilly, Mary Rose. *Radical Presence: Teaching as Contemplative Practice*

Tough, Paul. *Whatever It Takes: Geoffrey Canada's Quest to Change Harlem and America*

### **Course and Placement Responsibilities**

#### **Related to Class**

- You are expected to attend class and placement unless there is an emergency or serious health issue that prevents you from doing so. Please notify me immediately should such arise. Missing more than 2 classes or placement visits without a formal excuse will lower your final course grade for every class missed. Missing more than 4 class meetings or placement visits may lead to failure of the course.
- Please arrive in class on time and with the day's reading. Everyone should prepare well for class, and engage fully with the course readings as well as class discussions and group work during class. You should also come to class prepared to discuss the issues and questions that the week's fieldwork has raised for you.
- All written work is due as scheduled. Extensions are available if you ask for them in advance of the due date. Students may revise graded written work for a new grade, but must discuss their plans for revision with me first.
- If you have a learning difference that requires accommodation, please notify me early in the semester. Also, if you have questions about this, please consider consulting with Rick Webb (HC) or Stephanie Bell (BMC) who oversee issues connected with students' learning differences in the bi-co.

#### **Related to Placement**

- Placement visits resume during the first week of class in January and end when classes finish in the spring.
- Students must attend their placements weekly as scheduled, 5-8 hours per week (with accommodations for planning and cross-visitation, as needed). It is ESSENTIAL that you complete all of your field placement visits: many teachers, administrators, and students expect you to be present, and if you miss days or show up late, the relationships the Education Program has with these teachers and schools are jeopardized.
- Please keep detailed notes of each visit to your placement in a field journal. These notes will help you to remember what you see and do, to focus more clearly on

your observations and analysis, and to have sufficient and readily available data when you write papers for this class. I will collect and review the journal at the midpoint and the end of the semester. See below for fuller explanation of the field log.

- Feel free to ask me about questions arising at your placement at any time and please notify me immediately should any problems related to your placement arise. It is up to you and the teacher(s) with whom you are placed to negotiate your participation in your field placement setting. Although you will no doubt make every effort to fit in and contribute to the classroom in which you are placed, you may find yourself in an unexpected position. You may or may not be able to be as active as you would like to be. At any point, you might find your role shifting. All of these are inherent dimensions of the experience. Be prepared for them, and approach your placement with an open mind: you are there to learn whatever you can about teaching, learning, and schools/institutions.
- Final Thank You Note and Placement Closure Activity: At the end of the semester, please send a note or notes of thanks to your mentor(s), the students with whom you worked, and/or anyone else you feel has contributed to your experience at your placement. In addition, if possible and appropriate, find a way during your last visit to say goodbye to those you have come to know through your time at your placement. This can be especially important for children with whom you have worked closely. You might consider sharing a poem or story or teaching a lesson or holding an activity that in some way marks the end of your time with them. At the end of each semester, we will ask your cooperating teacher at the field placement site to write an evaluation of your participation.
- Students who submit the proper paperwork will be reimbursed for 10 round trips to your placement sites at the end of the semester through Ann Brown of the Education Program. To facilitate this, save all receipts and ticket stubs if you commute using public transportation, and write down exact mileage if you drive.

## Course Assignments

### Format for all writing assignments:

All writing for the course must be word-processed in a reasonably sized font and double-spaced. **All written assignments, including informal writing and drafts, should be carefully proofread before they are submitted.** Be sure to cite readings completely and appropriately using APA or MLA style guidelines. (For specific instruction in citation style, please consult

<http://www.brynmawr.edu/Library/citation.shtml>.<http://www.brynmawr.edu/Library/Docs/citation.html>.) **All course writing that refers to your field placement must use pseudonyms for the school and for all individuals.**

1. **Field log** – to be kept as a google document and shared with me, plus other classmates in your placement working group. Please use pseudonyms for people and your placement site!

In this journal, keep records of observations, meetings, questions, ideas, information, and reflections on your field experience. Make an entry after each visit to your placement site, date each entry, and include a sentence or two detailing the hours you attended and summarizing your activities there, as well as noting when and how you and your field placement mentor checked in about your involvement. Draw on course readings, assignments, and discussions as analytic tools. You may also experiment with other formats, such as the use of maps, diagrams, poetry, and other media to represent your observations and reflections. Your field notebook is where you will describe what you see and do at your placement, and where you keep track of issues, events, and questions to pursue. Include ideas for ways to address issues that arise; draft assignments, lesson plans, notes toward curriculum, and so forth, as relevant to your situation.

You may find that you are in a setting in which you can make brief jottings on what you observe during your visit. Fill out your notes in greater detail after your visit as soon as possible to make sure you don't forget anything.

## **2. Theory of Change Paper**

What is your theory of change? What do you find to be the theory of change dominant in your field site? How are these two in tension? In harmony? What questions and possible actions steps about this semester's work in your placement does this analysis prompt? (4-5 pp.)

## **3. Cross-Visitation Analysis**

For this assignment, you must arrange to visit another person's placement with him or her once, and (if possible) arrange to host someone at your placement once as well. You will need to seek permission from your field mentor to bring a visitor. Please keep in mind that the time you spend at your classmate's placement is deductible from your hours at your own placement for the week (although, of course, you need to inform your mentor about this).

Steps in completing the project:

Before your visits, develop one or several questions that you are bringing to the cross-visitation experience. These questions should involve an issue relevant in some way to both sites, and can be developed separately or in collaboration with your partner.

Take field notes on both visits as soon as possible after completing them.

Arrange to meet with your partner for about 30 minutes to debrief your experiences. As one aspect of your conversation, consider the questions you both brought to the experience.

Jot down some notes from your discussion to share informally in class and to use in your cross-visitation analysis paper.

Write a 5 page reflective essay on your learning from this experience. Be as specific as possible in this paper as you push your thinking, form insights, and raise questions.

Please include the following elements in your papers:

What were your questions going into the experience, and how did the cross-visitation

address those questions or not?

**Both describe and analyze** the most important things you learned about your own placement from this assignment (whether or not these were related to your initial questions). This must include visiting a classmate's placement and may include hosting your classmate.

Discuss what you learned from your post-visit discussion with your partner.

#### **4. Midcourse Portfolio**

Please turn back in, contained in a folder:

\* your self-assessment of your work and progress in the course, focused on identifying and analyzing your 1) learnings; 2) learning edges (areas/ideas you are rethinking/struggling with/puzzling over; and 3) your questions and goals for the second half of the course.

\* your theory of change paper (with my comments)

\* your research paper proposal (with my comments) with a 2-3 page update on the progress of your research

\* your cross-visitation paper

\* your field log

#### **5. Field Site Research/History Paper (8-10 pp)**

While each student will need to develop his/her own focus, this paper needs to result from document- and interview-based research into the history of your site. Questions for consideration could include: When did it start? Who started it? Under what conditions? And with what mission? Where is it located, and why? How has it changed over time? What is it part of? What is it outside of? Who holds this knowledge now? How does the "creation story" of the site inform and complicate practice there today? Why do people stay there? What causes them to leave? Where do you see current manifestations of this history? What is the history of the way this place has been represented? Who knows, writes about, remembers it? Why?

#### **6. Networked Educator Paper FOR WORKING GROUP**

Over the course of the Education minor you have examined a number of ways in which education in our current context is powerful as well as ways in which it is flawed or problematic. In this senior seminar we focus on learning work within and to challenge/change institutions and structures (of thought as well as interaction). This assignment asks you revisit your own theory of change and discuss the roles you find for yourself in taking it to action and interaction.

Part 1: What is your theory of change? Has/How has it changed since the start of the semester? Whose work is it in dialogue with? What are your questions about it?

Part 2: What group, network, organization, or community have you found to support you in advancing change and action? How do you envision this group serving as a "third space" for you and your work? Why do you wish to join this community? How do you envision it supporting you? What challenges and pitfalls do you foresee in this group's

mission, and how should we meet them? Think as an educator and a change agent: Be realistic and also honor your vision. (3-5 pp.)

Consider using/revising this paper as the introduction for your final portfolio.

## **7. Final Portfolio**

The senior seminar final portfolio serves as an ongoing and summative expression of what education students do and learn in preparation for their futures as educators. It should be constructed as evidence that as an education student you have explored and developed informed and meaningful relationships to (1) the self, (2) learners, (3) educational contexts, (4) subject matter, and (5) pedagogy. The project should highlight instances of active participation/decision and what you learned from those.

The faculty and administrators of the Education Program want to see evidence that students have engaged with the issues explored in education courses and how those issues have shaped each student's ideas of educational philosophy-into-practice. Therefore, each education student's portfolio must address the following questions in some way.

- How have I explored issues of social change and social justice?
- How do I demonstrate capacity for critical analysis and questioning?
- How do I demonstrate engagement, passion, and caring?
- How do I demonstrate recognition of and struggle with complexity/real dilemmas?
- How do I demonstrate openness to change and accomplishment of growth?

There are two distinct pieces to each selection included in the portfolio: the artifact and the reflection on it. The artifact is a visual representation of a particular experience. It can be a photograph, a page from a syllabus, a flyer from a camp, a collection of key selections from an important paper, a lesson plan, a test, a note from a student or administrator or colleague.

A focused, precise, and substantive reflection should accompany each artifact. This reflection should appear on the page facing the artifact. Like the artifact, the reflection should occupy only a single page. The reflection should include a title, a brief explanation of the context from which the artifact comes, and most important, a thoughtful, critical analysis of the significance of the artifact. Answer this question about the artifact: "In what way did this [experience or interaction or activity] contribute to my evolution as an educator?" Be specific.

The portfolio should include a frame at the beginning and/or end that situates the artifact-reflection pairs in the larger conceptual framework of the author's educational philosophy-into-practice.

## **Course Schedule**

### **Week 1: Orienting to the course/Reconstituting Community**

Mon. Jan. 23

Discuss: the course aims, materials, requirements, responsibilities, and schedule

Returning to placements

Guest: Sara Narva, HC '99, Dance and Theater Department, The Crefeld School, Philadelphia

Form Working Groups

Define: "Theory of change"

**Week 2:** Mon. Jan. 30

Reading due:

Tuck, "Suspending Damage"

Waters, Hack Education (blog selection):

<http://www.hackeducation.com/2011/12/13/top-ed-tech-trends-of-2011-the-higher-education-bubble/>

**Writing due: Theory of Change Paper**

What is your theory of change? What do you find to be the theory of change dominant in your field site? How are these two in tension? In harmony? What questions and possible actions steps about this semester's work in your placement does this analysis prompt? (4-5 pp.)

Field Log Entry

**Week 3:** Mon. Feb 6

Guests: Dr. Melanie McCarthy, Assistant Principal, Springfield Township High School; Dr. Kathleen McCladdie, Principal, Parkway West High School; David Garcia-Pedrosa, HC '09, China Foreign Affairs University

Reading due: *The Art of Being a Healing Presence*

Writing Due: Placement Research Paper Proposal: a one-page statement with your primary questions and goals for the project.

**Week 4:** Mon. Feb. 13

Reading due: *Teaching as Contemplative Practice*

**Week 5:** Mon. Feb. 20

Alum Educator Panel: Laura Hummer, Margo Schall, Maeve O'Hara, Amy Lagrotte, Jes Vinson

Reading due: None

Writing Due: Cross-Visitation Analysis Paper, 5-7 pp.

**Week 6:** Mon. Feb. 27

Reading due:

Tough, *Whatever It Takes*

*SPRING BREAK*

**Week 8:** Mon. March 12

Reading due:

Tough, *Whatever It Takes*

Writing due:

Mid-semester portfolio: Please turn back in, contained in a folder:

\* your self-assessment of your work and progress in the course, focused on identifying and analyzing your 1) learnings; 2) learning edges (areas/ideas you are rethinking/struggling with/puzzling over; and 3) your questions and goals for the second half of the course.

\* your theory of change paper (with my comments)

\* your research paper proposal (with my comments) with a 2-3 page update on the progress of your research

\* your cross-visitation paper

\* your field log

**Week 9:** Mon. March 26

Reading due: *The Networked Teacher*

Writing due: Networked Educator piece for Portfolio (tbd)

**Week 10:** Mon. April 2

Guest: Kira Baker-Doyle, Assistant Professor of Education, Penn State Berks; Author, *The Networked Teacher*; Co-Founder, John and Kira's Chocolates

**Writing due:**

Placement Research Paper (See Course Assignments for full description.)

**Working Group Problem of Practice Teaching Presentations (see assignment sheet for details for preparation, in-class, and post-class work due)**

Week 11: Mon. April 9

Week 12: Mon. April 16

Week 13: Mon. April 23

Week 14: Mon. April 30

**\*\* Final portfolio. We will discuss the due date in class.**