

How can power be redistributed to ensure equitable educational outcomes?



# Reconceptualizing Power in Education

## Course Meeting

Tuesday/Thursday  
12:55 – 2:15pm  
Taylor Hall  
Room D

## Contact

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Pronouns: She, her, hers  
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## Office Hours

Tuesday  
Bettwys-Y-Coed, Rm. 303  
3 – 5pm,  
Or By Appointment

## My Educational Philosophy

My instructional philosophy is guided by my desire to develop a community of critical learners, and my view on teaching, learning, reading, and writing is strongly influenced by socio-cultural perspectives and constructivist ideology. All members of our learning community are responsible for contributing to everyone's development. Completing readings, developing and sharing high-quality products, attending class, and contributing to discussions will help all of us learn from each other. In my dual role as a learning community member and the instructional designer of our learning environment, I share this responsibility with you.



## Our Focus

The systematic critical exploration of the influence of power in education requires attention and reconceptualization; from an anti-colonial and anti-racist frame, this course investigates the following question: how can power be redistributed to ensure equitable educational outcomes?

We will examine the production of transformative knowledge, arguing the necessity for including creativity and multi-disciplinary collaboration in contemporary societies. Supporting students' pursuit of a politics of resistance, subversion, and transformation will allow for the rethinking of traditional education. We will also center the intersections between race, class, gender, sexuality, language, religion, citizenship status, and geographic region, assessing their impact on teaching and learning. How exciting is this opportunity?!



### Student Learning Goals:

1. Conceptualize education in a historical and contemporary context;
2. Identify how power, privilege, and identity impact education;
3. Engage in critical self-reflection;
4. Critique current educational issues using an anti-colonial and anti-racist education framework; and
5. Envision varied approaches to create equitable educational outcomes.

Oakland Teacher Strike, 2019



### Class Format:

Although it is listed as a “lecture” class, we will be doing a lot more! You can expect a wide variety of writing, speaking, reading, and activities designed to explore course topics.



Readings, listenings, and viewings are theoretical, narrative-based, current, and historical.

In-class activities include debates, watching videos, practicing active listening, art-making, writing, reading, and more.

#### IS THIS CLASS RELEVANT TO ONLY EDUCATION STUDENTS?

NO; POLITICIANS, COMMUNITY MEMBERS, VOTERS, PARENTS – ALL ARE INVOLVED IN EDUCATION PROCESSES AND EDUCATIONAL CHANGE. EDUCATION IS CONNECTED TO ALL FACETS OF LIFE, AND WE WELCOME EACH PERSON WHO EXPRESSES CONCERN. THANK YOU FOR JOINING THE FIGHT!

#### Decolonizing the curriculum means:

1. acknowledging that knowledge is not owned by anyone
2. recognizing that knowledge is inevitably marked by power relations
3. rethinking, reframing and reconstructing the current curriculum in order to make it more inclusive
4. identifying ways in which the university structurally reproduces colonial hierarchies
5. creating spaces and resources for a dialogue among all members of the university
6. developing sustained collaboration, discussion and experimentation among groups
7. being courageous enough to admit that any knowledge could and should be open to challenge and question

*(adapted from Keele University)*

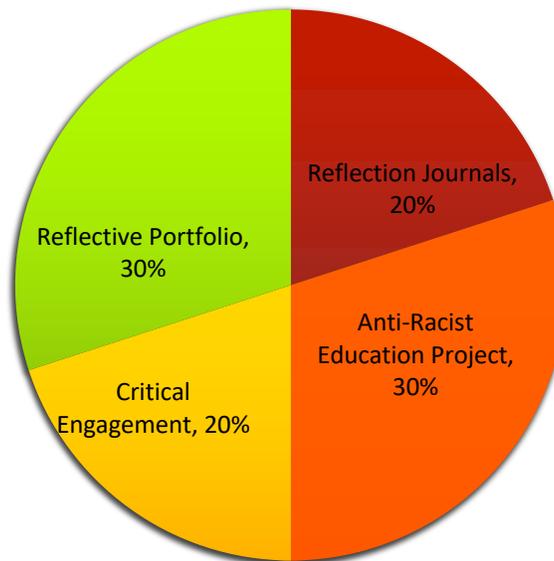


This course was redesigned engaging these principles of decolonizing the curriculum. This is my second time purposefully enacting the practices described, so I hope you will be patient with me and with this process. I also look forward to our collaboration to creating a mutually edifying learning environment!

## Demonstrating and Assessing Your Learning

### How much out of class work can you expect?

This interactive course will require you to be prepared to participate during class sessions, which necessitate preparation beforehand, and engagement afterward. You can expect to engage in appx. 3-4 hours of prep time, each week, depending on your different learning and processing needs. If you ever feel overwhelmed, please talk to me to so that we can create a plan that works for you.



\*\*\*Assignment guidelines are available on Moodle and will be discussed at length in class. Brief descriptions are below.\*\*\*

#### Determining your course grade:

- 3.7 to 4.0 - work distinguished by analytic depth, creativity, and engagement
- 3.0 to 3.3 - strong, capable work
- 2.3 to 2.7 - adequate though missing important elements
- 2.0 - missing important elements
- 1.7 and below - not demonstrating having met standards for moving forward

### Critical Reflection Journals (10\*2pts=20pts)

10 journal entries that engage with the readings and lecture/discussion material will be assigned. *Journals will be submitted via Moodle.* Each journal should demonstrate an understanding of the assigned topics and themes, and draw connections to your own experiences, and/or current events. Journals will be graded using a 2-point rubric we create.

### Critical Engagement Documents (5\*4pts =20pts)

This class requires 5 critical engagement experiences. The intent is for you to choose an area of interest to engage with over time. You will draw on this work in other assignments and in-class discussions. Your grade will be based on designing, completing, and reflecting on these experiences. We will discuss potential options, together in class.



### Anti-Racist/Decolonial Education Project (Draft 10pts; Final 20pts)

Enacting an anti-racist framework, you will design a project that critiques a current educational issue. This project will entail researching the issue, describing all sides of the issue, articulating your standpoint, and framing it within the redistribution of power in education. The project will be in the medium of your choice, and presented at an end of the semester showcase. The project will be graded based on a rubric designed by the class.

### Reflective Portfolio (30pts)

This final portfolio will demonstrate your learning and reflective practice. It will include summative reflections on your critical engagement experiences, journals, and Anti-Racist/Decolonial Education Project. You can think of this product as the culminating guide to your learning, in this course, throughout the semester. The portfolio will be submitted via Moodle, and will be graded based on a rubric posted there.

## THE FINE PRINT

### Academic Accommodations

I am committed to working with you to engage in learning that best suits your needs and allows you to experience academic success. Similarly, Bryn Mawr and Haverford Colleges have a wealth of resources available to support you. Students needing academic accommodations for a disability can first register through a confidential process: Deb Alder, Access Services, [dalder@brynmawr.edu](mailto:dalder@brynmawr.edu), 610-526-7516 or the Office of Access and Disability Services, [hc-add@haverford.edu](mailto:hc-add@haverford.edu). Once registered, students should schedule an appointment with me as early in the semester as possible to share the verification form and make appropriate arrangements. Please note that accommodations are not retroactive and require advance notice to implement. More information can be obtained online: <http://www.brynmawr.edu/access-services/> or <https://www.haverford.edu/deans-office-student-life/offices-resources>

### Electronics

Electronic devices are welcome (encouraged) in class, to support learning. Please be mindful that they do not serve as a distraction to you or those around you.



### Office Hours

Please meet with me during my office hours at any point throughout the semester! They are there to help you, and I encourage you to take advantage of them. Try to schedule with me ahead of time, when at all possible, to ensure that I do not overbook, and to make sure you are not made to wait for me in the hallway.

### Attendance

Your presence is necessary for everyone's success in this course. You are allowed to miss three class meetings. Any absence after the third, may impact your engagement with content and ideas shared in class, so I encourage you to remember this. Please be proactive in situations where you will be absent, if you experience an emergency, or anticipate a prolonged absence for any reason.

### Psychological Health

The college experience is celebrated as transformative, and this also comes with challenges – you do not have to endure these alone. Bryn Mawr College Counseling Services and Haverford College Health Services are dedicated to delivering excellent clinical care. You can learn to optimize your psychological health to fulfill their academic aspirations as individuals and contribute to building healthy relationships and communities.

### Academic Integrity

The [Honor Code](#) assumes that students are trustworthy and that they will live and work with integrity. Please familiarize yourself with it and speak to me if you experience any challenges.

**\*\*This syllabus is subject to change per the needs of the learning community.\*\***

## Help & Resources

### If you are feeling lost or overwhelmed...

- 1. Make an appointment with me.**  
 You are welcome to email me, or make an appointment to meet during my office hours. Many questions and issues can be easily resolved this way.
- 2. Use online resources**  
 On Moodle, I've linked some useful online resources and recommended readings to help you better understand course content.
- 3. Phone a friend**  
 We will establish Micro Learning Communities to support our learning throughout the semester. Please take advantage of the opportunity each of you have to be a resource to a peer.
- 4. Use the Writing Center**  
 The Writing Center is a free resource at any stage of the writing process, from getting started to revising drafts to polishing a final essay. The Writing Center is located in Canaday Library. You can get more information at [www.brynmawr.edu/writingcenter](http://www.brynmawr.edu/writingcenter).
- 5. Visit the Academic Support and Learning Resources Center**  
 Explore effective learning, studying, test-taking, note-taking, time and stress management strategies essential to success in this course and college life. Schedule a meeting with Specialist Rachel Heiser, by calling the Dean's Office at (610) 526-5375.
- 6. Get to know the Reference Desk**  
 Our library staff is eager to help guide your inquiry and to orient you to our library's print and online resources.

## **Preliminary Plan for Course Organization (subject to revision as we move through the course)**

### **Weeks 1-3: Conceptualizing education/identifying issues**

We will begin with a series of activities, readings, and writing assignments that invite you to conceptualize education in a historical and contemporary context and analyze dimensions of power that inform dynamics and practices in education, nationally, as well as within the wider world. These weeks will build both the kind of learning community we need to explore such complex issues and surface the particular areas of focus we will pursue in greater depth through the course.

### **Weeks 4-8: Selecting and delving into issues of power, privilege, and identity**

Based on the explorations in weeks 1-3, we will select, research, share findings, identifying how power, privilege, and identity impact education, while addressing the tensions and opportunities presented by various examples of educational systems. These weeks will support a delving in to the complexities of each dimension, critiquing educational issues we choose to focus on and allow for finding connections across points of difference. It will also be the time that we refine the assignments that will be graded within the course.

### **Weeks 9-13: Generating strategies and preparing action plans**

These weeks will be devoted to generating strategies for developing and implementing action plans with the goal will to educate ourselves on particular approaches to respond to the issues we've uncovered in the educational system and create forums for their exploration.

### **Weeks 13-15: Reflecting on and documenting learnings and accomplishments**

You will now envision varied approaches to creating equitable educational outcomes. These weeks will provide you the time and space to step back, analyze what you have experienced and learned, and develop thoughtful representations of those in portfolios to be shared with classmates as well as submitted for formal, summative assessment

#### ***Potential Sub-Topics:***

- Multicultural Education
- Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
- Anti-Racist Education
- Power and Privilege
- Education and the Community
- Decolonizing Westernized Education
- Undocumented Students
- Culturally Responsive Teaching and Inclusive Pedagogies
- Exploring Differences within and outside Ethnic Groups
- The Teaching Force and Teacher Unions
- Standardized Assessments
- Restorative Justice
- Empowerment in Schools
- Gentrification and Poverty
- Gender and Sexuality
- Human Exceptionalities and Neurodiversity

**Shared Reading and Listenings:**

Fugitive Pedagogy, Jarvis Givens

The Colorblind Perspective in School: Causes and Consequences, Janet Schofield

Whose Community Is This? Mathematics of Neighborhood Displacement, Eric Gutstein

The Silenced Dialogue: Power and Pedagogy in Educating Other People's Children, Linda Delpit

Decolonization is not a Metaphor, Eve Tuck & K. Wayne Yang

White Teachers at the Crossroads, Kathleen Berry

Love Pedagogy, Lisa Arrastia

Abolitionist Teaching, Bettina Love

Equity Literacy for All, Paul Gorski

Promoting Racial Literacy in Schools, Bryan Stevenson

But What is Urban Education, Richard Milner

Beyond Heroes and Holidays, James A. Banks

Model Minority Myth, Wayne Au

Toward a Critical Race Curriculum, Tara Yosso

But that's just good teaching! The case for culturally relevant pedagogy, Gloria Ladson-Billings

Critical Race Theory, Race and Gender Microaggressions, and the Experience of Chicana and Chicano Scholars, Daniel Solorzano

Subtractive Schooling, Angela Valenzuela

The Politics of Education, Paulo Freire

Teaching to Transgress, bell hooks

Everyday Anti-Racism, Mica Pollock

Anti-Racism in Higher Education: A Model for Change, Ash et. al

