



# **Introduction to Learning and Teaching in a Culturally Diverse Society**

## **IDS 2013**

### **Spring 2008**

Instructor: Dr. Jean Ann Joest  
Office: MB 2.212  
email: jean.joest@utsa.edu

FAX: 458-7281  
Office Hours: Thursday, 12:45-1:45  
Phone: 458-5969; home 497-8732

Class meets: Tuesday/Thursday 11:00-12:15, MB 0.208

#### **Department of Interdisciplinary Learning and Teaching: Mission and Goals**

It is the **Mission** of the Department of Interdisciplinary Learning and Teaching to foster intellectual and professional growth and integrity of students and faculty through critical reflection and dialogue, civic responsibility, and leadership. This mission will be accomplished by nurturing a community of interdisciplinary learners who:

- Promote excellence in academic and pedagogical knowledge and research
- Engage in reflective practices
- Embody a strong professional identity and can articulate their philosophies and values
- Value diversity and multiple perspectives
- Promote equality and social justice
- Care about their students and their profession
- Advocate for educational change and reform

The **Goals** of ILT will create a context that nurtures interdisciplinary learners who:

- Acquires and demonstrates content and discipline knowledge
- Demonstrates an awareness and acknowledgement of and engagement in research-based, reflective, culturally responsive practices
- Is a producer, disseminator, and critical consumer of research
- Demonstrates an awareness and acknowledgment of and engagement in social justice and equitable practices, and
- Articulate their professional philosophy and demonstrate a strong professional identity.

This course, IDS 2013, is one of many classes you will take within the Department of Interdisciplinary Learning and Teaching that will fulfill this mission and goal.

#### **Course Description**

This is an introductory course for all prospective teachers and is designed to help students examine the culture of schooling and classrooms, and the complex role of the teacher. Emphasis will be on, but not limited to, students as learners, curriculum standards and assessment, effective teaching practices for diverse learners, professionalism, and the socio-political challenges confronting today's teachers. A minimal field experience of 20 hours is required.

#### **Course Framework**

IDS 2013 is the cornerstone course for all students engaged in the pursuit of teacher certification. This course builds upon the conceptual framework and goals of the Department of Interdisciplinary Learning and Teaching that foster intellectual and professional growth. These goals are for the purpose of:

- building content and discipline knowledge;
- crossing subject boundaries to explore issues, concepts, questions, events, problems, processes, and other areas of inquiry;
- facilitating effective communication and ongoing reflection, and
- promoting equity, social justice, and diversity.

The course is organized around three interdisciplinary focus questions:

1. *What does it mean to be a teacher?*

Readings, learning activities, observations, and discussions will focus on teachers' roles, the characteristics of highly qualified teachers, and the knowledge, skills and dispositions required of qualified teachers. What reasons do you have for becoming a teacher? What assumptions do you have about teaching? What factors influenced your decision to become a teacher? What does it mean to be a teacher for all students?

2. *What are the aims and characteristics of diverse schools?*

Thinking about this question will center on the characteristics and aims of schools of diversity. What is the purpose of schools? How do the multiple and often conflicting purposes of schools affect what teachers do and what student learn? What distinguishes a diverse school from a non-diverse school? What does it mean to provide an excellent and equal education to a diverse student population? What assumptions do you hold about diverse schools, students, teachers, and communities?

3. *What does it mean to be a teacher in a culturally diverse society?*

The issues embedded in this question provoke an examination of what is required to become a reflective, professional educator. What should you be learning as you prepare for teaching all students? What learning experiences will you need? How will you learn from those experiences? What do you expect to gain? What can you learn from firsthand experience in the classroom? How much teaching is common sense and how much depends on a body of professional knowledge?

### **Course Themes**

The course is organized around three interconnected themes – *Professionalism, Reform, and Decision Making*- that will frame the coursework and lay the foundations for the teacher preparation courses you will take in subsequent semesters. During each class session, there will be discussion and reflection on assigned readings and your experiences in your field experiences. This course is structured to encourage you to become more aware of yourself and of your experiences, commitments, and assumptions. This course is designed to assist you in considering and articulating the commitments you want to embrace as a learner and a teacher, the directions which you want to grow and ways you can begin to do so.

1. *Professionalism*

Professionalism is the theme that ties together topics such as career selection, teacher working conditions, career-long development, teacher evaluation, and relationships with supervisors, peers, students, parents, and the community.

## 2. *Reform*

Reform has been and will continue to a critical influence on education. Standards, accountability, and testing – for teachers and students – are being proposed as solutions to both educational and societal problems. The course will introduce and discuss several current and specific reform issues.

## 3. *Decision Making*

Decision making, which involves goal-oriented problem solving based on professional knowledge, is one of the central characteristics of teacher professionalism. Students will begin thinking about personal and professional decisions that will influence the kinds of teachers they will become.

### **Course Objectives**

By the conclusion of this course, students will:

1. Demonstrate an awareness of the world of work of teachers past, present, and future;
2. Analyze their own personal motivation, needs, and goals with respect to the teaching profession;
3. Assess their personal attributes and knowledge and compare them to what is required of teachers;
4. Demonstrate a working knowledge of information pertaining to teacher certification requirements and standards in Texas and apply that knowledge to their own courses of study;
5. Participate in a field experience with varied and diverse student populations;
6. Discuss the importance of diversity equality, and social justice in delivering high-quality education for all students; and
7. Discuss the various social issues and challenges surrounding teaching as a profession.

### **Required Texts**

- Kauchak, D. & Eggen, P. (2005). *Introduction to Teaching*. Columbus, OH: Merrill Prentice Hall.
- Ayers, W. (2001). *To Teach: The Journey of a Teacher*. New York: Teachers College Press.

### **Additional Resources**

1. TExES Preparation manual for Pedagogy and Professional Standards for your certification area [http://www.excet.nesinc.com/prepmanuals/prepman\\_opener.htm](http://www.excet.nesinc.com/prepmanuals/prepman_opener.htm)
2. Readings posted on WebCT
3. Spiral notebook (50 page) for field notes
4. Reflection journal prompts (found on WebCT)

### **Field Work**

Research has demonstrated that beginning teachers value their preservice teacher preparation program and are more prepared for their first year of teaching when they have been engaged in

early field experiences—that is, they have multiple opportunities to engage in real classrooms with real teachers and learners. This course will offer you one of your first experiences in that context. To that end, you will be an observer in an assigned classroom for a total of 20 hours over the course of the semester (two hours per week). It is your responsibility to be on time to your observation classroom and to be professional at all times.

Professional behavior includes arriving on time for field-based work, or notifying the cooperating teacher if you have to change plans for any reason. You must adhere to all policies and regulations of the school or facility serving as a field-based site including appropriate attire for professionals.

Any breach of professional ethics or conduct deemed unsuitable by the cooperating teacher in the field placement and/or the course instructor could result in the your being dropped from the course or disciplinary action by the university following the policies specified in the UTSA Faculty Handbook and the Fitness to Teach Policy. As a requirement of this course, you must attend an orientation session and turn in a one-page summary of the UTSA's Fitness to Teach Policy (found at <http://coehd.utsa.edu/FTT/FTT.htm>).

### **Course Requirements:**

*Attendance, preparedness, and professionalism*

- UTSA College of Education and Human Development's Fitness-to-Teach policy. In order to enter into your field placement with your mentor teacher, you must *complete the Fitness to Teach Reflection attached to this syllabus*. The Fitness to Teach policy is intended to make sure that you fully understand the requirements of professional behavior as a student in the COEHD. You can find this policy at <http://coehd.utsa.edu/FTT/FTT.htm>. This Reflection is due at the beginning of the second class meeting time; you will not be allowed to enter into your classroom placement until you have successfully completed this activity.
- Attendance. Attend class. Be timely. Attendance of scheduled classes and field-based experience are **mandatory** for the completion of this course. Activities designed for class participation cannot be replicated apart from class sessions. Nor can field experiences be replicated. Therefore, attendance is expected for each class session. Attendance will be checked at the beginning of each class period. In order to be considered present for the class, the student must arrive on time and remain for the entire class period. No absences are allowed in this course, except for extreme emergencies ("emergency" is left to the discretion of the instructor). Excused absences will result in the loss of five points from the Attendance and Participation points. Upon the **second** unexcused absence, the student will receive a reduction in the final grade by one (1) letter grade. Each additional absence will result in a subsequent reduction of the final grade by an additional letter grade. The instructor will also initiate a Fitness to Teach review as outlined on <http://coehd.utsa.edu/FTT/FTT.htm>.

Please be prompt to class and stay the entire class period. Tardies and leaving early will result in a reduction of two points per tardy/leaving early from the Attendance and Participation points.

In other words, do not miss class and do not be late. There will be no exceptions to the attendance policy.

- Preparedness. Complete your assignments on time. **There will be a late penalty of 5% per day for late assignments.** Be ready for class and for your observation sessions with your students. Being prepared is crucial in teaching.
- Professionalism includes (but is not limited to) the way in which we present ourselves in the school in which we will be working. The way we dress and act is important to our projection as teachers to both the students in the school as well as to the other teachers and administrators. Please see the attached questionnaire for a better understanding of what it means to be a professional.

### *Responses to Readings*

There are two texts that will serve as your primary source of reading; you will also find online readings on WebCT. It is your responsibility to read the assigned readings **prior** to coming to class; we will be able to have better discussions if all class members are informed. In order to prepare you for the class discussions, your instructor may ask you to engage in one or more of the following response activities:

- Online quizzes. You will be asked to demonstrate your understanding (and completion) of some of the readings through online quizzes. Each quiz can be accessed on WebCT. You will take the quiz and email the results to your instructor before the beginning of the class on the day in which it is due.
- Written responses to readings: “Reading responses” are meant to help you organize the information you’ve learned from the readings as you read. Each response will be turned in at the beginning of the class on the day it is due. Each of your responses should have the following components:
  - ❑ Identification of: Author, title, date of your response, and your name
  - ❑ Summarize the reading by producing a single paragraph that indicates the central points of the material or by listing the three most important ideas from this reading. Please be sure to include page numbers if you do quote.
  - ❑ Reaction --After your brief summary, you’ll want to react to the reading by writing a three-section response:
    - ❑ The first section includes your “*Aha’s*” or *insights* that you made with the chapter—as in “Aha, I never thought of that, but now that I have...”
    - ❑ The second section includes your *puzzlements* or *ponderings* (those aspects of the reading that leave you wondering or uncertain).
    - ❑ The third section will be a connection to something you’ve experienced outside of the reading. Perhaps the reading reminded you of something you read before, saw in a classroom, or experienced yourself as a reader and writer.
- Other responses as assigned by your instructor (such as “Entry slips;” Golden Quotes; and Metacognitive Maps).

### *Early Field Experiences*

- **Field work:** You must complete a **minimum of 20 hours of field work** in an assigned classroom in public school setting in order to receive credit for this course—in other words, you cannot pass the course without completing this assignment. These hours must be completed on a weekly basis (2 hours per week) and must be completed during classroom instructional time. You will spend approximately one hour of each of your two hour visits observing, based on the daily guideline, and one hour interacting with the learners, based on the request of the classroom teacher. A timesheet is included in with this syllabus on which you will keep track of your time in your classroom; it is due on the day listed as is your mentor teacher's evaluation form (also included in this syllabus).
- **Field notes:** To help you focus on specific behaviors of the teachers and children, your instructor will provide you with a specifications page for each observation. You will take notes concerning what you see in your Field Notes spiral. Your notes should be complete and detailed and based on your observations—write down exactly what you see and hear. Take note of the language of the teachers and learners. Do not make any judgments or evaluations about what you see. You are to make observations during every observation period and should bring your field notes to class each week as it will be turned in with the reflection. At least a page of notes per week would be adequate. You should offer to let your cooperating teacher read your notes if he/she so desires. This is a public document—please be extremely professional in your note taking. Your field spiral will help you complete your next assignment—the *Reflective Journal*.
- **Reflective Journal:** Once you have left the field, your instructor will ask you to use your field notes to complete a Reflective Journal entry. The purpose of the Journal is to ensure that you are making connections between course readings, class discussions, and what you are seeing in your cooperating teacher's classroom. To that end, you will turn in a page from your reflective journal once a week. Your instructor will assign the topic for observation and reflection. You will turn in your field notes and your reflection each week. See your Daily Observation Guidelines for the topics under study and the specifications page included in this syllabus for more details.

### *Professional Belief Statement (PBS)*

As a potential teacher, it is important that you begin to examine and be able to explicate your philosophy of learning and teaching. This PBS will undergo many draft versions as we learn more about learning and teaching this semester. Please see the specifications page for more details.

### *Interdisciplinary Inquiry Project*

As your culminating activity for this course, you will select a topic for your own interdisciplinary inquiry from the material presented in class. This project will give you the opportunity to explore a specific strategy, philosophy, or theory about which you are interested in learning more. You should carefully consider varied, reliable and sufficient resources for an in-depth study of your chosen topic. Please see the attached specifications page for more details.

### *Learning Group Design Project*

Students will work in assigned small groups to design a model classroom, reflecting the learnings from the course on the best practices for the classroom. Each group will focus on a

specific level of classroom—elementary, middle school, or high school. Group will create a visual of the classroom, as well as submit a 3-4 page paper discussing the design of the classroom.

<b>Grading</b>	<b>Grade Points</b>
Attendance and Professionalism	30
In-class Activities	20
Responses to Reading	50
Field Notes	20
Reflective Journals	60
Learning Environment Group Project	25
Professional Belief Statement	40
Interdisciplinary Inquiry Project	55
<b>TOTAL POINTS</b>	<b>300</b>

270-300 = A	240-269 = B	210-239 = C
180-209 = D	Below 179 = F	

#### University Policies

1. **Classroom Conduct.**  
All students are expected to exercise self-discipline and a respect for the rights of others at all times. Behavioral disruptions that interfere with the business of the classroom or with an individual's ability to learn may be referred to the Office of Student Judicial Affairs in accordance with Section 202 of the *Student Code of Conduct*.
2. **Scholastic Dishonesty, Particularly Plagiarism.**  
The University expects every student to maintain a high standard of individual integrity for work done. Scholastic dishonesty is a serious offense, which includes, but is not limited to, cheating on a test or other class work, plagiarism (the appropriation of another's work and the unauthorized incorporation of that work in one's own work), and collusion (the unauthorized collaboration with another person in preparing college work offered for credit). In cases of scholastic dishonesty, the faculty member responsible for the class may initiate disciplinary proceedings against the student. In this class all UTSA procedures will be followed and the necessary paperwork will be filed with the Office of Student life and the College of Education. The course instructor will recommend a penalty to the Office of Student Life, which may impose an additional university penalty.

#### **UTSA Honor Code:**

**“On my honor, as a student at The University of Texas at San Antonio, I will uphold the highest standards of academic integrity and personal accountability for the advancement of the dignity and the reputation of our university and myself.”**

3. **Support Services**  
If any member of this class feels that he/she has a disability and needs special accommodations of any nature whatsoever, the instructor will work with you and the Office of Disability Services to perform in this class. Students with disabilities must be registered with the Office of Disability Services located in MS 2.03.18 (Main Campus, 458-4157) or BV 1.302 (Downtown, 458-2838). Please advise the instructor of such disability and the desired accommodations at some point before or immediately after the first scheduled class period.
4. **Criminal Background Checks.**  
Criminal background checks will be conducted on all students enrolled in undergraduate courses at the 3000 and 4000 level, in all ASL courses, and in some 2000 level courses. Since observation and interaction with minors is required for successful completion of degree programs in the College of Education and Human Development, students who do not have a clear criminal background check may not be allowed to continue in the programs of the College. In addition, you must have a criminal background check completed by the second day of class, when you will meet your teacher. You must take care of this online if you have not all ready done so.
5. **Flexibility Clause**  
Flexibility is one key to learning. The instructor reserves the right to modify or change the assignments, sequence of assignments, or weight of assignments as necessary and as reflected by the needs of individuals or the group during the semester. This course outline represents a tentative listing of information and modifications may be assigned as necessary and appropriate. If you are not in class, you may miss important information that directly affects your grade!
6. **Texas Professional Responsibilities**  
The following TExES Competencies are covered in this course:  
Domain I (standards 001; 002; 003; and 004); Domain II (005 and 006); Domain 3 (007; 008; 009; and 010); and Domain 4 (011 and 012).

Student Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

## Fitness to Teach Reflection

The Fitness to Teach policy is intended to make sure that you fully understand the requirements of professional behavior as a student in the COEHD. You can find this policy at <http://coe hd.utsa.edu/FTT/FTT.htm>. This Reflection is due at the beginning of the second class meeting time; you will not be allowed to enter into your classroom placement until you have successfully completed this activity. The reflection questions below come from your perceptions of the video. If you do not remember the contents of the Fitness to Teach Guidelines or video, please go to the COEHD web site to view it. Then answer the following questions, using no more than 2, word-processed, double-spaced pages.

1. Explain why you think the Fitness to Teach Policy is needed at UTSA.
2. Name five key points from the policy that you personally think are most important for future teachers to adhere to, and explain why you think these are important points.
3. Do you think this policy is a reasonable, fair guideline to follow? Why or why not?
4. If you would change this policy in any way, what would you add to it or take away from it?

## Field Experience Reflective Journal Specifications Page

During each of the ten weeks of classroom observations, you will be completing a Reflective Journal entry. Each week you will be directed to observe for a particular facet of the classroom teacher's behaviors and skills as she/he interacts with the students. The classroom observations will be aligned with the four Quadrants of study in this course: Relationships, Environment, Instruction, and Professionalism. You will first take copious notes of what you see in the classroom around that topic.

After completing your Field Notes, you will write a reflective journal entry summarizing and reacting to your observations. The first paragraph should summarize your observations on the topic. The second paragraph should give several specific examples from the classroom to support your summarization. The third paragraph should contain your new insights you have gained from this experience. The final paragraph should reflect your thinking of how your new insights correlate with your previous beliefs of classroom practices.

Each reflective journal entry will be two, double-spaced typed pages. Writing should reflect scholarly effort and be error-free.

The reflective journal will be turned in the week following the completion of that Field Notes. The Field Notes should be attached. Students should be prepared to share their examples from their Field Notes and Reflective Journal in class discussions.

## **Philosophy and Belief Statement (PBS) Specifications Page**

Your philosophy and belief statement will be guided by your own experiences with learning and teaching, your field experiences, class readings, and peer discussions. Consider your PBS to be in a constant state of revision during this semester. To that end, consider the following as you construct your philosophy statement:

- ❖ Education as part of the way in which a society educates its youth;
- ❖ Learning and under what conditions teachers can best structure a learning environment that is conducive to the success of all learners (includes the physical and print environment);
- ❖ The role of relationships in learning and teaching; and
- ❖ What it means to be a teacher in today's society.

This exercise will offer you the opportunity to examine your own practices and beliefs about learning and teaching, but will also (hopefully) help you explicate that which you believe to be true about learning and teaching.

This PBS will undergo several changes as you move through your university experience at the UTSA; this version is intended to be your first formal attempt at writing a professional belief statement.

Your PBS will undergo several examinations by your peers in this class; your instructor will consider the following when assigning a grade to your PBS:

- ❖ Completeness and comprehensiveness;
- ❖ Consistency across beliefs and principles;
- ❖ Clearness and readability for its intended audience; and
- ❖ Comprehensiveness in use of published research, minimum of two citations

## Inquiry Project Rubric

As your culminating activity for this course, you will select a topic for your own interdisciplinary inquiry from the material presented in class. This project will give you the opportunity to explore a specific strategy, philosophy, or theory in which you are interested learning more about. You should carefully consider varied, reliable and sufficient resources for an in depth study in your chosen topic. Inquiries should include at least five resources, be a minimum of five pages long, and follow APA guidelines for publication. Projects will be presented in class.

Criteria	Points	Points	Comments
The inquiry is clearly written in first person narrative.	8		
The search builds from the <u>current</u> discussion of the teaching strategies, philosophies or theories presented in the course.	10		
The paper explores the broader implications of the chosen topic in relation to the guiding questions introduced in this course. What does it mean to be a teacher? How does this fit in to our understanding of diverse schools? How does this reflect culturally responsive teaching?	14		
The search demonstrates the author's ability to conduct a substantive and creative inquiry.	8		
Five unique resources cited using APA style in text and on an attached reference list (no textbooks allowed as references).	5		
The paper is free from typographical and grammatical errors.	5		
Oral presentation with visual aids	5		
<b>Total Points</b>	<b>55</b>		

## IDS 2013 Course Structure



