Curriculum Theory

Course Description
The fundamental question which emerges from the curriculum field is one of worth: What is it most worthwhile to know and experience? The answer to such a question presupposes a particular notion of the “subject” and the society of which one wishes to be a part. The question of worth will be the pivotal question in the course. We will explore a series of responses which the question has evoked during the last century. Related questions which will guide our exploration are:

1. What are some of the perennial categories?
2. What are the theoretical frameworks that focus curriculum inquiry?
3. How does curriculum function as a shaping force in society?
4. What are the politics of curriculum?
5. How do race, class, gender and sexuality relate to curriculum?
6. How has curriculum operated in a modern world?
7. How might curriculum operate in a post-modern world?
8. What are the factors which contribute to curriculum reform?

Throughout this exploration we will become acquainted with the predominant perspectives and paradigms in the field and the scholars who represent them. Each of us will attempt (in turn) to answer the question of worth for ourselves – a sobering but useful exercise! By the end of the semester, my hope is that we will have come to an appreciation of the complexity of educational experience.

Learning Objectives
1. What are the presuppositions that underlie our conceptions of curriculum?
2. How can we develop effective critical analysis of the theoretical frameworks that focus curriculum inquiry?
3. How has curriculum actually functioned as a shaping force in society?
4. In what ways do politics, race, class, gender and sexuality affect the way that we understand and teach our curriculum?
5. How have new technologies affected curriculum?
6. How can we understand the shift in teaching and learning form the 20th to the 21st centuries?
Major Course Requirements

Assignments:
Reflective Journals 20%
Theorist paper 35%
Application discussions 35%
Class Participation 10%

Reflective Journals: The purpose of this assignment is to engage you in reflective exploration of your practice, the curriculum orientation(s) under which you make decisions, and possible alternatives or directions for you to consider in your own practice. This is an evolving project which will require you to write a weekly reflection responding to questions raised and discussed in class, class readings, outside readings of theorists and curriculum books, and your own lived experience. Follow the themes develop in class and include critical insight into your emerging understanding of your practice in relation to the themes. Do not simply summarize the content of the class.

Theorist paper: The purpose of this assignment is to critically explore your knowledge about a particular theorist or theoretical position. This is a formal paper of about ten pages and should follow APA guidelines. A rough draft of this paper is to be submitted at least two weeks prior to the end of term or when you intend to submit it.

Application discussions
The purpose of this assignment is to offer you the opportunity to begin to construct your way of thinking critically about what you teach, why you teach and how you teach. This set of ideas comprises a kind of paradigm out of which your aims and ideals emerge. You are being asked to reflect on your practice in relation to the history of philosophical thought. Grading for this assignment will be satisfactory/unsatisfactory and based on your willingness to participate and interact.

Required or Recommended Readings

Required Text:

Recommended or Supplemental Reading:
Readings and video clips from tedtalks.com and authors @ google will be assigned to supplement the texts.

Course Policies
Attendance/tardiness
Attendance is expected at all classes. There is a high positive correlation between consistent, punctual attendance and higher course grades. It is virtually impossible to receive an A in the course if there are absences and/or lateness.
Late work and Make-up Exams
NA
Extra Credit
NA

Cell Phone/Electronic Device Usage
Vigorously discouraged

Academic Integrity / Plagiarism.
University students are expected to conduct themselves in accordance with the highest standards of academic honesty. Academic misconduct for which a student is subject to penalty includes all forms of cheating, such as illicit possession of examinations or examination materials, falsification, forgery, complicity or plagiarism. (Plagiarism is the presentation of the work of another as one’s own work.) In this class, academic misconduct or complicity in an act of academic misconduct on an assignment or test may result in failure.

Dropping a Class
I hope that you never find it necessary to drop this or any other class. However, events can sometimes occur that make dropping a course necessary or wise. Please consult with me before you decide to drop to be sure it is the best thing to do. Should dropping the course be the best course of action, you must initiate the process to drop the course by going to the Student Services Center and filling out a course drop form. Just stopping attendance and participation WILL NOT automatically result in your being dropped from the class. November 5th is the last day to drop a class with an automatic grade of “W” this term.

Preferred methods of scholarly citations
It is important that this paper be written in a formal manner. Sources should be cited throughout and a bibliography presented using APA guidelines. The paper will be marked, not only for content, discussion, and incisiveness, but also for correct grammar, sentence structure and presentation of its argument at a graduate level of competence.

Classroom/professional behavior
Throughout this exploration we will become acquainted with the predominant perspectives and paradigms in the field and the scholars who represent them. Each of us will attempt (in turn) to answer the question of worth for ourselves – a sobering but useful exercise! By the end of the semester, my hope is that we will have come to an appreciation of the complexity of educational experience. This calls for tolerance and understanding of difference.

All teachers are curriculum developers. Hence, given that everyone taking this course has expertise in developing curriculum in one’s own field, the move in this course will be from the theoretical to the practical. The primary purpose of the course, then, will be to make you to become aware of the framework under which you make curriculum
decisions and then to frame other possibilities.

Grade Appeals*
As stated in University Rule 13.02.99.C2, Student Grade Appeals, a student who believes that he or she has not been held to appropriate academic standards as outlined in the class syllabus, equitable evaluation procedures, or appropriate grading, may appeal the final grade given in the course. The burden of proof is upon the student to demonstrate the appropriateness of the appeal. A student with a complaint about a grade is encouraged to first discuss the matter with the instructor. For complete details, including the responsibilities of the parties involved in the process and the number of days allowed for completing the steps in the process, see University Rule 13.02.99.C2, Student Grade Appeals, and University Procedure 13.02.99.C2.01.

Student Grade Appeal Procedures. These documents are accessible through the University Rules Web site at http://www.tamucc.edu/provost/university_rules/index.html. For assistance and/or guidance in the grade appeal process, students may contact the Office of Student Affairs.

Disabilities Accommodations*
The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please call or visit Disability Services at (361) 825-5816 in Driftwood 101.

If you are a returning veteran and are experiencing cognitive and/or physical access issues in the classroom or on campus, please contact the Disability Services office for assistance at (361) 825-5816.

Syllabus

Please note that this is not a contract, assignments may change

1. Intro to course. Charles Leadbeater ‘We Think’
2. Understanding Curriculum, pp. 1-121
3. pp.241-357, Sugata Mitra (tedtalks.com)
4. pp. 241-402, discussion of paper topics
5. pp. 404-604, Ken Robinson on creativity, (tedtalks.com)
6. pp.606-742, Clay Shirkey on cognitive surplus
7. pp.744-790, Richard Florida (authors @google.com)
8. pp. 792-84, Dave Eggers (tedtalks.com)
9. pp. 785-869
10. General discussion of contemporary conceptions of curriculum theory