



Black Lives Matter: Changing Racial Disparities in Schools

Instructor: Hannah Mitchell

Number of Credits: 1*

Course Description:

Now over a decade old, the Black Lives Matter movement began in 2013 in response to Treyvon Martin's murder and gained momentum with the murders of Michael Brown and Eric Garner in 2014. Since then, the movement has spread across the world as people come together and stand up against race-based discrimination.

This course examines the ways in which these ideas – discrimination against and empowerment of Black people – applies to educational spaces in the United States. Participants will first complete modules on foundational frameworks for discussing and thinking about discrimination, before moving on to explore context in which the Black Lives Matter movement was founded, including the movements that came before it. This module will include lessons on current American law, including the 13th Amendment. The course will conclude in a final module exploring common educational policy that disproportionately affects Black students and culminate in a final assignment in which participants consider how they might apply the knowledge from this course to eliminate racial bias in their learning communities.

Learning objectives:

- Define the Black Lives Matter movement, including its mission statement, founders, and activities
- Recall and explain historical and contemporary legislation that impacts the de facto freedom of Black Americans
- Analyze common educational and disciplinary policies to determine how they impact student experiences
- Apply the foundational knowledge of bias to participants' own educational environments

Resources: No texts are required to purchase in order to complete this course. All required reading will be provided to you in course modules.

- Bonilla-Silva, Eduardo. *Racism without Racists: Color-Blind Racism and the Persistence of Racial Inequality in America*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2003.

This text helps participants to understand the everlasting effects of racism, and how we all perpetuate it, even without harboring conscious racism. It situates itself in "colorblind" ideology, which peaked in popularity in the 1990s and early 2000s, to help readers understand that

pretending to not “see” color is to intentionally not bear witness to the injustices that have been done against Black and Brown people in the United States throughout history and still today. Participants will utilize passages of this text to work towards unlearning the fallacy that to notice and consider racial differences is rude and/or in and of itself racist and to bolster their confidence in discussing race, particularly in educational settings.

- Morris, Monique W. *Pushout: The Criminalization of Black Girls in Schools*. New York, The New Press, 2016.

This text explores the relationship between common disciplinary policies, such as “zero tolerance” and the rates of Black girls being “pushed” out of school through expulsions, suspensions, and dropouts.

- Rothstein, Richard. *The Color of Law: A Forgotten History of How Our Government Segregated America*. Norton. 2018.

This text will help participants discover the relationship between current and historical American law and policy, and racial segregation we see across the country today. Participants will use this text to begin to understand how America’s schools became a case study in segregation.

***Course Requirements:** To receive full credit for the course, participants must complete ALL assignments and respond to specific questions outlined in each assignment. Failure to complete all assignments will result in a disqualification in the course and a failing grade.

Other Course Information:

Getting Started

- After registering for the course, you will be sent a confirmation email with your course dates. A few days before your course is scheduled to begin, you will receive an invitation from Canvas Instructure to join your course. Please follow the prompts in that email to log in and access your course.
- Access each assignment through the course home page or the “Modules” page in your course. All assignments will be submitted through the Canvas platform.
- Please save a backup copy of all course assignments and completed work.

Participation

- You are not required to be present (i.e. online) on specific days or times. You will work at your own pace. The course is structured in 3 Weekly Units, and has a definitive course end date; however you may work at your own pace within the three week timeframe.
- All responses will be posted online. Large documents, files, photographs, or PowerPoint presentations may be attached as part of your response by using the “Submit A File” option.
- For all discussions you will be asked to respond to your classmates’ posts. If you are the first poster for an assignment, or if there are not yet enough posts for you to respond to the minimum number of posts, *you are responsible for returning to lessons you’ve already completed to ensure you are participating in class discussions*. Not doing so may result in losing

participation points. In the event that you are in a course with three or fewer students, your instructor will reach out with further instruction on meeting participation requirements.

- You may work collaboratively and submit *similar* responses on all assignments except for quizzes which must be done individually. Under no circumstances may you copy/paste the same response as a classmate, even if you collaborate on the assignment. Copying and pasting your classmates' or colleagues' responses will be treated as plagiarism and may be grounds for failing the course. Please contact your course instructor with any questions.

INTASC Standards that are addressed in this course:

- 2. The teacher understands how children learn and develop, and can provide learning opportunities that support their intellectual, social and personal development.
- 3. The teacher understands how students differ in their approaches to learning and creates instructional opportunities that are adapted to diverse learners.
- 4. The teacher understands and uses a variety of instructional strategies to encourage students' development of critical thinking, problem solving and performance skills.
- 5. The teacher uses an understanding of individual and group motivation and behavior to create a learning environment that encourages positive social interaction, active engagement in learning, and self-motivation.
- 6. The teacher uses knowledge of effective verbal, nonverbal, and media communication techniques to foster active inquiry, collaboration, and supportive interaction in the classroom.
- 7. The teacher plans instruction based upon knowledge of subject matter, students, the community, and curriculum goals.
- 9. The teacher is a reflective practitioner who continually evaluates the effects of his/her choices and actions on others (students, parents, and other professional in the learning community) and who actively seeks out opportunities to grow professionally.
- 10. The teacher fosters relationships with school colleagues, parents, and agencies in the larger community to support students' learning and well-being.

Iowa Teaching Standards that are addressed in this course:

X	1. Enhance Student Achievement	X	5. Monitoring Student Learning
X	2. Content Knowledge	X	6. Classroom Management
	3. Planning and Preparation	X	7. Professional Growth
X	4. Instructional Strategies	X	8. Professional Responsibilities

Unit	Lesson/Activity	In Class Time	Out of Class
	Get to know the course: Take some time to work through the “getting started” module; watch the welcome video from the instructor, review the Canvas 101 instructions, and peruse the readings for the course under the “files” tab. Before beginning the course participants are required to score 100% on a quiz on the transcript request procedure.		3 hours
Week 1: Building our Foundation			
1	Introductions: Participants will review the week 1 introduction from the course instructor before introducing themselves to their classmates in a discussion post. Participants will need to respond to a minimum of two classmates to fulfill all requirements for this assignment.	.5 hour	
1	Unpacking Privilege Discussion: In this lesson, participants will read Peggy McIntosh's groundbreaking “Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack” and watch an accompanying Ted Talk also by Peggy McIntosh. Participants will also review the article “What is White Privilege, Really?” from Learning for Justice before finishing up the lesson by looking through a few surveys that demonstrate different types of privilege, and responding to discussion questions. Participants will need to respond to a minimum of two classmates to fulfill all requirements for this assignment.	1.5 hours	3 hours
1	Microaggressions Discussion: In this lesson, participants will read three different articles about microaggressions, to introduce the subject and see examples of common microaggressions. They will then dive deeper by reading Chapter 4 of <i>Racism Without Racists</i> “How to Talk Nasty about Minorities Without Sounding Racist”. Participants will finish the lesson by responding to discussion questions. Participants will need to respond to a minimum of two classmates to fulfill all requirements for this assignment.	1 hour	3 hours
1	Intersectionality Discussion: Kimberlè Crenshaw coined the term “intersectionality” in 1989 to refer to the specific experience of Black Women. In this lesson, participants will watch a series of interviews and a Ted Talk given by Crenshaw about why she saw a need for the term, and develop an understanding of what the term means. Participants will then read the Introduction to <i>Pushout</i> as a snapshot of how intersectionality’s framework can provide insight into the experiences of Black Girls in the classroom. Participants will finish the lesson by responding to discussion questions and respond to a minimum of two classmates to fulfill all requirements for this assignment.	1 hour	2.5 hours
1	Overcoming Biases Discussion: Participants will learn how personal biases can emerge in both simple and complex ways through a Ted Talk by Vernā Meyers. They will further their understanding through Chapter 3 of <i>Racism Without Racists</i> , “The Central Frames of Color-Blind Racism”. This discussion will challenge participants to consider biases they can identify within themselves and consider how they might work to overcome them. They will respond to a minimum of two classmates to fulfill all requirements for this assignment.	1.5 hours	1.5 hours

Week 2: Diving Deeper				
2	#BlackLivesMatter Discussion: Now that participants are more familiar with the ideas surrounding race and racial injustice in the United States, they will dig into the founding of Black Lives Matter, the movement and organization, and their mission, by reading information published by the organization itself. They will then juxtapose this with news articles talking about the Black Lives Matter movement/organization. In a discussion, participants will reflect on the disconnect between the response to the movement and the movement itself, as well as provide their own understanding and perspective about the effects of the movement. Participants will be asked to respond to at least two of their classmates.	1 hour	2 hours	
2	Ferguson to Minneapolis Discussion: In this lesson, participants will examine the differences between the response to Mike Brown's murder in Ferguson, MO in 2014 and George Floyd's murder in Minneapolis, MN in 2020. Through articles and podcasts, participants will also hear from Black scholars and activists about what happened during those 6 years, and how George Floyd's murder led to a sustained movement in defense of Black Lives, unlike anything we'd seen since the Civil Rights Movement. Participants will reflect on their own responses in 2014 and 2020 in a discussion, as well as explain the context in which the protests erupted. They will respond to a minimum of two classmates.	2 hours	2 hours	
2	US Education: Still Separate, Still Unequal Discussion: This lesson takes participants back to 1896 and the landmark SCOTUS case establishing "separate but equal" philosophy, <i>Plessy v. Ferguson</i> , and by walking through US legislation, brings them to the current state of policy today. Participants will explore: <i>Plessy v. Ferguson</i> (1896), the 14 th Amendment, and <i>Brown v. The Board of Education</i> (1954). They will then read a series of short news articles about the conditions of school buildings in predominately white neighborhoods vs. predominately non-white neighborhoods, and supplement this with Chapter 3 of <i>The Color of Law</i> "Racial Zoning". In a discussion post, participants will reflect on the question of whether public education is truly integrated, and on the effects of de facto segregation in their own classrooms. They will respond to a minimum of two classmates.	2 hours	3 hours	
Week 3: Bringing it Home				
3	Suspension and Expulsion Disparities Discussion: In this lesson, participants will revisit Dr. Monique Morris's <i>Pushout</i> , reading Chapters 2 and 3 "A Blues for Black Girls When 'Attitude' is Enuf" and "Jezebel in the Classroom". They will also read a series of short articles on disciplinary discrepancies between Black students vs. white students. Participants will answer a series of discussion questions about their own school's referral data, and respond to at least two of their classmates.	2 hours	3 hours	
3	Academic Performance Disparities Discussion: Participants will synthesize what they've learned to reflect on academic achievement gaps between Black and white students through a series of discussion questions. They will three articles from educational journals and websites to assist them.	1.5 hours	2 hours	

3	The School-to-Prison Pipeline Discussion: In the final lesson of the course, participants will engage in a cursory review of the school-to-prison pipeline, the phenomenon of Black students ending up in the carceral system as a result of the disproportionate rates of disciplinary action against them. Participants will read articles on the school-to-prison pipeline from Learning for Justice, NEA, and the ACLU, and then answer discussion questions and respond to two classmates.	1 hour	2 hours
3	Final Assignment: Using the rubric found in this syllabus along with the prompt in the module, participants will design an implementation plan to use in their classroom/school/office or wherever they interact with students or those who make decisions affecting them. This plan will be about 1,000 words, and submitted in the student's preferred medium.	.5 hour	3 hours
	Total Class Time:	15 hours	30 hours

Coursework: Participants can earn up to 80 points total for the course. The following table depicts the breakdown of points possible for the required coursework

Activity	Points
11 Discussion Posts (5 Points Each)	55
Final Implementation Plan/Paper	25
Total	80

Grading Scale – Graduate Credit

100-90% (80 – 72 points)	A
89-80% (71 – 64 points)	B
79-70% (63– 56 points)	C
69-60% (55 – 48 points)	D
59%-Below (<48 points)	F

Grading Scale - License Renewal Credit

100-80% (80-64 points)	P
79%-Below (<64 points)	NP

Student Requirements Students are required to:

- Participate in **ALL** discussion forums and quizzes
- Complete a final implementation plan

Americans with Disabilities Act: If you are a student with a disability and require any auxiliary aids, services, or other accommodations for this class, please see the instructor to discuss your accommodation needs.

Statement of Plagiarism: Academic dishonesty results in failure of this course. Give credit where credit is due. Use the MLA or Chicago Publication Manuals found at Purdue OWL to cite references when needed. Not crediting ideas or words of others is unacceptable scholarship, as is submitting work that was done

for a previous course or that is not your own origin in design or completion. Submit original assignments. Do not submit work for this course that you have done for other courses.

Grading Rubrics for Individual Activities

11 Discussions (55 points possible): Discussion Forums are asynchronous ways to engage in class discussions. They require you to submit an answer to a question and respond to the posts of other peers. Because they are an integral part of sharing strategies, analyzing research, and sharing ideas, discussion forums in this course comprise a significant percentage of your final grade. It's highly recommended that you read and respond to more than the required two peer postings because greater participation will facilitate a greater depth of understanding. Additionally, it's important to make posts in a timely manner to benefit from peer responses.

Grading Rubric for Discussion Forums		
		Points
Critical Thinking	Makes connections to the other content and real-life that are supported by reference(s) and example(s)	1
	Offers new ideas, connections, or applications	1
	Integration of Personal Experience and Perspective	1
Assignment Specific Criteria	Addresses all parts of the assignment, cites sources	1
Participation (Responds to at least 2 peer posts)	Responds to other posts	1
Total Points Possible		5

Final Assignment (25 points possible): The final assignment is a critical part of this course. Participants must complete a two-page final assignment. The paper is meant to be a reflection as well as a chance to state what you will use going forward. The rubric below will be used to grade the final assignment, but additional details will be provided within the course.

Grading Rubric for Implementation Plan		
		Points
Critical Thinking	Highlights any new knowledge gained as a result of course.	5
	Offers new ideas, connections, or applications	5
	Expresses and justifies personal opinion	3
	Discusses Overall Implications	2
Assignment Specific Criteria	Addresses all parts of the assignment, cites sources	2
Mechanics	Writing is clear, well developed, and organized, No or few grammar and spelling errors	2
Implementation	Clearly states ideas to use in the future	2
	States resources to be used	2
	Is realistic in their approach – understands limitations may exist	2
Total Points Possible		25