



Department of Special Education

## **SPED 203 Travel Course in the Dominican Republic Syllabus**

### **Course Title:**

SPED 203 Cultural Diversity Issues in Schools and Society

**Class Location:** 4 on-campus class meetings before travel, 1 week in Dominican Republic and 1 on-campus class meeting after travel

### **Course Description:**

This course explores the many aspects of cultural diversity such language, race, gender, sexual orientation, religion, ability/disability, age, etc. It prepares teachers and other professionals to enter a multicultural workforce and increasingly diverse classrooms with requisite attitudes, skills, knowledge, and desired internal/external outcomes (Deardorff, 2006). The course will engage students in experiential activities and intercultural dialogue that foster critical self-reflection, exploration of contact across cultures and social justice issues. It will also present students with opportunities to analyze the intersectionality of identities and integrate their increasing global awareness into pedagogical and other professional contexts.



### **Study Tour Overview:**

Students will meet on campus three times prior to spending one week in the Dominican Republic. Upon return, students will meet one time to debrief about the experience. Students will read articles that explore cultural diversity (language, race, gender, sexual orientation, religion, ability/disability, age, etc) in the U.S. and the Dominican Republic. Specifically, they will learn about education in the Dominican Republic through volunteering at a school for the one week study tour. At the school, they will play with the children and also teach them mini English lessons. In the evenings, students will analyze their experiences at the school, integrating their own personal experiences and course readings/content. The course will culminate in a critical reflection on the teaching experience in relation to course.

## Required Books and Materials:

- Packet of articles

## Links and Resources Related to Multicultural Education and Social Justice:

1. TED Talks:
  - “Why Cultural Diversity Format Matters” - Michael Gavin  
[https://video.search.yahoo.com/yhs/search;\\_ylt=A0LEV77ZY9VY9HMAXWMnnlIQ?p=why+cultural+diversity+matters+children&fr=yhs-mozilla-002&fr2=piv-web&hspart=mozilla&hsimp=yhs-002#id=1&vid=c5538122df8d60bb4d07322dd88d6888&action=view](https://video.search.yahoo.com/yhs/search;_ylt=A0LEV77ZY9VY9HMAXWMnnlIQ?p=why+cultural+diversity+matters+children&fr=yhs-mozilla-002&fr2=piv-web&hspart=mozilla&hsimp=yhs-002#id=1&vid=c5538122df8d60bb4d07322dd88d6888&action=view)
  - “Don’t ask me where I’m from, ask me where I’m local” – Taiye Selasi  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LYCKzpXEW6E>
  - “The danger of a single story” - Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie  
[https://www.ted.com/talks/chimamanda\\_adichie\\_the\\_danger\\_of\\_a\\_single\\_story?!language=en](https://www.ted.com/talks/chimamanda_adichie_the_danger_of_a_single_story?!language=en)
2. The Shadow of Hate:
  - 1) <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5gUy3b1-DOI>
  - 2) [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CrC\\_eES1Kb8](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CrC_eES1Kb8)
  - 3) <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YFyD81rQBKA>
3. Racial Stereotyping:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8ABRIWybBqM>
4. Jane Elliott’s Blue Eyes Brown Eyes Experiment:
  - <http://www.janeelliott.com/>
  - <http://io9.gizmodo.com/the-trailer-for-big-trouble-in-little-china-the-game-h-1795819484>
  - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0LynJwk9tcw>
  - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nPyoqLeqxLU>
  - <http://www.janeelliott.com/clarification.htm>
5. The power of inclusive education:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZIPsPRaZP6M>
6. Links and Resources Related to Multicultural Education and Social Justice: Activities for Engaging Your Members in Conversations about Diversity and Inclusion:  
<http://www.aauw.org/resource/conversations-about-diversity-and-inclusion/>
7. National Education Association Diversity Toolkit:  
<http://www.nea.org/tools/diversity-toolkit.html>
8. National Education Association Resources for Addressing Multicultural and Diversity Issues in your Classroom: <http://www.nea.org/tools/resources-addressing-multicultural-diversity-issues-in-your-classroom.htm>
9. National Association for Multicultural Education: <http://www.nameorg.org/index.php>
10. Teaching Tolerance: <http://www.tolerance.org/>
11. Social Justice Standards: The Teaching Tolerance Anti-bias Framework:  
<http://www.tolerance.org/social-justice-standards>
12. Teaching for Change: <https://www.teachingforchange.org/>

### Course Outcomes\*:

Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Gain a knowledge of and appreciation for Dominican Republic (D.R.) history, ecology, and culture. Reflect on similarities and differences between the D.R. and the United States.
2. Identify relevant laws, mandates, and issues regarding inclusion in education in both the D.R. and the United States (Action 20).
3. Define major terms relevant to multicultural education and intercultural development and apply that learning to intercultural experiences in the DR.
4. Make a positive, personal connection with at least one person from the D.R.
5. Acquire a deeper understanding of the realities of poverty and its effects.
6. Awaken a personal belief in the importance of generosity and service in a world-wise context. Understand that even small contributions can have significant effects.
7. Develop a sense of self-efficacy by dealing successfully with new challenges.
8. Analyze variations in beliefs, traditions, and values across cultures (focusing specifically on the U.S. and D.R. context) and the effects on students, and adapt teaching styles accordingly. (Diversity 7)
9. Develop strategies and professional approaches that facilitate an inclusive classroom environment that support equitable learning opportunities for both the U.S. and D.R. contexts.
10. Apply their understanding of diversity and advocating for social justice to experiences of intercultural communication and teaching in the DR. (Justice 15; Action 16, 17, 18 & 19)

\*These outcomes are aligned with *Social Justice Standards: The Teaching Tolerance Anti-Bias Framework* [https://www.tolerance.org/sites/default/files/2017\\_06/TT\\_Social\\_Justice\\_Standards\\_0.pdf](https://www.tolerance.org/sites/default/files/2017_06/TT_Social_Justice_Standards_0.pdf)

### Evaluation and Assignments:

Percentage of total points available will be used to determine the class grade as follows:

100–94%	A	86–82%	B	74–71%	C
93–90%	A-	81–78%	B-	70-67 %	D
89–87%	B+	77–75%	C+	70% and below	F

Grades will be based on the following requirements:

▪ Discussion Participation/Leadership	15
▪ Journal	40
▪ Expectations vs. Realities Reflection	20
▪ Teaching Preparation and Practice in the DR	25
TOTAL	100 points

### Discussion Participation/Leadership

You will be engaging in a variety of small group discussions over the course of the semester.

You will each have the opportunity to take the lead during one small group discussion. You will

sign-up for one of the discussions provided by the instructor during the first class. Each of the discussions will be based on course content and experiences living and teaching in the DR.

As the leader of the discussion, you can be as creative as you'd like in order to engage your group members in an in-depth, critical reflection. You will be graded on the following three criteria:

1. Preparation: You will create discussion prompts and questions related to course content.
2. Facilitation of Discussion: Instructor will observe and participate in discussions, looking at follow-up questions, comments, summaries, as well as your ability to model and facilitate respectful dialogue.
3. Reflection: Write a brief reflection (1-2 paragraphs) in your journal about your experience facilitating this discussion. What issues were challenging and how did you resolve them? What did you learn from the discussion? What do you think the other participants learned?

### **Dominican Republic Study Course Journal**

Before, during and after the trip, each participant keeps a journal in which they record their daily reflections and other specific assignments. A summary of the journal contents as well as the journal itself is submitted to the professor at the end of the semester. Contents of the student journals will be analyzed deductively against the intended learning outcomes for the course. There will also be opportunities to write together and share reflections with one another as the course unfolds.

### **Expectations vs. Realities Discussion (Focus: Education)**

This focused discussion will highlight on the following and will be adapted depending on students' questions and course content.

1. What do you expect the DR will be like? Have you been there before? Where is your current information about the coming from? Let's discuss, make predictions, research and try to imagine ourselves in a new context and then when we are in the DR, we will compare and contrast these imaginings to the reality of being there.
2. Specifically, we will focus on education as we are going to have the opportunity to spend time in one school and learn about the children's experience there. What do you expect the school to be like?
3. We will discuss the landscape of multicultural education in the United States and how inclusive education is one of our core values and then we will discuss the landscape of the DR in comparison. Prior to departure, we will have visitors from the DR come to our classes to talk about their own education experiences and their thoughts on coming to the United States and how it compared/contrasted with their own experiences.
4. Students will write a reflection on their expectations vs. realities upon return to the United States.

## Teaching Preparation and Practice in the DR

You will have the opportunity to teach English lessons while visiting the DR. We will prepare for these lessons prior to departure. You will be provided with a curriculum focused on some basic English expressions and vocabulary. Most importantly, in this experience, you will be flexible and willing to learn from the students you are teaching. We will practice the lessons together and then when you enact them in the school you will go with the flow of the situation and adapt as needed. You will reflect on this experience in specific journal entries on teaching preparation and practice. The journal entries will be analyzed to determine if you met the following criteria:

1. Respectful communication at all times with all co-teachers, students and teachers at the school even in challenging circumstances (we will talk more about what this means in terms of practice)
2. “Go with the flow attitude” – If things don’t go as planned at the school, you make effort to go with the flow and adapt accordingly. This is challenging, but making efforts to do this will make this much more meaningful for you.
3. Critical thinking about the experience in relation to course content How is what we discussed prior to departure playing out in the classroom? Is the education in this context inclusive? What diverse experiences do these students bring with them to their education?
4. Questions- What questions do you have about the experience? What confuses you? What are you wondering about? Ask questions as you go along and feel free to ask them in our discussions or just pose them in your journal if that is more comfortable for you.

## Written Assignment Guidelines

1. Most of this class is focused on journaling. You need to make sure that your journal is legible and that the final journal summary is double spaced and 12 point font (Times New Roman)
2. Be sure the completed assignment follows the guidelines provided for it. It should address each of the required questions or components.
3. Remember to always incorporate your course readings into your written assignments whenever relevant.
4. Plagiarism is a *serious act of theft*. This instructor will take appropriate action in accordance with BSU policy. Plagiarism will result in an automatic F on the relevant assignment and in failure of the course.

## COURSE SCHEDULE (Subject to change)

Exact schedule TBA

## **Course Policies & Expectations**

*Attendance* – Students are expected to attend all classes, arrive on time, remain in class for the duration of each session, demonstrate professional behavior in the classroom, and complete all assignments with professional quality and in a timely manner. When absence from class is unavoidable, it is the student's responsibility to make arrangements to obtain notes, handouts, and lecture details from another student (it is recommended that you have two colleagues in the course for this). Please be sure to notify the classmate(s) in sufficient time for them to be of assistance for you. Please notify the Instructor about absences in advance or within 24 hours after an absence. Two unapproved absences from a face-to-face session will result in a deduction of 5 points. Every subsequent absence will result in a deduction of additional 5 points.

*Classroom Policies* – The use of electronic devices that produce sound or otherwise interfere with the learning of others (such as cell phones, pagers, etc.) is prohibited during class. Please turn these devices off or to vibrate before the start of class. Computers may be used to take notes during class, but it is not appropriate to use them for Internet exploration or other non-class activities during class time.

*Late Work* – To successfully complete this course, students must adhere to the due dates for specific assigned readings and completions of assignments. Student will receive full-earned credit for assignments turned in on time. Anticipate point deductions for late work.

*E-mail* – You are responsible for any and all e-mail communications sent by your instructor and your classmates to your BSU e-mail account per the University's [E-mail as an Official Means of Communication to Students](#) policy. It is important that you periodically check your BSU e-mail so that you do not miss important communications from your instructor and classmates.

*Makeup Assignments* – There are no makeup assignments allowed, with exceptions allowed in critical emergency circumstances (i.e. student has been hospitalized) with documented proof. In order to be fair to all classmates, makeup assignments at the end of the semester to boost your course grade are not allowed. It is important that you complete assigned work on time throughout the semester.

*Feedback and Grading Timeline* – The course instructor will provide students with timely formative feedback so that students can gauge their progress and have an opportunity to improve their performance with regard to prescribed learning outcomes. The course instructor reserves the right to take up to three weeks to post the grade on a course assignment.

*Students with Exceptionalities* – Bridgewater State University is committed to ensuring all individuals equal access to its programs and services. Bridgewater offers a number of services to students who have a documented medical condition, are physically challenged, and/or have emotional or learning disabilities. The Disability Resource office is located in the Academic Achievement center in Maxwell Library. If you wish to learn more to seek equal access because

you have a documented condition, visit <https://my.bridgew.edu/departments/DRO/SitePages/Home.aspx> for more information.

*Academic Integrity Policy* – The College of Graduate Studies at Bridgewater State University, like all institutions of higher learning, considers academic integrity to be an important hallmark for graduate students and scholars. The importance of academic integrity and honesty, which is taught at the undergraduate level, continues to be even more vital for scholars and researchers at the graduate level, who find themselves writing seminar papers, research papers, and theses. All graduate degree programs at Bridgewater State University require courses in research where conventions of documentation are taught. Graduate students, who are acquiring scholarly habits and skills in degree programs, must rely on the scholarship that has preceded them, and they must acknowledge the scholarship in their own academic work by adhering to the time-honored conventions of their discipline. In short, graduate students are entering a community of scholars and must respect the rules and traditions of that community. To learn more about academic integrity visit this web site: <http://catalog.bridgew.edu/content.php?catoid=7&navoid=494>

### **College of Education and Allied Studies Dispositions for Teacher/Educators:**

All students who take this course must be familiar with the following:

1. Exhibits sensitivity to community and cultural norms while recognizing individual differences and experiences
2. Demonstrates a willingness to work with other professionals and members of the community to improve the overall learning environment for students
3. Establishes a positive classroom climate and contributes to a positive school climate by engaging in appropriate professional and supportive practices for self and colleagues
4. Appreciates and respects individuals and their rights to privacy and confidentiality of information
5. Provides fair and equitable access to all learners and exhibits personal integrity and ethical behaviors with all members of the learning community
6. Nurtures all aspects of each student's well-being which may include cognitive, emotional, social and physical well-being as appropriate
7. Plans, assesses, reflects, and revises instruction based on needs and changing circumstances and social contexts
8. Demonstrates thoughtful, effective, verbal and nonverbal communication skills and responsive listening skills
9. Evinces commitment to professional growth and enthusiasm for all subjects taught and keeps abreast of new ideas and developments in the field
10. Connects academic content to everyday life