

F400: Project TEAM Honors Seminar
Spring Semester 2005
Section 5346 (1-3 credits); Wednesday 2-5:15 PM; Ed. 1250 and 1006
Paulette Patterson Dilworth, Instructor
3272 Wright Building
pdilwort@indiana.edu
856-8157 (Office)
Office Hours: Tuesday 1-3 p.m. and by appointment

Course Overview and Introduction:

This course is a continuation of the Project TEAM seminar series concerned with *teaching and learning for social justice in a multicultural democratic society*. This semester we will explore the relationship between education and society focusing on aspects of youth violence, the media and popular culture. "Social Justice" is used as an umbrella concept for the many topics and concerns connoted by the terms democracy, equality, and diversity, while the term "Teaching/Learning" emphasizes the essential connections between theory and practice that we will examine in this course. Assigned text and related readings will provide you with opportunities to look at a broad range of concerns and issues relating to youth violence, the media, and popular culture. The educational arena will be used to examine the many ways that the media and popular culture engage diversity, democracy, and social change in classrooms and communities. This course will draw on the lived experiences of students and teachers who struggle to critically analyze and challenge oppressive relationships and institutions, and to imagine and create more just and inclusive alternatives. We will study how various mediums, including film, television, newspaper, comic strips, music, and popular magazines depict youth violence. Furthermore, we will examine how accurate (or inaccurate) these depictions are. This course will also look at theoretical approaches to understanding the relationship between education, youth violence and the media. Primarily, we will analyze the various images of youth violence as represented in the mass media, asking questions such as: What aspects of violence and popular culture are a focus of media portrayals? How accurate are their stories? How do the media portray different aspects of youth popular culture (i.e. music, films, entertainment) and violence (i.e., sexual harassment, bullying, gun and weapon usage, fighting, hate crimes, suicide, and assault)? To what extent are schools and classrooms co-conspirators in shaping an environment, which represents punitive (typical) responses to youth popular culture and violence?

Course Goals:

This course is designed to discuss issues focusing on education, media, and youth violence and provide opportunities to:

- develop a better understanding of the nature of youth violence and education
- frame questions of violence, the media, and popular culture in ways that make clearer the

various dimensions of those issues

- gain understanding of strategies for, and barriers to, positive change on personal, organizational/community, and societal/planetary levels
- illustrate what can be and is being done with young people around the problem of violence and education
- identify a personal agenda for social and educational reform, and assess one's potential to contribute to these processes.

OnCourse Electronic Classroom

This course will be managed through OnCourse a web based environment. The course syllabus, announcements, email correspondence, and related assignments and exchanges should be done via OnCourse. It is the responsibility of each student to learn how to use OnCourse. If you need assistance please let me know.

Assigned Text:

Cortes, Carlos E. (2000). *The children are watching: How the media teach about diversity*. New York: Teachers College Press.

Osofsky, Joy D. (Ed.) (1997) *Children in a violent society*. New York: Guildford Press..

Graded Assignments:

1. Reflective Essay/Reflective Writing– In this essay you will focus on examining your personal experiences with popular culture, violence and schooling. To what extent was violence a part of the culture of your school and/or community? Do you believe that particular aspects of popular culture played a significant role in your experiences with violence or the lack of violence in your experiences? If yes, why? If no, why not? To what extent was there an absence of violence in your schooling and/or community experiences? In what ways did your school and/or community respond to youth violence? Was the response effective? Why? Why not? **(15%). Your essay should be**
2. Each week choose a TV show (including news, sitcom, talk show, or drama series BET, MTV, VH1 ok too!), newspaper or magazine article that focuses on a violence-related issue and type a one page double-spaced reaction to the article or show relating to the class discussions and reading assignments. Discuss the tone of the article or show and how it might be biased. How does the article or show relate to what we have been discussing in the class? Additionally, include your reaction to the article—is it typical of the way violence is portrayed in U.S. culture? Why? Why not? A total of eight different reviews are required for this assignment. **The first review is due January 26 and thereafter, for the next seven class sessions.** Your reviews will be handed in at the end of each class session. **(25%)**
3. Conduct a content analysis on one of the following (or a related topic you have

submitted to me for prior approval) (25%) (4-5 pages maximum). **Your final submission for this assignment should focus one of the following:**

- Racial portrayals of violence in (news, in a specific newspaper or)
- Contemporary magazine for young people, on television shows
- Portrayals of violence against women in the media (focus on criminals, victims or a specific type of injustice)
- Portrayals of violence victims (choose a specific type of violence, rape victim, mugging victim, burglary, or other acts of physical or psychological violence)
- Violence in cartoons
- Violence in music, music videos or a specific movie

In the write up of your analysis respond to the following questions:

Violent Storylines

- What role does the violence play in the program?
- Would there be a story without the violent conflict?
- Is the violence used at intervals throughout the story to add excitement?
- Was this story developed because it is violent, or is it a valuable story of human relationships in which violence is a necessary and integral part?

Violent Consequences

- Are consequences of the violence shown? If so, what purpose does it serve the plot? How does it develop a character?
- Do you see people hurt or bleeding?
- Do those who die simply disappear?
- Are the economic and social consequences of violence clear? If not, how would the story change if it were shown?

Good Guys/Bad Guys

- How are the "good guys" and "bad guys" portrayed?
- Why do the "bad guys" use violence? Why do the "good guys" use violence?
- Do the "bad guys" have family or others who will care if they get hurt or killed?
- What kinds of violence do the "good guys" use? How do their acts of violence differ from those used by the "bad guys"?

Some Deeper Questions:

Now consider the impact of the media's portrayal of violence. Media violence has a different effect on children than it does on adults.

“Children model behavior they see in the media. If kids don't see the consequences of violence, it teaches them that violence doesn't cause serious harm. When heroes use violence it sends a message that violence is an appropriate way to respond to problems. If you were a child, what lessons about the world might you learn from the program you just watched?”

“Adults see much more violence in the media than actually exists in real life. That's because producers believe that they have to include extraordinary violence in order to keep viewers interested. As a result, heavy TV viewers think that the world is more dangerous and violent than it actually is. This phenomenon is often called the "mean world" syndrome. How high is your mean world quotient? Do the shows you watch make you feel more fearful?” (Excerpted from Barbara Olson (2003) *Media and Values*. Center for Media Literacy.)

4. **Social Reform Design Project** – A small group term project integrating collaboratively complex task drawing from personal preferences, imagination, and experiences; from interactions with each other; and from seminar materials and activities; small design groups will develop projects relevant to each of the three focal course themes covered in this seminar. Working in small groups you are required to develop a presentation designed to inform school administrators, teachers, and students about the significance of the media and popular culture on the education experiences of youth. Be creative! (Think dramatizations, infomercials re-enactments, skits, videos, etc.) Final presentations should be 15-20 minutes in length. Group projects will be video taped during final presentations. **(25 %)**
5. Students are expected to attend and actively participate in class sessions and activities and to arrive on time to class. **Students are expected to complete all readings prior to the class sessions for which they are assigned and to bring all reading materials to class.** All written assignments should be typed, double-spaced unless otherwise indicated. Your work is evaluated primarily on its content; however, it is important that assignments are well-written. **Please edit your work carefully.** All written assignments are to be turned in on time unless prior arrangements are made with the instructor. Failure to do so will result in a 10% reduction of your grade. **(10%)**

Evaluation:

Late assignments will not be evaluated unless arrangements are made with the instructor or peer reviewers in advance. Final grades are assigned upon completion of all course requirements and based on the following guidelines:

93% mastery or above = A

90% to 92% = A-

87% to 89% = B+

83% to 86% =B

80% to 82% = B-

77% to 79% = C+

73% to 76% = C

70% to 72% = C-

below 70% = D

and below 60% = F

Course Calendar

	<i>Topic</i>	<i>Assignments/Readings</i>
Jan 12	Welcome, Introductions, and Overview of Seminar Requirements	
Jan 19	<p>Contemporary Debates about violence and youth in the U.S.</p> <p>Consider: What practices and values embedded in U.S. ideology help maintain an acceptance of violence as inevitable in this country?</p> <p>Discuss: What are some hidden beliefs and practices associated with violence in U.S. society?</p> <p>Video: Bowling for Columbine</p>	Osofsky: Read Forward and Chapter 1 and 2
Jan 26	<p>When Violence Brings Death to School</p> <p>Consider: In what ways are teachers prepared to address violence and death in the classroom?</p> <p>Video Clip: “Broken Child”</p> <p>Presentation: Lynn McWhorter</p>	Johnson (1995) Life After Death: Critical Pedagogy In an Urban Classroom (Handout) Osofsky: Chapter 3
Feb 2	<p>Violence in the Organization of Schools</p> <p>Discuss: School Culture and Violence</p> <p>Consider: What aspects of school culture allow and encourage violence against males and females, gay students (i.e. bullying, sexual harassment, assault, fighting, guns and weapons)</p>	Stein (1995) , Sexual harassment in school
Feb 9	<p>Examine: The mass media as multicultural curriculum</p> <p>Discuss: Media makers as multicultural curriculum developers and media products as multicultural textbooks</p> <p>(REFLECTIVE ESSAY DUE)</p>	Osofsky, Chapter 5 Cortes, Ch 3-4

Feb 16	<p>ATE Conference</p> <p>Violent Imagery and the Media</p> <p>Examine: How the proliferation of violent images and values in the media contribute to school violence? To what extent can educators and policy help support change?</p>	Nogurea (1995)
Feb 23	<p>AACTE Conference</p> <p>Violence, Popular Culture and the Media</p> <p>Discuss: To what extent does popular culture represent violence as pleasure, racist stereotypes, and a desensitization of the reality of the violence being shown in the media and popular culture?</p>	Cortes, Ch. 5
March 2	<p>Education in a Multiculturally Mediated World</p> <p>Consider:</p> <p>Discuss: Media, Multiculturalism, social justice and schooling</p>	Cortes, Ch. 8
March 9	<p>Looking for Answers to Youth Violence</p> <p>Consider: How might the development of moral values and positive group identity be a solution to youth violence?</p> <p>(Content Analysis of Violence in Media Due)</p>	Ward, (1995) Cortes, pp. 67-73
March 16	<i>No Class, Spring Break</i>	Have Fun and Be Safe!
March 23	<p>Violence and Nonviolence– Lessons Learned From History</p> <p>Discuss: Project Hip Hop</p>	Murray & Garrido (1995)
March 30	<p>Voices of Youth on Violence</p> <p>Discuss: Youth Speak Out</p>	Aziz, Bazzi, Dewar, & Clements (1995)

April 6	<i>No Class, Instructor attending AERA Conference in New Orleans, LA</i>	
April 13	Project III – Presentations	
April 20	Project III– Presentations	
April 27	Final Class Meeting Location TBA	