URBAN EDUCATION

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INTRODUCTORY ESSAY

The syllabus accompanying this essay outlines an undergraduate introduction to urban education. I take an assets-based approach to students and communities represented in urban schools, situate these schools in their policy context, and address some classroom issues.

At my institution, any interested students across the college take this course. It does not fulfill a specific degree requirement; it does not have prerequisites. Some enrolled students want to become teachers. Some want to work in education policy. Some find their way to us simply because the course fits in their schedule or they need a course that allows them "to view the world from more than one cultural perspective."

Some students enrolled in the course attended public or charter P-12 schools in urban areas. However, many more students attended suburban, predominantly white public schools or private schools. During the course, these students come to realize that policy makers have deliberately kept such schools separate from urban schools through intentional housing and education policies (Anyon, 2005; Rothstein, 2017). Furthermore, these students reflect on their families' decisions, in many cases, to buy access to "good" (usually they mean predominantly white) schools by buying houses in particular areas that shielded them from the possibility of attending urban (usually they mean low-income and racially minoritized) schools (Holme, 2002). Most students at my selective liberal arts institution come to realize that their previous experiences have not afforded them an opportunity to learn about urban schools and that they have much to learn. Even students who have attended urban schools realize their education did not prepare them to think about schools as products of specific policy decisions.

This course begins with deconstructing the word "urban." Of course, "urban" means relating to cities, but people often say "urban education" as a code for majority black, majority poor, and/or underperforming schools (Milner, 2012). Next, students explore race and racism and how these constructs impact schooling in the US. They learn to understand racism as "a means by which society allocates privilege and status" (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017, p. 21) and a blend of "racist policies and racist ideas that produces and normalizes racial inequities" (Kendi, 2019, pp. 17–18). The course introduces critical race theory in education (Ladson-Billings, 1998) as a guiding construct for student thinking about issues introduced later in the course.

Next, the course introduces the community cultural wealth framework to help students understand the assets that children and communities bring to urban classrooms (Yosso, 2005). We survey historical and present policies that have led to urban classrooms having many racialized, minoritized, and/or poor children, underserved by existing school structures. These policies include economic and labor policies, housing policies, segregation to desegregation to resegregation, charter schools, and recent educational reform efforts.

We then hone in on our local city as a way to understand specifically how the story of segregation/desegregation/resegregation and recent attempts at educational reform have played out. Students often have heard of big court cases (*Brown v. Board*) and desegregation battles (Little Rock, Ruby Bridges), but they may not have realized that these events happened in every city across the United States. The local case study helps students understand the dynamics that continue to affect students' learning experiences now. Other instructors could adapt this module of the course to include readings and media relevant to their local context.

Finally, the course ends with an exploration of teaching, learning, and activism in urban classrooms. This part of the course covers some issues that urban teachers face in their daily work, including immigration and culturally sustaining teaching. It also highlights the work of teachers, parents, and students advocating and organizing for educational equity.

Pedagogically, the course revolves around readings and in-class discussions. The syllabus indicates that some readings occur "in class" in an effort to keep the reading load manageable; these readings drive lectures and class discussions as students explore excerpts and key themes from them. Early in the course, students write an essay in which they explore their own positionality related to urban education. Throughout the course, they work on an open-ended project of their choosing that they present at the end of the semester. During the course, students meet biweekly with book clubs. These book clubs, in which students select the groups and the book, give students the opportunity to explore issues deeply connected with urban education but not necessarily the focus of the course. Past student book clubs have explored mass incarceration, adolescent experiences in the criminal justice system, housing policy, economic policies, the so-called achievement gap, and the experiences of racialized students in diverse high schools.

All people, regardless of their career plans, have an interest in public education. As Labaree (2000) explained,

> even people who elect to withdraw their children from public schools must still live with the consequences of public education in their community…They cannot avoid the social, economic, and political effects of the system of public education as it succeeds or fails in its effort to provide the political competence and human capital without which society cannot function. (p. 124)

There is no exit from a public good; all of us live with the consequences of being part of a society that values (and thus funds) the educational experiences of some children much more than others. Having accurate information about and frameworks for understanding urban districts, the cultural richness of the students who enroll in them, and the challenges that those districts face, matters. It matters for those who will teach in urban districts because they need to understand the racialized dynamics of how urban school systems have come to exist as they are today. It matters for future parents who make decisions about where to send their children to school. It matters for voters and for ordinary citizens who may one day run for school board or start a grassroots campaign for equitable school funding in their cities. All of us have a stake in robust public schools, whether we work in them or send our children to them or not.

REFERENCES

Anyon, J. (2005). What "counts" as educational policy? Notes toward a new paradigm. *Harvard Educational Review*, *75*(1), 65–88.

Delgado, R., & Stefancic, J. (2017). *Critical race theory: An introduction*. New York, NY: NYU Press.

Holme, J. J. (2002). Buying homes, buying schools: School choice and the social construction of school quality. *Harvard Educational Review*, *72*(2), 177–206. https://doi.org/10.17763/haer.72.2.u6272x676823788r

Kendi, I. X. (2019). *How to be an antiracist*. New York, NY: Random House Publishing Group.

Labaree, D. F. (2000). No exit: Public education as an inescapably public good. In L. Cuban & D. Shipps (Eds.), *Reconstruction of the common good* (pp. 110–129). Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Ladson-Billings, G. (1998). Just what is critical race theory and what's it doing in a nice field like education? *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education: QSE*, *11*(1), 7–24. https://doi.org/10.1080/095183998236863

Milner, H. R. (2012). But what is urban education? *Urban Education*, *47*(3), 556–561. https://doi.org/10.1177/0042085912447516

Rothstein, R. (2017). *The color of law: A forgotten history of how our government segregated America*. New York City: Liveright Publishing.

Yosso, T. J. (2005). Whose culture has capital? A critical race theory discussion of community cultural wealth. Race, Ethnicity, and Education, 8(1), 69–91. https://doi.org/10.1080/1361332052000341006

SYLLABUS: URBAN EDUCATION

CATALOG DESCRIPTION

This course introduces and surveys issues related to urban education. Urban education refers to schooling, teaching, and learning in cities. We explore the unique assets and challenges that exist in city schools. We investigate how people use the term "urban" to code for racial, socioeconomic, and other diversity. We contextualize our work within critical race theory and the community cultural wealth framework in order to see the assets that children and their communities bring to urban classrooms. The course begins with an overview of urban education and urban education policies. We examine the racial dynamics involved in education reform. Next, students hone in on the city of Memphis, as a case study that shows how issues of segregation, integration, and resegregation have played out across American cities. The class concludes with a look at classroom issues in urban education such as immigration, culturally sustaining teaching, and the combined work of teachers, students, and parents to advocate for educational equity.

FORMAT

Face-to-face, meets twice a week.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

- **Understand** and critique the use of the term "urban" within the field of education

  - Assessed in module 1: reading responses in sessions 1 and 2, positionality essay

- **Explain** and apply critical race theory and the community cultural wealth framework to issues in education

  - Assessed in module 1: reading responses in sessions 3-5, positionality essay, final project

- **Analyze** one's own positionality in relation to urban education

  - Assessed in module 1: positionality essay

- **Identify**, explain, and critique key educational policies, including how these policies have affected our local context

  - Assessed in modules 2 and 3: reading responses in sessions 6-20, current events, final project, book club presentations (as applicable)

- **Define** and explain the potential of culturally sustaining pedagogies

  - Assessed in module 4: reading responses in sessions 21-23, book club presentations (as applicable)

- **Understand** the advocacy efforts of groups working towards educational reform

  - Assessed in module 4: reading responses in sessions 24-26

- **Synthesize** multiple perspectives on an educational issue and argue a point of view, supported by evidence, on that issue

  - Assessed throughout: current events, final project, book club

WHAT DO I HAVE TO DO?

- Reading/Discussion Responses (35 points)

- Essay: Positionality statement, what is urban education? (10 points)

- Final Project (30 points)

- Book club → Group learning experience (15 points)

- Current events (10 points)

ASSIGNMENT DESCRIPTIONS

READING/DISCUSSION RESPONSES (35 POINTS)

Read and take notes on readings prior to coming to class (unless the reading is marked on the course calendar with *in class.) Submit an online reading response prior to class. Each response should show your engagement with the major issues in the reading, how you connect that reading to other course content, connections to issues in current education news if possible, and any questions the reading raised for you that you hope to explore more in class discussion. The reading response should be at least two paragraphs.

ESSAY: POSITIONALITY STATEMENT, WHAT IS URBAN EDUCATION? (10 POINTS)

This is a reflective three-page paper. You should address: Your evolving understanding of urban education, how your prior experiences have related to and shaped your thinking about urban education, and what experiences and learning you need to undertake in order to move forward as an informed stakeholder (future teacher, future policymaker, etc.) in urban education. Consider citing course readings as applicable.

FINAL PROJECT (30 POINTS)

This open-ended project gives you the opportunity to explore a topic of your choice in urban education. You need to select the following: a topic, a final product, and a grouping structure.

- You may choose any topic relating to urban education. Here are some ideas: preparing teachers for urban schools; test score gap between white students and students of color; Black Lives Matter at School movement; school funding (choose a particular issue / time / place); charter schools (policy / history / outcomes / case study of charters in a particular city); magnet schools; segregation, desegregation, resegregation (choose a particular city); immigration in urban schools (choose particular time / place / immigrant group); language policies in urban schools (choose particular state / district); No Child Left Behind; Every Student Succeeds Act; Common Core State Standards; high stakes testing; school-to-prison pipeline; role of school boards in urban districts; how change happens in urban districts; teacher / student / parent activism; role of nonprofits in urban education; how newspapers portray urban education issues; intersections between housing and education policies; educational options and access for youth in the criminal justice system; alternative teacher certification programs; merit pay for teachers; retention laws; vouchers; universal preK; teachers unions, teacher evaluations, and/or teacher strikes

- These topics all assume you are researching something. You may wish instead to do a service project, particularly if you have minimal experience actually in urban schools. If you wish to do a field-based final project in which you serve in an urban educational setting, see me to work out details.

- You may choose any final product that makes sense for the topic you chose and your target audience. Here are some ideas: research paper, podcast, photo essay, series of infographics, teach-in, unit plan for k-12 schools, editorial or series of editorials, mini-documentary, curated exhibit, artistic product with accompanying artist's statement, social media campaign, website, etc.

    - You may choose a grouping structure that makes sense for your topic, project, and work preferences. You can choose to: work alone, work with a partner, or work in a small group.

GRADING

The final project has three check-ins (3 points each), a works-in progress mini-conference (6 points), and a final presentation with product submission (15 points).

- 1st check-in: submit your plan (topic, final product idea, group members (if applicable), reading/viewing list (what kind of research will you do?), and schedule (What will you turn in at 2nd and 3rd check-ins? What will you have ready to present at works-in-progress conference? When are you going to read/view what you need to in order to complete your project?) Who is going to do each thing (in case of group work)?)

- 2nd check-in: submit your notes since previous check-in; what have you read so far, and what are your notes on it? Have you updated your work plan? If so, how?

- 3rd check-in: submit your notes since previous check-in; what *else* have you read, and what are your *additional* notes? Have you updated your work plan? If so, how?

- Works-in-progress conference: Prepare a three-minute presentation for your peers about your final project. Come prepared to ask for and receive specific feedback.

- Final presentation & submission of project: Prepare a five-minute presentation at which you present your final product.

BOOK CLUB → GROUP LEARNING EXPERIENCE (15 POINTS)

Select a book from the menu below (or get approval for another text). Have the book by session 7 [2 points]. Attend all meetings of your book club, having read the text your group agreed to and having prepared some notes and questions about it [1 point per day]. Create an in-class learning experience for the rest of the class (but please not a boring PowerPoint) to share the highlights of your learning from your book club [8 points].

CURRENT EVENTS (10 POINTS)

Identify an event in the news that relates to urban education. Add the link to the item to the sign-up page one day before class [2 points], prepare an oral summary of the news [2 points], and facilitate a five-minute discussion of it at the beginning of class [6 points].

COURSE CALENDAR

Date - Topics	Due
Module 1 – What is urban education? Framing the conversation	
Session 1	**What is urban education?** *in class: Watson, D. (2018). What do you mean when you say "urban"? Speaking honestly about race and students. In D. Watson, J. Hagopian, & W. Au (Eds.), *Teaching for black lives* (pp. 183–185). Milwaukee, WI: Rethinking Schools.
Session 2	**What is urban education?** Leonardo, Z., & Hunter, M. (2007). Imagining the urban: The politics of race, class, and schooling. In W. T. Pink & G. W. Noblit (Eds.), *International Handbook of Urban Education* (pp. 779–801). Dordrecht: Springer Netherlands. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4020-5199-9_41 Milner, H. R. (2012). But what is urban education? Urban Education, 47(3), 556–561. https://doi.org/10.1177/0042085912447516 *in class: Haberman, M. (2007). Who benefits from failing urban schools? An essay. *Theory into Practice, 46*(3), 179–186. https://doi.org/10.1080/00405840701401796
Session 3	**Race and racism** Lipsitz, G. (2006). *The possessive investment in whiteness*. (introduction and chapter 1) Philadelphia: Temple University Press. *in class: Delgado, R., & Stefancic, J. (2017). *Critical race theory: An introduction*. (p. 7-12) New York, NY: NYU Press. *in class: Kendi, I. X. (2019). *How to be an antiracist*. (chapter 1) New York, NY: Random House Publishing Group.
Session 4	**How we talk about urban ed: Assets-based and deficit-based approaches** *in class: Adichie, C. N. (2009). *The danger of a single story*. TED Talk. Retrieved from https://www.ted.com/talks/chimamanda_adichie_the_danger_of_a_single_story?language=en Yosso, T. J. (2005). Whose culture has capital? A critical race theory discussion of community cultural wealth. *Race, Ethnicity, and Education*, *8*(1), 69–91. https://doi.org/10.1080/1361332052000341006
Session 5	**How we talk about urban ed: Our own positionality**

	Farmer-Hinton, R. L., Lewis, J. D., Patton, L. D., & Rivers, I. D. (2013). Dear Mr. Kozol....Four African American women scholars and the re-authoring of Savage Inequalities. *Teachers College Record, 115*(5), 1–38. Rooks, N. (2017). *Cutting school: Privatization, segregation, and the end of public education.* (chapter 1) New York, NY: The New Press. *in class: Weiner, L., & Jerome, D. (2016). *Urban teaching: The essentials*. (chapter 1). New York: Teachers College Press. *in class: Noguera, P. (2003). *City schools and the American dream: Reclaiming the promise of public education*. (chapter 1) New York: Teachers College Press. **DUE: Final project check-in #1**
Module 2 – Urban Education Policy	
Session 6	**History: How did we get here?** Darby, D., & Rury, J. L. (2018). *The color of mind: Why the origins of the achievement gap matter for justice*. (chapters 3&4) Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press. *in class: Lytle, J. H. (2007). Urban school reform: To what end? In W. T. Pink & G. W. Noblit (Eds.), *International handbook of urban education* (pp. 859–882). Dordrecht: Springer Netherlands. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4020-5199-9_45
Session 7	**Book Clubs**
Session 8	**Policy: What counts as educational policy?** *in class: Anyon, J. (2005). What "counts" as educational policy? Notes toward a new paradigm. *Harvard Educational Review*, *75*(1), 65–88. *in class: Berliner, D. C. (2013). Effects of inequality and poverty vs. teachers and schooling on America's youth. *Teachers College Record*, *115*(12), 1–26. **DUE: Positionality essay**
Session 9	**#BlackLivesMatterAtSchool Week** *in class: The Movement for Black Lives coalition. (2018). A vision for Black lives: Policy demands for Black power, freedom, and justice. In D. Watson, J. Hagopian, & W. Au (Eds.), *Teaching for black lives* (pp. 74–79). Milwaukee, WI: Rethinking Schools.

	Richard Milner, H., IV, Cunningham, H. B., Delale-O'Connor, L., & Kestenberg, E. G. (2018). *"These kids are out of control": Why we must reimagine "classroom management" for equity*. (chapter 5) Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.
Session 10	**#BlackLivesMatterAtSchool Week** Darby, D., & Rury, J. L. (2018). *The color of mind: Why the origins of the achievement gap matter for justice*. (chapters 6&7) Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
Session 11	**Book Clubs**
Session 12	**Policy: Is school funding fair?** Baker, B. D., Farrie, D., & Sciarra, D. G. (2018). *Is school funding fair? A national report card*. Education Law Center. pages iii-3, 9, 15, 18, 20, 23-24, 28. *in class: Holme, J. J. (2002). Buying homes, buying schools: School choice and the social construction of school quality. *Harvard Educational Review*, *72*(2), 177–206. https://doi.org/10.17763/haer.72.2.u6272x676823788r **DUE: Final project check-in #2**
Session 13	**Policy: What about charter schools?** Labaree, D. F. (2000). No exit: Public education as an inescapably public good. In L. Cuban & D. Shipps (Eds.), *Reconstruction of the common good* (pp. 110–129). Stanford: Stanford University Press. *in class: CREDO. (2009). *Multiple choice: Charter performance in 16 states*. Center for Research on Education Outcomes. *in class: Wang, J., Herman, J., Fox, R., & Buchanan, N. (2017). Magnet schools: History, description, and effects. *The Wiley Handbook of School Choice*, 158-179.
Session 14	**Policy: What about charter schools?** Lipman, P. (2013). Choice and empowerment: The cultural politics of charter schools. In *The new political economy of urban education: Neoliberalism, race, and the right to the city* (pp. 120–145). New York, NY: Taylor & Francis.
Session 15	**Book Clubs**
Session 16	**Policy: Standards, testing, and accountability** **High performing urban schools and students** Heilig, J. V., Jameson Brewer, T., & Pedraza, J. O. (2018). Examining the myth of accountability, high-stakes testing, and the achievement gap.

	Journal of Family Strengths, 18(1). Retrieved from https://digitalcommons.library.tmc.edu/jfs/vol18/iss1/9/ Wiggan, G., & Watson-Vandiver, M. J. (2019). Urban school success: Lessons from a high-achieving urban school, and students' reactions to Ferguson, Missouri. *Education and Urban Society*, *51*(8), 1074–1105. https://doi.org/10.1177/0013124517751721 Williams, J. M., & Bryan, J. (2013). Overcoming adversity: High-achieving African American youth's perspectives on educational resilience. *Journal of Counseling & Development*, *91*(3), 291–300. https://doi.org/10.1002/j.1556-6676.2013.00097.x
Session 17	**Policy: Segregation** *in class: Green, M. (n.d.). *Why are American public schools still so segregated?* the Lowdown. Retrieved from https://www.kqed.org/lowdown/30098/why-have-americas-public-schools-gotten-more-racially-segregated *optional: Kiel, D. (2008). Exploded dream: Desegregation in the Memphis City Schools. *Law & Inequality*, *26*, 261. *optional: Bell, D. (2004). *Silent covenants: Brown v. Board of Education and the unfulfilled hopes for racial reform*. (chapter 10) Oxford: Oxford University Press. *optional: Hannah-Jones, N. (2014). *Segregation now: Investigating America's racial divide*. ProPublica. Retrieved from https://www.propublica.org/article/segregation-now-full-text *optional: Laosa, L.M. (2001). School segregation: A focus on Hispanic/Latino children. *ETS Policy Notes, 10*, 1. **DUE: Final project check-in #3**
Module 3 – Local Case Study	
Session 18	**What's going on in Memphis?** Kiel, D. (2019). Beauty and bitterness: Two centuries of Memphis education. In K. B. Golightly & J. Judaken (Eds.), *Memphis: 200 Years Together* (pp. 124–133). Memphis, TN: Susan Schadt Press.
Session 19	**Book Clubs**
Session 20	**What's going on in Memphis?** Rushing, W. (2017). School segregation and its discontents: Chaos and community in post–Civil Rights Memphis. *Urban Education*, *52*(1), 3–31. https://doi.org/10.1177/0042085915574520

| | OR

Frankenberg, E., Siegel-Hawley, G., & Diem, S. (2017). Segregation by district boundary line: The fragmentation of Memphis area schools. *Educational Researcher*, *46*(8), 449–463. https://doi.org/10.3102/0013189X17732752 |
|---|---|
| **Module 4 – Teaching, Learning, Advocacy, and Activism in Urban Schools** | |
| **Session 21** | **Immigration: How are Urban Schools Changing?**

Dissard, J. M., & Peng, G. (2013). I learn America. USA. Retrieved from http://ilearnamerica.com/ |
| **Session 22** | **Teaching & Learning in Urban Schools: Culturally Sustaining Pedagogies**

Ladson-Billings, G. (1995). But that's just good teaching! The case for culturally relevant pedagogy. *Theory into Practice*, *34*(3), 159–165.

OR

Ladson-Billings, G. (2008). "Yes, but how do we do it?": Practicing culturally relevant pedagogy. In W. Ayers, G. Ladson-Billings, & G. Michie (Eds.), *City kids, city schools: More reports from the front row* (pp. 162–177). New York: The New Press.

*in class: Palos, A. (2011). *Precious knowledge*. |
| **Session 23** | **Book Clubs** |
| **Session 24** | **Student and Family Advocacy and Activism**

Warren, M. R., & Mapp, K. L. (2011). *A match on dry grass: Community organizing as a catalyst for school reform*. (introduction + chapter of your choice) New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

(optional) Cooper, C. W. (2007). School choice as "motherwork": Valuing African-American women's educational advocacy and resistance. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education: QSE*, *20*(5), 491–512. https://doi.org/10.1080/09518390601176655

(optional) Wilson, C. M. (2015). Refusing Detroit's public school failure: African American women's educational advocacy and critical care versus the politics of disposability. *Education Policy Analysis Archives*, *23*(125), 1–33. |
| **Session 25** | **Teaching & Learning in Urban Schools: Activism & Curriculum, Student Advocacy** |

	Selections from Watson, D., Hagopian, J., & Au, W. (2018). *Teaching for Black Lives*. Section 1, (pages 16-74). Milwaukee, WI: Rethinking Schools. *in class: Einhorn, E. (2019, October 28). How a lawsuit over Detroit schools could have an "earth-shattering" impact. *NBC News*. Retrieved from https://www.nbcnews.com/news/us-news/how-lawsuit-over-detroit-schools-could-have-earth-shattering-impact-n1072721 *in class: Fortin, J. (2018, July 4). "Access to literacy" is not a constitutional right, judge in Detroit rules. *The New York Times*, p. 11. Retrieved from https://www.nytimes.com/2018/07/04/education/detroit-public-schools-education.html *in class: Wong, A. (2018, July 6). Students in Detroit are suing the state because they weren't taught to read. *The Atlantic*. Retrieved from https://www.theatlantic.com/education/archive/2018/07/no-right-become-literate/564545/
Session 26	**Teaching & Learning in Urban Schools: Teachers as Advocates** Selections from Christensen, L., Karp, S., Peterson, B., & Yonamine, M. (2019). *The New Teacher Book* (3rd ed.). Chapter 5 (pages 247-308). Milwaukee, WI: Rethinking Schools.
Session 27	**Book Club Presentations**
Session 28	**Book Club Presentations**
Final Exam	**Final Project Presentations**

BOOK CLUB OPTIONS

Alexander, M. (2010). *The New Jim Crow: Mass incarceration in the age of colorblindness.* The New Press.

Delpit, L. (2013). "*Multiplication is for white people": Raising expectations for other people's children.* The New Press.

Desmond, M. (2016). *Evicted: Poverty and profit in the American city*. Crown Books.
Ewing, E. (2018). *Ghosts in the schoolyard: Racism and school closings on Chicago's South Side.* University of Chicago Press.

James, S., Liu, B., Parrish, R., Shaw, K. (2018). *America to me.* Kartemquin Films.

Ladson-Billings, G. (1994). *The dreamkeepers: Successful teachers of African American children.* Jossey-Bass.

Morris, M. (2015). *Pushout: The criminalization of black girls in schools.* The New Press.

Rooks, N. (2017). *Cutting school: Privatization, segregation, and the end of public education.* The New Press.

Rothstein, R. (2017). *The color of law: A forgotten history of how our government segregated America.* Liveright Publishing Corporation.

Suarez-Orozco, C., Suarez-Orozco, M., Todorova, I. (2008). *Learning a new land: Immigrant students in American society.* Belknap Press.

Wright, B., Counsell, S. (2018). *The brilliance of black boys: Cultivating school success in the early grades.* Teachers College Press.

CLIMATE STATEMENT

The Educational Studies Program is committed to creating an academic climate that is sage, respectful, and appreciative of all students, staff, and faculty regardless of race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, size, socioeconomic background, religion, spirituality, physical ability, mental ability, or any other aspect of one's identity. We believe that a climate of mutual respect allows us to ask difficult questions and to participate in honest discussions about difficult issues, even in the context of strong disagreement.