



AGS 820 | Culturally Responsive School Leadership for Deep Change

Spring 2021 | Revere

Professor: James Noonan, Ed.D.
Email: jnoonan@salemstate.edu
Cell Phone: 617-953-1697

Office: Sullivan Building 207-C
Office Hours: TBD, and by appointment

Course Description

Taking a culturally responsive approach to school leadership is crucial for leaders hoping to enact deep change within diverse school settings. Schools need leaders who can shape culture in ways that improve the lives of all children. This requires careful attention to culture and to the processes that lead to deep and lasting organizational change. This course will equip future school leaders with the tools to enact deep change that is driven by a culturally responsive stance.

Course Goals

In this course, students will:

1. Explore and develop their identities as culturally responsive school leaders.
2. Demonstrate an ability to enact the core behaviors of culturally responsive school leadership and will take an equity stance in their leadership work.
3. Explore a number of models of deep change within schools and other organizations.
4. Demonstrate an ability to create a targeted plan for deep change within an educational setting, framed through a culturally responsive lens.
5. Develop the ability to enact and sustain change processes in order to promote anti-oppressive, culturally responsive school experiences for all learners.

Course Objectives

By the end of this course, students will be able to:

1. Understand the ways that educational leaders can take on a culturally responsive stance in order to empower all students, with a particular focus on minoritized student populations.
2. Develop familiarity with cultural responsiveness from the position of an educational leader.
3. Develop familiarity with leadership approaches that lead to deep and lasting organizational change.
4. Discover concrete strategies for enacting a culturally responsive leadership stance.
5. Discover concrete strategies for leading and sustaining deep change within school communities.

Required Text

There is one required text for this course. If you're able, consider purchasing it from an independent bookstore (Bookshop.org) ([IndieBound](http://IndieBound.com)). Please make sure you purchase the *revised* edition. Additional readings will be posted to Canvas.

Tracey A. Benson and Sarah E. Fiarman. (2019). *Unconscious Bias in Schools: A Developmental Approach to Exploring Race and Racism*. Revised edition. Harvard Education Press.

Note on Teaching and Learning in the Time of COVID-19

The language of a syllabus—dates, do’s, don’t’s—is designed to introduce you to a course in ordinary times, but as we know all too well these are *not* ordinary times. Much like last spring, we may find ourselves dealing suddenly with unexpected challenges, whether to our health, the health of people we care about or care for, employment, internet access, childcare, or more. We may also find our course once again interrupted in ways that we cannot yet anticipate.

I am excited to teach and learn with you in this course, and I want to make clear from the outset that *my first priority is your well-being*. If you experience any challenges that affect your work in this course, please communicate with me as soon as possible. I don’t need to know the details, though you may share as much as you want to. I only need to know that you need to discuss alternative arrangements to help you get the most from the course. And if you are experiencing challenges more generally, I am happy to serve as a point of contact to connect you with the resources you need.

Finally, I acknowledge that teaching and learning online can create its own set of challenges for developing a community. Watching videos or talking to each other through video platforms is just not the same as sitting across a table from each other. And while there are comforts working and learning from home, please believe me when I say that I understand that distractions happen and may even happen during synchronous class times. I welcome children, siblings, roommates, pets, or other wandering guests and I understand if/when you need to step away to take care of yourself or others.

These are strange and uncertain times, and we will get through them together.

Course Format (Online, Blended)

Normally, this course is a “hybrid” course, meeting in person five times (from 4-8pm on Thursday) and conducting the rest of the work online. However, because of ongoing disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, the course this year will be held fully online in a “blended” format. This means that some of the work will happen asynchronously, with everyone working independently and at your own pace, but we will also convene as a group five times. Synchronous sessions will be held on Zoom and last approximately two hours, from 5:00-7:00 pm on the dates below. Additional information about Zoom is available on the course website’s [Read Me First Guide](#) under “Synchronous Meeting Etiquette.”

- Tuesday, March 9
- Tuesday, March 23
- Tuesday, March 30
- Tuesday, April 6
- Tuesday, April 27

Crew

During our first session, you will be assigned to a 3-4 person “crew.” As a crew, you will be responsible for the learning of the group and for the learning of each individual member. Your online reflections will be posted to a crew discussion board. Small group conversations during our synchronous sessions will be held in crew. Consider these colleagues your first sounding board and your support network. As a crew, plan to model “[expedition behavior](#)” for each other.

Grades

In this course – as with all courses in this program – the focus of your efforts should be on *your learning* (and not just your grade). In our in-class discussions and your assignments, I want you to take chances, to be unsure and uncomfortable (and to be okay with that), to challenge what you may have previously thought, to challenge what I think and what the authors we read may think, and to struggle when using new ideas for the first time. And so while this is a graded course, I will provide you with clear assignment guidelines and rubrics to give you a picture of what is expected. I will also give you substantive feedback on your work in many forms throughout the course. Your final grade is based on accumulated points on assessments (weighted as described in the previous section), using the following scale:

A = 94-100 % *	B = 83-86 %	C = 73-76 %
A- = 90-93 %	B- = 80-82 %	C- = 70-72 %
B+ = 87-89 %	C+ = 77-79 %	F = 69% or below

* Note that all grade ranges include a calculation to the nearest hundredth. Thus, a grade of 93.99 would be an A- while a grade of 94.01 would be an A. Please note, too, that I reserve the right to use discretion when calculating your final grade, beyond what can be found on Canvas. If you have questions about the grading policy, please talk to me.

Course Requirements

While I believe grades carry too much importance in the formal assessment of learning, the course requirements are weighted to reflect the value I place on them for your learning and development:

50%	Weekly online work and class participation
10%	Core Values Speech
40%	Entry Plan for Equity

Course Requirement Details

Weekly participation and engagement

The quality of your learning depends on your (and your colleagues') full participation. Whether engaging in online discussions, small group discussions, or whole class reflections, your perspectives and your voice are crucial to our learning community. To the extent you can, please bring your "whole self" to these learning environments. Participation and engagement do not mean knowing the right answer or putting only fully polished thoughts on the table. Rather, it means bringing questions, worries, skepticism, partially-shaped ideas, or dilemmas to the conversations – both in person and online.

Core Values Speech

As future school leaders, you may be called upon – either in a job interview or in faculty meetings or in community conversations – to initiate and/or facilitate conversations about race and equity. An important part of these conversations is laying out your core values or beliefs as they relate to race and equity. For this assignment, you be asked to prepare a short and extemporaneous speech (no more than 5 minutes) in which you name and explain up to three (3) core values and how they shape your thinking about culturally responsive leadership. More details on this assignment will be given in class.

Entry Plan for Equity

For your final project – for this class and for the CAGS program overall – you will prepare an "entry plan" that lays out your school leadership priorities, which you will be able to use in your job search or when

you assume your first leadership position. At the center of this plan will be a statement of your core values and an emphasis on equity, but you will also need to draw upon the learning you’ve done throughout this program. Specifically, you will be tasked with identifying strategies (and the equity-based rationales for your decisions) across four domains: accountability, community, training, and transparency. You will have a choice of format for this project: either (a) a two-page maximum, single-spaced memo, or (b) a PowerPoint or Google Slides presentation of at least 4 but no more than 10 slides, with voice-over narration. More information about this project, including a rubric, will be available in class.

Course Hashtag (#AGS820)

Increasingly, educators are finding community and opportunities for deeper learning through online social media platforms like Twitter. For this reason, in addition to posting on the course site, I encourage you to post reflections, resources, or questions related to course material on Twitter. Unlike the posts on the course website, posts to Twitter are not required. But if/when you do post something, don’t forget to include the course hashtag (#AGS820)! I will be doing the same ([@_imnoonan](#)). In posting to social media, please be mindful of the privacy of your colleagues and the conversations or stories that they share.

Course Rhythms

The online portion of this course will be run using learning modules on Canvas. New modules will open after class each week, with work generally due the following Tuesday. Accompanying each module will be a short overview of the week’s readings and assignments. I recommend that you read these first. Occasionally there may also be intermediary deadlines. Recognizing your busy lives as educators, please be in touch ahead of deadlines if you require an adjustment. However, staying on track with the course is important, particularly given our compacted schedule.

PROPOSED SCHEDULE

This overview is a guide for the semester. It represents the core work and the readings for our time together. I may adjust the syllabus to respond to your needs across the semester. Please stay up-to-date by checking the Canvas site regularly.

Rows shaded grey in the table represent asynchronous weeks, when we will not meet via Zoom.

Date	Topic	Readings Due	Assignments Due
Session 1 Mar 9	Re-introductions Looking Back to Move Forward	<i>Please listen to/read before our first session:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Podcast: “Skulls and Skin,” Scene on Radio (S2, Ep. 8, listen/read) Kendi, “Why the Academic Achievement Gap is a Racist Idea” 	
Session 2 Mar 16	Race, Equity, and Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Unconscious Bias</i>, Introduction (pp. 1-12) & ch. 5 (pp. 89-99) Gorski, “Avoiding Racial Equity Detours” 	Reading Reflection #1

Date	Topic	Readings Due	Assignments Due
Session 3 Mar 23	Starting With Self	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Unconscious Bias</i>, ch. 1 & 2 (pp. 13-50) Tatum, "The Complexity of Identity" (pp. 99-108) <i>Recommended</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Video: "Implicit Bias: Peanut Butter, Jelly, and Racism" (watch) 	Reading Reflection #2
Session 4 Mar 30	Core Values	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Unconscious Bias</i>, ch. 3 & 4 (pp. 51-87) <i>Recommended</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> de Novais, "Brave Community" 	Core Values Speech
Session 5 Apr 6	Racial Climate and Discipline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lewis and Diamond, <i>Despite the Best Intentions</i>, ch. 3 (pp. 45-81) 	Reading Reflection #3 Core Values Speech
Session 6 Apr 13	Racial Climate and Relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Unconscious Bias</i>, ch. 6 & 7 (pp. 101-133) 	Reading Reflection #4
Session 7 Apr 20	Creating an Equity Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Unconscious Bias</i>, ch. 8 & 9 (pp. 135-162) Ricketts & Smith, "You've committed to DEI. Now what?" 	Entry Plan Draft
Session 8 Apr 27	Going Slow to Go Far	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Unconscious Bias</i>, ch. 10 (pp. 163-175) <i>Recommended</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Heifetz & Linsky, "When Leadership Spells Danger" 	Reading Reflection #5
Final Project Due: May 4			

Acknowledgments

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Bibliography

Course Resources

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- de Novais, J. (2019). Brave Community, From Ethnography to Pedagogy to Post Racism. In M. A. Peters & R. Heraud (Eds.), *Encyclopedia of Educational Innovation* (pp. 1–5). Springer, Singapore.
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- Heifetz, R. A., & Linsky, M. (2004). When leadership spells danger. *Educational Leadership*, 61(7), 33–37.
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- Ricketts, K., & Smith, M. (2020, December 10). You've Committed to DEI, Now What? *Medium*. <https://koriricketts.medium.com/youve-committed-to-dei-now-what-6d4d18ff41cb>
- Tatum, B. D. (2017). *Why Are All the Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria? And Other Conversations About Race* (Revised edition). Basic Books.

Other Resources

- Fahey, K., Breidenstein, A., Ippolito, J., Hensley, F., & McDonald, J. P. (2019). *An UnCommon Theory of School Change: Leadership for Reinventing Schools*. Teachers College Press.
- Lee, E., Menkart, D., & Okazawa-Rey, M. (Eds.). (1998). *Beyond Heroes and Holidays: A Practical Guide to K-12 Anti-Racist, Multicultural Education and Staff Development* (2nd ed.). Teaching for Change.
- Ngounou, G., & Gutierrez, N. (2017). Learning to lead for racial equity. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 99(3), 37–41.
- Oluo, I. (2018). *So You Want to Talk About Race*. Seal Press.
- Pollock, M. (Ed.). (2008). *Everyday Antiracism: Getting Real About Race in School*. The New Press.
- Safir, S. (2017). *The Listening Leader: Creating the Conditions for Equitable School Transformation*. Jossey-Bass.
- Swanson, J., & Welton, A. (2019). When good intentions only go so far: White principals leading discussions about race. *Urban Education*, 54(5), 732–759.
- Watson, D., Hagopian, J., & Au, W. (Eds.). (2018). *Teaching for Black Lives*. Rethinking Schools.

OTHER THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW

Equity Statement

“Salem State University is committed to providing equal access to the educational experience for all students in compliance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act and to providing all reasonable academic accommodations, aids and adjustments. Any student who has a documented disability requiring an accommodation, aid or adjustment should speak with the instructor immediately. Students with disabilities who have not previously done so should provide documentation to and schedule an appointment with the Office for Students with Disabilities and obtain appropriate services.”

Emergency Statement

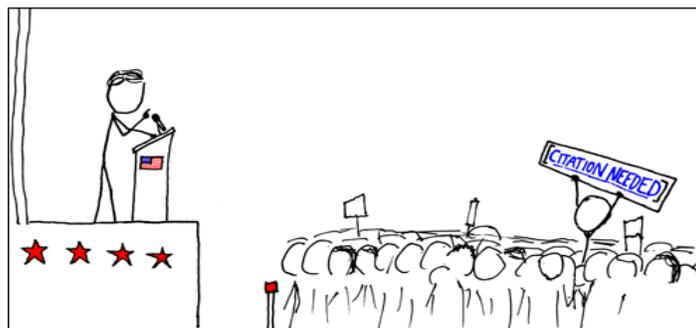
“In the event of a college declared critical emergency, Salem State University reserves the right to alter this course plan. Students should refer to their college email for further information and updates. The course attendance policy stays in effect until there is a college declared critical emergency. In the event of an emergency, please refer to the alternative educational plans for this course located in course handouts. Students should review the plans and gather all required materials before an emergency is declared.”

Additional Emergency Statement

In the event of a University declared critical emergency, Salem State University reserves the right to alter this course plan. Students should refer to www.salemstate.edu for further information and updates. The course attendance policy stays in effect until there is a University-declared critical emergency. In the event of an emergency, please refer to the alternative educational plans for this course, which will be posted on Canvas. Students should review the plans and stay up to date via Canvas.

Citations and Attribution

Please ensure that all work you submit is your own and cite your sources when you use them. The work of education involves creativity and being resourceful. Often, this means looking elsewhere for ideas. That is encouraged in this course. However, you must attribute those ideas to the original authors when you use them. Failure to do so, in the form of plagiarism (even if unwitting) can result in a grade of 0 or further action with the SSU administration. Please visit this site for further information about citation and attribution: <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/589/01/>



Source: <https://xkcd.com/285/>