Education and Social Change in the Black Diaspora
T/Th 10-11:20am | Bradley Hall 403

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The paradox of education is precisely this—that as one begins to become conscious one begins to examine the society in which he is being educated. The purpose of education, finally, is to create in a person the ability to look at the world for himself, to make his own decisions, to say to himself this is black or this is white, to decide for himself whether there is a God in heaven or not. To ask questions of the universe, and then learn to live with those questions, is the way he achieves his own identity. But no society is really anxious to have that kind of person around. What societies really, ideally, want is a citizenry which will simply obey the rules of society. If a society succeeds in this, that society is about to perish. The obligation of anyone who thinks of himself as responsible is to examine society and try to change it and to fight it—at no matter what risk. This is the only hope society has. This is the only way societies change.
- James Baldwin, “A Talk to Teachers”

Course Description

How do you come to know what you know and why is this information important to you? Historically, for people of African descent, education has meant more than acquiring skills or satisfying intellectual curiosities; education has been and continues to be a catalyst for social transformation. The family, local neighborhood, and global community have been critical resources in the Black Diasporic educational process, often supplanting traditional educational institutions, and subverting ineffective methods of teaching and learning. In this course, we will consider the broad meaning of education and the expansive scope of possibilities for social change that have emerged from the Black diasporic experience.

Central Course Questions

We will challenge ourselves to look at education holistically and think of it as more than a unilateral transmission of information from one source to another, while asking questions such as:

- How do educational institutions shape social identities and replicate oppression?
- How has education changed -- and how does it continue to change -- social, cultural, and economic realities across the Black Diaspora?
- In what ways can education directly affect improvements in the social, political, and economic conditions of Black folks?
- How can we extend our understanding of where and how learning takes place so that we might identify and nurture alternative educational spaces better suited to a community’s needs?

These questions and ideas are especially important as we battle anti-CRT, anti-Black, and white supremacist movements in the United States and beyond.
Course Goals and Learning Outcomes

SUPER 6 - Department of Urban Education’s Principle of Teaching

The following six principles guide this course’s approach to teaching and learning:

- Principle 1: Subject Matter and Curriculum Aptitude
- Principle 2: Understanding Your Learners
- Principle 3: Pedagogical Content Knowledge
- Principle 4: Evaluation of Achievement
- Principle 5: Readiness for Establishing and Maintaining Effective Learning Environments
- Principle 6: Educational Professionalism

These principles also inform the general course goals and objectives. At the end of this course, students will:

1. Understand the differences between education and school(ing) within the context of various Black Diasporic experiences. (Principle 1)
2. Evaluate the historical and social purpose(s) of education in cross-cultural contexts. (Principle 3)
3. Read culturally-specific texts and apply (where appropriate) knowledge across contexts, thusly demonstrating a breadth and integration and knowledge of human cultures and critical thinking. (Principles 1 & 3)
4. Apply macro-level processes to micro-level contexts, demonstrating their capacity to apply their interdisciplinary and intersectional knowledge to issues presented. (Principle 2)
5. Communicate effectively, as demonstrated through freewrites, class discussions, presentations, and reflection/final papers. Students will be given consistent feedback on their communication skills via in-class commentary from the instructors, peers, and through topical feedback on written work. (Principles 4 & 6)

Required Text(s)


All other readings will be made available on our course Canvas page.

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1 There are 6 available e-copies in the library. This means only 6 people can read the text simultaneously, and it is on a first-come, first-served basis. For purchase copies will be available in the bookstore, and the book is widely available via other online booksellers.
Course Requirements and Grading

The following assignments count toward your final grade in this course. They are applied components of the course’s essential ideas and objectives, intended to help you tie together readings, lectures, class discussions, and your own individual learning.

1) Response Papers: 20 points (5 @ 4 points each)
2) PechaKucha Class Presentation: 15 points
3) News Share: 5 points
4) Critical Educational Autobiography: 20 points
5) Final Project: 20 points
6) Participation: 15 points
7) Attendance: 5 points

Total: 100 points

*Should you fall between ranges, I will round to the nearest number.

Grading Scheme:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grades</th>
<th>Definitions</th>
<th>Numerical Equivalent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Outstanding</td>
<td>91-100/4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>~</td>
<td>87-90/3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>80-86/3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>~</td>
<td>77-80/2.5</td>
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<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Satisfactory</td>
<td>70-76/2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>Poor</td>
<td>61-70/1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Failure</td>
<td>60 and below /0.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1) Reading Responses (5 x 4 points each for a total of 20 points)

You must hand in 5 response papers over the course of the semester; you are encouraged to respond to topics that are most interesting or most challenging for you. In these responses, you are required to select a quote from the reading and respond to it in no more than a paragraph (approximately 250 words). This quote should represent an idea, concept, or research finding that you found compelling, interesting, inspiring, frustrating, confusing, etc. You must explain what the quote means, why you chose it, and how it is important to the course and/or our understanding of education and social
change across the diaspora in general. Place the page number after the quote from the text and before your comment. In the event that there are multiple readings, you can choose which reading to respond to.

Please be sure to proofread your paper, including a thorough check for grammar, sentence-structure, and general clarity issues. A copy of each response should be submitted via our course page by class time on the day that the reading is due and another should be brought to class with you (to refer to during class discussion). Please include that day’s topic and/or the date in your submission title. They will be scored on a check plus, check, check minus system at that time:

*Check plus* = good/excellent job;
*Check* = acceptable job;
*Check minus* = incomplete/insufficient/problematic/late.

At the end of the semester, your responses will be graded as a whole using the Reading Response Rubric (which will be posted under Assignments on our course page).

2) **Leading One Class PechaKucha Presentation** (15 points)

The purpose of this assignment is to assess your ability to articulate core concepts from the course texts to others, and to connect those texts with others and the overall themes of the course. With that being said, please approach this assignment as an opportunity to really dig into the material and shape the way the rest of course engages with it. Have fun!

You and a classmate should sign up to take responsibility for introducing and leading class discussion about a particular week’s readings through the use of carefully selected images and minimal text. For this assignment, we will be doing a PechaKucha (means chit chat in Japanese), which is a presentation style in which 20 slides are shown for 20 seconds each (six minutes and 40 seconds in total). The images advance automatically and you talk along with the images. The theme of this PechaKucha will be an analysis of how the readings speak to the central questions and issues raised in the course. You and your partner will also need to develop at least 3 discussion questions to follow your PechaKucha introductory presentation. Resources for creating a presentation in this format can be found on the [PechaKucha website](http://www.pechakucha.com) or [WabiSabi Learning’s website](http://www.wabishabi.com).

A link to sign up for your PechaKucha presentation will be available on Canvas.

3) **News Share** (5 points)

Social movements are dynamic and ever-changing, as they respond to the needs of the communities they serve at a given time and in a specific place. This is true of social and educational movements everywhere, but especially for Black communities across the globe in this particular political moment. As students of education and social change, it is important to be kept abreast of the current events in this arena. At the beginning of each designated class, there will be time for students to share a piece of current events related to education and social change. This will help to feed the class with knowledge and generate a brief discussion.
You will present a NewsShare during one of the listed days during the semester. **Choose an article that is five years old or less.**

1. On the day you signed up for, you will post a copy of the news segment on Canvas, along with a short summary (no more than a paragraph) and discussion questions.
2. You will have 10 minutes of “floor time.” This will allow you to briefly overview the current event and also present 1-2 discussion questions to help the class critically think through the current event.

A link to sign up for NewsShare opportunities will be available on Canvas.

**4) Critical Educational Autobiography & Philosophy Statement (20 points)**

This essay asks you to consider your own educational experiences and beliefs, along with course readings/texts, to craft a coherent, thoughtful essay in which you respond to the following questions:

- What was/were the context(s) within which your *formal schooling* took place (e.g. urban/suburban/rural, city and school demographics, size, relevant historical facts, etc.)?
- What was/were the context(s) within which your *informal education* took place (e.g. community-based programs, religious instruction, etc.)?
- What do you believe were the larger purpose(s) of education, both in your formal schooling and informal education? Explain and support.
- How did these values regarding the purpose(s) of education impact your educational experiences? Explain and support.
- Based on your previous experiences and what you have learned in the course thus far, what do you believe the purpose of education should be? What role does/should education play in advancing social and cultural change?

Your essay must include discussion of how your experiences, together with what you have learned this semester in the course, influence your ideas about the purpose, value, and role of education in the Black diaspora.

**5) Final Project (20 points)**

Your final project will be an examination of a contemporary education and social change movement within the Black Diaspora. Many of your ideas for this project will likely stem from News Shares presented in class and our Unit 3 texts. Your project will entail identifying the central problem(s) the movement is addressing, researching the context(s) and history in which the problem(s) surfaced, and analyzing the intervention(s) proposed to address said problem(s). *Students are strongly encouraged to examine a movement outside of the United States.*

Each project must be thoroughly researched and incorporate what you have learned both in class and through your own investigations. You will present your projects in class during the last week of
the course. **Your accompanying paper must be uploaded to Canvas by Thursday, December 16th by 11:20 am.** We will be discussing your final projects frequently during the course of the semester, including more specific details and creative options.

**6) Participation (15 points)**

All students are required to come to class having completed the relevant readings. Students must be prepared to discuss the readings and pose a question to the group for their consideration. In this class we will be discussing subject matter that some students may consider controversial. Some students may find some of the readings and/or comments in class very challenging. Our purpose in this class is to explore this subject matter deeply and consider multiple perspectives and arguments. Students are expected to listen to the instructor and to one another respectfully, but of course are free to disagree, respectfully, with views expressed in class or in readings. Should any student experience harassment or abuse in any form by a fellow student, please contact me immediately so that we can take appropriate action. Hateful or derogatory speech will not be tolerated whatsoever. You are strongly encouraged to report any and all hate and or bias incidents: [https://cm.maxient.com/reportingform.php?RutgersUniv&layout_id=7](https://cm.maxient.com/reportingform.php?RutgersUniv&layout_id=7).

**7) Attendance (5 points)**

Attendance is required. Each student will be expected to attend every class session and to arrive on time. See the full Attendance Policy in the Additional Course Information And University Policies section of the syllabus.

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**ADDITIONAL COURSE INFORMATION AND UNIVERSITY POLICIES**

**Citations, Sources, & Fonts:** Please cite all sources, including course texts, interviews and observations in either APA or MLA format (APA preferred; see the Purdue Owl APA & MLA guides here). Please use a standard-sized, 12-point font for all written assignments, and be sure to paginate. You will be given an expanded description of each assignment and a rubric (if applicable) including specific parameters for completion closer to its due date.

**Class Format:** Class sessions will usually be a mixture of lecture, screening, discussion, or other in-class activities. This mixed method approach is designed to constantly engage with course material, focus on learning outcomes, and recognize diverse learning styles. Lectures will be concise and relevant, helping to outline new content or grasp difficult concepts. We will also take part in large and small group discussions (safely), active learning exercises, videos, written reactions, and possibly guest speakers. These opportunities will allow you to work with fellow students and grapple with the material presented in lectures and readings on a deeper level, and to apply concepts to your own life experiences/practice. I am open to dialogue and feedback about what best helps you learn. Shoot me an e-mail to this end.

**Communication:** E-mail is the best way to reach me and get a response. When you want to send me a message, use your Rutgers e-mail address. Also, include your name, course, and question(s) in f
your emails. Including a brief but descriptive subject line is very helpful for me so that I can respond quickly and effectively (ex: Need to postpone NewsShare, computer crashed), and sign your name (See you in class, Awesome Student). I will respond in kind; respectful communication breeds good relationships and a better overall experience. If you send me a message Monday through Friday before 5:00pm, I will get back to you within 24 hours. On weekends, I may not be able to get back to you until Monday morning. I will be communicating with all of you via email and through Canvas. I also highly encourage all of you to visit my office hours (offered virtually and in-person). I hold these hours for you and it is a great time to talk about the course or education more generally. If the office hours I have listed do not work for you, please reach out and make an appointment.

**Classroom Expectations/Culture:** Your intellectual work should aspire to three simple “ground rules”:

1. Be Present.
2. Read & Write.
3. Speak to After.

These expectations are adopted from Dr. Greg Carr (2003). I will outline my own expectations using these ground rules on the first day/couple of days of class.

**Instructor Availability:** I am always available in person or virtually during office hours; however, if you cannot make these times, let us know and we will set up another time to meet. In addition, I am available to answer questions via email. You can also talk to me after class; if you have questions, don’t hesitate to ASK! The earlier the better!

**Life Happens/Late Assignment Policy:** I understand that there are often things in life that we cannot control (hi, pandemic). Sometimes these events or freakish phenomena may prevent you from handing in an assignment on time. For this reason, I have adopted what a colleague calls a “life happens” policy. This policy includes **2 free late passes** within 1 week of the assignment's original due date. If for some reason you forget to complete your reading response, for example, you can do so the following class (but within one week), no questions asked. **All you need to do is email me and let me know that you’d like to use a late assignment pass.** If you do not email within 48-hours of a due date indicating you’d like to use a late pass, or if you simply do not submit your work, your grade will revert to a 0. You must communicate with me in order to receive the late pass! **Important note:** These late passes do not apply to major course assignments, like presentations or essays. Barring extreme circumstances, I do not accept late papers or presentation. For papers, you will have an 12 hour grace period. After that, however, I will consider your submission late and will apply late penalties: a grade point deduction for each day your paper is late (e.g. from an A, to an A-, A- to B+, etc.). Because handing in work on time and communicating with others is a professional requirement in nearly every field, I highly encourage you to communicate with me immediately to discuss an alternative plan if you have extenuating circumstances or medical emergencies. I will do my best to make accommodations in these cases.

**Attendance Policy:** Attendance is required. Each student will be expected to attend every class session and to arrive on time. Consistent with the “life happens” policy above, students are allowed
to miss two class sessions, no questions asked. Students who miss more than two sessions, except in the case of medical or family emergencies or religious observances, may see a reduction of up to $\frac{1}{3}$ in their final grade. In other words, an A- student who has three absences may receive a B+ on their final grade; an A- student with four absences may receive a B on their final grade, and so on and so on. The same policy exists for consistent late arrivals. If you are experiencing special circumstances that make it difficult to attend class or complete the required work, please let me know! In this event, talking to me early will help me work with you to have a successful experience in the class. More than 5 absences without notification will result in failing the class.

**COVID-19 Classroom and Mask Policy:** In order to protect the health and well-being of all members of the Rutgers-Newark community, masks must be worn by all persons inside campus buildings when in the presence of others, and in buildings in non-private enclosed settings (e.g., common workspaces, workstations, meeting rooms, classrooms, etc.). Masks should securely cover the nose and mouth. Masks must be worn during class meetings. Each day before you arrive on campus or leave your residence hall, you must complete the brief survey on the My Campus Pass symptom checker self-screening app found at: [myRutgers Portal](myRutgers Portal).

**Academic Integrity:** As an academic community dedicated to the creation, dissemination, and application of knowledge, Rutgers University is committed to fostering an intellectual and ethical environment based on the principles of academic integrity. Academic integrity is essential to the success of the University’s educational and research missions, and violations of academic integrity constitute serious offenses against the entire academic community. The entire Academic Integrity Policy can be found here: [http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/](http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/)

Your health and well-being matter, and Rutgers has put in place a number of resources that are intended to help students through the challenges that might emerge during these times. Information on many of these resources appears below. Please let me know immediately if you are experiencing circumstances that are negatively impacting your academic performance. I also strongly encourage you to contact your academic advisor.

**Accommodation and Supports:** Rutgers University Newark (RU-N) is committed to the creation of an inclusive and safe learning environment for all students. RU-N has identified the following resources to further the mission of access and support:

- **Absences:** All students are responsible for timely notification of their instructor regarding any expected absences. The Division of Student Affairs can provide assistance for absences related to religious observance, emergency or unavoidable conflict (illness, personal or family emergency, etc.) Students should refer to the University’s Course Attendance policy (10.2.7), for complete expectations and responsibilities. The office can be contacted at: (973) 353-5063 or deanofstudents@newark.rutgers.edu.

- **Disabilities:** The Office of Disability Services (ODS) is responsible for the determination of appropriate accommodations for students who encounter barriers
due to disability. Once a student has completed the ODS process (registration, initial appointment, and submitted documentation) and reasonable accommodations are determined to be necessary and appropriate, a Letter of Accommodation (LOA) will be provided. The LOA must be given to each course instructor by the student and follow up with a discussion. This should be completed as early in the semester as possible as accommodations are not retroactive. More information can be found at ods.rutgers.edu. Contact ODS: (973) 353-5375 or ods@newark.rutgers.edu.

- **Temporary Conditions/Injuries:** The Division of Student Affairs can assist students who are experiencing a temporary condition of injury (broken or sprained limbs, concussions, or recovery from surgery). Students experiencing a temporary condition or injury should submit a request for assistance at https://temporaryconditions.rutgers.edu.

- **Pregnancy:** The Office of Title IX and ADA Compliance is available to assist students with any concerns or potential accommodations related to pregnancy. Students may contact the office at (973) 353-1906 or TitleIX@newark.rutgers.edu.

- **Gender or Sex-Based Discrimination or Harassment:** The Office of Title IX and ADA Compliance can assist students experiencing any form of gender or sex-based discrimination or harassment, including sexual assault, sexual harassment, relationship violence, or stalking. Students can report an incident to the office at: (973) 353-1906 or TitleIX@newark.rutgers.edu. Incidents may also be reported by using the following link: https://cm.maxient.com/reportingform.php?RutgersUniv&layout_id=7. For more information, students should refer to the University’s Student Policy Prohibiting Sexual Harassment, Sexual Violence, Relationship Violence, Stalking and Related Misconduct located at: http://compliance.rutgers.edu/title-ix/about-title-ix/title-ix-policies/.

- **Interpersonal Violence:** The Office for Violence Prevention and Victim Assistance can provide any student with confidential support. The office is a confidential resource and does not have a reporting obligation to report information to the University’s Title IX Coordinator. Students can contact the office at: (973) 353-1918 or run.vpva@rutgers.edu. There is also a confidential, text-based line students can text for support: (973) 339-0734.

- **Crisis and Concerns:** The Campus Awareness Response and Education (CARE) Team works with students in crisis to develop a support plan to address personal situations that might impact academic performance. Students may contact the CARE Team at: https://cm.maxient.com/reportingform.php?RutgersUniv&layout_id=11 or careteam@rutgers.edu.
• **Stress, Worry, or Concerns about Well-Being:** The Counseling Center has confidential therapists available to support students. To schedule an appointment: [counseling@newark.rutgers.edu](mailto:counseling@newark.rutgers.edu) or (973) 353-5805. If a student is not quite ready to make an appointment with a therapist but is interested in self-help, check out *TAO at Rutgers-Newark* for an easy, web-based approach to self-care and support: [https://thepath.taoconnect.org/local/login/home.php](https://thepath.taoconnect.org/local/login/home.php).

• **Emergencies:** Call 911 or contact Rutgers University Police Department (RUPD) at (973) 353-5111.

**Learning Resources:**

- Rutgers Learning Center (tutoring services)  
  (973) 353-5608  
  [https://sasn.rutgers.edu/student-support/tutoring-academic-support/learning-center](https://sasn.rutgers.edu/student-support/tutoring-academic-support/learning-center)

- Writing Center (tutoring and writing workshops)  
  (973) 353-5847  
  nwc@rutgers.edu  
  [https://sasn.rutgers.edu/student-support/tutoring-academic-support/writing-center](https://sasn.rutgers.edu/student-support/tutoring-academic-support/writing-center)

**Technology LaunchPad:**

[https://runit.rutgers.edu/technology-launch-pad/](https://runit.rutgers.edu/technology-launch-pad/)
Course Schedule
*subject to change

UNIT 1: FOUNDATIONS OF EDUCATION AND SOCIAL CHANGE IN THE DIASPORA

Week 1

9/2: Course Introductions. (class cancelled)

Week 2 - On The Intellectual Roots of Contemporary Black Thought & The Diaspora

9/7: Course Introductions.


Week 3: On The Intellectual Roots of Contemporary Black Thought & The Diaspora, cont’d


NewsShares


Reading Response Due (submit at least 1 by the end of Unit 1)

UNIT 2: WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF EDUCATION? WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE “EDUCATED”?

Week 4: Education as Freedom


PechaKucha Presentation


Week 5: Education, Training, and Work

NewsShares


Week 6: Public education as Bad Faith and Enclosure


PechaKucha Presentation


Guest Speaker: Kermit O.

Week 7: Education as Liberation


NewsShares


PechaKucha Presentation

Week 8: Education as Activism


NewsShares


Reading Response Due (submit at least 1 by the end of Unit 2)

UNIT 3: CONTEMPORARY MOVEMENTS AT THE INTERSECTION OF EDUCATION AND SOCIAL CHANGE

Week 9: Gender Justice and Education in South Africa

10/26: NO CLASS; Critical Educational Autobiography & Philosophy Statement due by end of class time
10/28: Reading TBD  
Guest Speaker: Dr. Relebohile Moletsane

Week 10: The Black Lives Matter Movement (stateside)

11/2: Black Lives Matter at School; Editors of Rethinking Schools, “Right-Wing Legislators Are Trying to Stop Us from Teaching for Racial Justice. We Refuse.”  
NewsShares

11/4: BLM Chicago  
Guest Speaker: Aislinn Pulley

Week 11: Black Lives Matter & The Black Education Movement (Brazil)

11/9: BLM Brazil-USA  
PechaKucha Presentation

11/11: Amilcar Pereira - "For an Authentic Racial Democracy!": The Brazilian Black Movement’s Struggles in Schools and Curricula webcast (ends around 55 minutes)

Week 12: Black Lives Matter & The Black Curriculum (U.K.)

11/16: UK BLM /Race and Racism in English Secondary Schools Report  
Black Lives Matter UK / Breakfast Clubs Against Racism  
NewsShares

11/18: The Black Curriculum Britain (website & report)  
PechaKucha Presentation

Week 13: (School) Abolition

PechaKucha Presentation

11/25: - NO CLASS

Week 14: (School) Abolition, cont’d

NewsShares

**Reading Response Due** (submit at least 1 by the end of Unit 3)

*Week 15: Applications & Integration of the Ground Rules*

12/7: Final Project Presentations

12/9: Final Project Presentations / Final Day of Classes

*Week 16: Finals*

12/16: Final Project Presentations / Papers Due by 11:20am