

Statement of Teaching Interests

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Drawing on critical and sociocultural learning theories, I guide undergraduate students in understanding educational theory and practice, building upon existing scholarship, and contributing their own scholarly knowledge on these topics. To achieve this goal, I foreground student-centered discussion, encourage students to examine the relationship between their own lived experience and course material, and engage them with the policymaking process outside of the classroom.

Learning is a social process, and I structure my courses around student discussion using a variety of small and whole group configurations. My courses begin by creating a classroom culture conducive to discussion. In my course, *Schools and Society*, for example, I have students co-develop course norms, define discussion, and create guidelines for quality discussion. As the semester progresses, students play an increasingly active role in leading discussion, taking turns developing questions for the group to discuss and grounding the class in course material. In pairs, students prepare for and co-lead Socratic seminars by carefully attending to course material, selecting passages in the text they would like to unpack with the group, and developing questions the readings raised for them. For example, two students led a Socratic seminar examining how intersectional race and gender oppression operate in the cultural tropes of the “Good Bad Boy” and the “criminal, unsalvageable” boy in Ann Ferguson’s *Bad Boys*.

I guide students in making connections between their lived experiences and course material. In *Schools and Society*, students create critical educational autobiographies, connecting their personal experiences with educational policy and practice to broader social patterns. I intentionally include readings by scholars from historically underrepresented backgrounds, including works by Kimberlé Crenshaw, Gloria Ladson-Billings, and Stacey Lee. These readings are instrumental in helping students identify how their personal experiences map onto intersectional structural inequalities along lines of race, ethnicity, gender, and immigration and to reform trends (e.g., school discipline, test-based accountability). Students review each other’s draft papers, allowing them to engage with peers’ work, see themselves as capable of scholarly critique, and create a polished piece by the end of the semester.

I engage students in contemporary educational debates beyond the four walls of the classroom. In *Democracy and Education*, I require students to attend a school board meeting; for many students, it is their first experience with a local legislative body and provides an important window into educational policymaking. Students create memes representing the school board meetings, which they bring to class. This approach provides an entry point for students to summarize what can often be long, bureaucratic meetings and provokes class discussion. For their final project, students develop a project (e.g., policy brief, podcast, website) identifying an issue of educational (in)equity, evaluating it according to democratic values, and making an education policy recommendation to deepen democracy in this case. They then present this work to the class. For example, a student who had attended a “No Excuses-style” charter school presented his podcast evaluating the values underpinning this school model.

Students leave my classroom with the capacity to work and learn from others, the skills to evaluate contemporary education practices and policies, and the tools to envision more just alternatives. Whether students plan to continue in the field of education or pursue different careers, they are better equipped to contribute to a more equitable, just society.