

EDUC 630: Pursuing *dije* (diversity, inclusion, justice, & equity)

University of Michigan School of Education, Room 2218, Thursdays, 1:00-4:00pm

Fall 2021; Sept. 2-Dec. 9; **No Class Nov. 25**

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Office hours: Maren - [by appointment](#) & Kati - by email

Course Description

Students in this course will examine the concepts of diversity, inclusion, justice, and equity from an anti-racist and critical perspective. From defining and dialogue to reflection and re-examination, this course is as much a personal inquiry journey into one's own identity as it is an exploration of the core concepts. Readings, discussions, and self-exploration will push us to consider how our own ways of knowing, learning, and teaching can more fundamentally account for and enact diversity, inclusion, justice, and equity. We will examine both scholarly and empirical texts, as well as applied strategies and practices. We will also consider our own identities and how human interaction plays a crucial role in learning and teaching in and beyond the university setting.

Course Objectives

- Understand the concepts of diversity, inclusion, justice, and equity in both theory and practice
- Understand one's own positionality, both individually and at the societal level
- Seek to authentically embody pursuit of these concepts

Course Ethics

Ethic of Care

- It has always been important to us to approach our students with care and compassion and to develop a caring community in classroom spaces. In this extraordinary time, it is all the more important that we practice caring for ourselves and for each other. Taking care of the self – physically, emotionally, mentally, and spiritually enables us to work and strive intellectually, civically, and ethically.
- One specific element of care that merits naming is to acknowledge that much of the material in this course may be quite painful to read, watch, or listen to; although for whom it is painful and why varies along many lines. Given that, we will not offer “content warnings” for specific resources, because to do so is actually an imposition of our own positionality and perspective onto yours. What we will say is that you need to prepare yourself for listening to hateful speech, for witnessing violence, and for reading about atrocities. Please think about what you need to manage your own self-care when faced with difficult material and reach out if you need support. You are welcome to connect with either member of the teaching team to let us know in advance of specific issues that concern you.
- Everyone in our learning community will have a range of reactions to our material. Some things may deeply trouble you, and yet be unacknowledged by someone else. Other things may come as a complete surprise to you, and yet be a commonplace part of someone else's lived experience. Please be mindful to regard the reactions of others with grace and also to realize that your very reaction may embody an element of your own privilege. We are all sparked in different ways. Part of the experience of this course will be to learn about what sparks us and the ensuing impact on ourselves and others. We will invite ourselves to share on these matters; to

be patient and compassionate with ourselves and others; and brave enough to recognize the ways in which we may (intentionally and unintentionally) cause others to feel pain.

Ethic of Responsibility

- This class requires initiative, organization, and self-determination on the part of the students, as well as the instructors. We are intentionally practicing what bell hooks calls “engaged pedagogy,” and that inherently involves students in their own learning and teaching. Our desire to encourage a diversity of groupings and learning modalities means that you will be learning in many ways and spaces, sometimes without an instructor present. Additionally, we will share grading responsibility with you: 40% of your grade is based on attendance and submitting assignments on time; 35% of your grade is based on points you will award yourself by qualitatively assessing your own work; and 25% of your grade is based on points awarded by the teaching team qualitatively assessing your work. More on this in the grading section below. Our role is to facilitate and push, respond and assist, listen and grow; but you will find that much of the accountability in this class will rest with you.

Ethic of Respect¹

- We must respect and value the efforts, identities, capacities, and ideas that each person brings into the space. We call people their chosen names and preferred pronouns and we make the effort to learn and to say their names as they wish them said.
- We must all be open to alternative views, experiences, and perspectives, and curious to learn about and from one another. Freedom to express ourselves, a fundamental civil and human right, *excludes* expressions that commit or encourage violence or trauma toward others. We do not invite racist, sexist, classist, homophobic, transphobic, or generally, bigoted, xenophobic, or hateful ideas, nor are we inviting tolerance or respect for such ideas. Such judgements are part of the responsibility that a free and just society entails.
- We stand for the goals of diversity, inclusion, justice, and equity expressed in our school community’s [statement of institutional commitments](#). Acting on these commitments in our day-to-day work together means that we each must cultivate awareness of our own biases and perspectives. Actively advancing diversity, inclusion, justice, and equity requires that we are cognizant of our own biases and perspectives; and mindful of our ways of being, listening, talking. Furthermore, we must critically interrogate the materials, ideas, structures, and contexts we study and the environments in which we exist.

Ethic of Growth

- This course includes a focus on the self. From the beginning you will be asked to consider not only who you are, but how that identity shapes your way of being in the world, your way of knowing, and the work that you do. You will be asked to identify goals for yourself in pursuing justice, to articulate those goals, and to engage in honest self-appraisal about your progress towards them. You will be asked not only to speak, but also to listen, and to see how listening can help you grow, change, and evolve. As H. Richard Milner, IV. has said, “[Start where you are, but don’t stay there.](#)” And as Brené Brown said in an episode of her podcast, *Unlocking Us*, “[I’m here to get it right, I’m not here to be right.](#)”

Early in the semester, we will come together and discuss “invitations to engagement,” ways that we can agree as a community that we want to be with one another. Sometimes these are referred to as “norms,” and we are happy to discuss with you why we have chosen a different moniker.

¹ With gratitude to Deborah Ball for composing and sharing the language in this section

In the meantime, please consider, in addition to the assigned readings for weeks 1 & 4, the following group norms offered by the [Program on Intergroup Relations at the University of Michigan](#):

1. Take the learning, leave the stories
2. Be present and engaged. Avoid technology distractions.
3. Share airtime.
4. Speak from your own experience.
5. Be aware of intent and impact.
6. Listen to learn, not to respond; listen harder when you disagree.
7. Do not freeze people in time.
8. Expect discomfort and joy; we are on our learning edge.
9. Anticipate unfinished business.
 - Kaplowitz, Griffin, and Seyka. (2019). Race dialogues: A facilitator's guide to tackling the elephant in the classroom. p. 32.

Scope & Sequence

Our class is scheduled to meet on Thursdays from 1:00-4:00 pm during the Fall semester of 2021. This course will meet in person unless the University makes a shift to remote instruction for public health and safety needs in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic. Vaccinations (with limited exceptions) and masking are required. There are three days on the course calendar marked as “asynchronous,” meaning that we will NOT meet in person and you will be expected to complete work on your own: **September 16, October 28, and December 2**. These days correspond with due dates for assignments and the expectation on these days is that you will use class time to review the work of your peers in your dialogue group and offer written feedback to push their reflection and help them improve their work. Peer feedback is considered part of the work of the course and contributes to your final grade.

Weeks	Themes	Assignments/Tasks
2 & 3	Identity, Self, Positionality	Sep. 16* : Philosophy Statement Draft 1 due to Dialogue Groups
1 & 4	Dialogue, Connection, Vulnerability	Sep. 23: Draft 1 Peer Feedback due
5 & 6	Education as the Practice of Freedom	
7 & 8	Critical Stories & Storytelling	
9		Oct. 28* : Good Ancestor Assignment due
10 & 11	“DEI” Work & Functions	
12-14	Abolition & Towards a Future of Thriving	Dec. 2* : Philosophy Statement Draft 2 due to Dialogue Groups Dec. 9 (last day of class): Draft 2 Peer Feedback due

15	NO CLASS	Dec. 16: Philosophy Statement Finals due
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**Asynchronous*

Course Resources

All assigned and optional “readings” (mostly readings, but also some videos and/or podcasts) are listed here as of September 1, 2021. A “live” list can be found on the Canvas homepage, and if we make any adjustments to assignments, we will update that page immediately. The list on Canvas is organized by the due date of the readings, so that is the place to consult on a weekly basis to see what is assigned.

There are two books that we will be reading in their entirety in this course:

- Love, B. (2019) *We want to do more than survive: Abolitionist teaching and the pursuit of educational freedom*. Boston, MA: Beacon Press
- La paperson. (2017). *A third university is possible*. Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press.

We recommend purchasing these if you can...you can order them online for about \$10-12 each. They are available at the UM library, but only on a very restricted basis, without enough copies (electronic or paper) to accommodate our class.

Finally, many of the readings are uploaded as PDF files to our Canvas site. Otherwise, a hyperlink will be provided in the table below or a note directing you to an electronic copy available through UM library (<https://www.lib.umich.edu/>). As long as you are logged in with your UMich email account on the library website, you should have no trouble accessing those readings.

Syllabus Listing	Citation (if unmarked or unlinked, please find the PDF on Canvas)	Theme
Adichie, 2009	The danger of a single story. 18:49 min. https://www.ted.com/talks/chimamanda_adichie_the_danger_of_a_single_story	Critical Stories & Storytelling
Ahmed, 2006	Non-performativity of anti-racism. <i>Meridians</i> . 7(1), 104-126.	“DEI” Work & Functions
Arao & Clemens, 2013	<i>The art of effective facilitation</i> . Sterling, VA: Stylus Publishing. Chapter 8: From safe spaces to brave spaces, a new way to frame dialogue around diversity and social justice.	Dialogue, Connection, Vulnerability
Collins, 2012	Social inequality, power, and politics: Intersectionality and American Pragmatism in Dialogue. <i>The Journal of Speculative Philosophy</i> . 26(2), 442-457.	“DEI” Work & Functions
Dancy, T.E., et al., 2018	Historically white universities and plantation politics: Anti-Blackness and higher education in the Black lives matter era. <i>Urban Education</i> . 53(2), 176-195.	“DEI” Work & Functions
Darder, 2018	<i>The student guide to Freire's Pedagogy of the Oppressed</i> . London, UK: Bloomsbury Academic.	Education as the Practice of Freedom
Dumas, 2016	Against the dark: antiBlackness in education policy and discourse. <i>Theory into Practice</i> , 55(1), 11-19.	“DEI” Work & Functions

Freire, 2000	<i>Pedagogy of the oppressed</i> . Bloomsbury Academic; 30 th Anniversary Edition.	Education as the Practice of Freedom
hooks, 1994*	<i>Teaching to transgress: education as the practice of freedom</i> . New York, NY: Routledge.	Education as the Practice of Freedom
Kumashiro, 2002	<i>Troubling education: Queer activism and antioppressive pedagogy</i> . New York, NY: Routledge. Chapter 3: Readings and rereadings of identity, culture, and oppression. 77-132	Critical Stories & Storytelling
la paperson, 2017*	<i>A third university is possible</i> . Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.	Abolition and Towards of Future of Thriving
Lorde, 1984	<i>Sister outsider: Essays and speeches by Audre Lorde</i> . Berkeley, CA: Crossing Press. The transformation of silence into language and action. 40-44.	Dialogue, Connection, Vulnerability
Love, 2019	<i>We want to do more than survive: Abolitionist teaching and the pursuit of educational freedom</i> . Boston, MA: Beacon Press.	Abolition and Towards of Future of Thriving
Okello, 2018	From self-authorship to self-definition: Remapping theoretical assumptions through Black feminism. <i>Journal of College Student Development</i> , 59(5), 528-544.	Identity, Self, Positionality
Oluo, 2019	<i>So you want to talk about race</i> . New York, NY: Seal Press.	Dialogue, Connection, Vulnerability
Patel, 2019	Fugitive practices: Learning in a settler colony. <i>Educational Studies</i> . DOI: 10.1080/00131946.2019.1605368	Abolition and Towards of Future of Thriving
Selasi, 2014	Don't Ask Where I'm From, Ask Where I'm Local. 16:31. https://www.ted.com/talks/taiye_selasi_don_t_ask_where_i_m_from_ask_where_i_m_a_local?http:	Identity, Self, Positionality
Solórzano & Yosso, 2002	Critical Race Methodology: Counter-Storytelling as an Analytical Framework for Education Research. <i>Qualitative Inquiry</i> , 8(1), 23–44. https://doi.org/10.1177/107780040200800103	Critical Stories & Storytelling
Takacs, 2003	How does your positionality bias your epistemology? <i>Thought and Action</i> , 27-38.	Identity, Self, Positionality
Tatum, 1992.	Talking about race, learning about racism: The application of racial identity development theory in the classroom. <i>Harvard Educational Review</i> , Feb 1992.	Identity, Self, Positionality

Tatum, 1997.	<i>"Why are all the black kids sitting together in the cafeteria?" And other conversations about race.</i> New York, NY: Perseus Books. <i>Chapter 2: The complexity of identity.</i>	Identity, Self, Positionality
Zuniga, 2003.	Bridging differences through dialogue. <i>About Campus.</i> January-February 2003.	Dialogue, Connection, Vulnerability

* Please note that bell hooks and la paperson intentionally use lower-case letters in their names. If you cite them, please follow this convention accordingly.

Assignments

1) Good Ancestor Assignment²

*"Be a good ancestor. Stand for something bigger than yourself.
Add value to the Earth during your sojourn."
- Marian Wright Edleman*

We exist within a larger ancestral witness of resistance to oppression and assaults to our humanity. Therefore, our work has never been our own; our methods for pursuing *dije* are not original; they have been handed down to us from our ancestors -- both known and unknown. Resistance is about the everyday acts of committing to a praxis of humanization (Freire, 1968; Mohanty, 1990).

The purpose of this assignment is two-fold. First, we want you to reflect upon and draw on the rich legacies of resistance that (currently/have) shape(d) your commitments to *dije*. Secondly, we want to acknowledge that sacred ways of knowing resistance are not contained within the four-walls of the academy. In fact, much is to be learned concerning how to engage in *dije*-informed education from folk outside of academe.

For this exercise, we are asking you to think about a *non-academic* (grandma, auntie, mother, local community leader, artist, etc.) who embodies *dije* ideals in the way they live their life. Our readings and discussion on storytelling and counter storytelling (Solórzano & Yosso, Adichie, and Kumashiro) might inform how you conceive of the story we are asking you to tell.

Please prepare a 10-12-minute recorded presentation detailing the following:

- Relevant biographical information of your subject important to understanding their *dije* philosophy.
- Why did you select this person?
- How does this person embody *dije* ideals?
- What is the context (system of oppression) of their work? Around what constraints are they navigating?
- How can/should their work inform how we engage *dije* in our current and future work both as scholars and people?

The presentation should be completed in a format that can be viewed by your classmates asynchronously. Examples include a voice moderated powerpoint, a recorded prezzi, a video, etc. There

² With gratitude to David Humphrey for composing and sharing much of the language in this section

will be a designated assignment on Canvas to post your presentation so that your peers can review it and provide thoughtful feedback.

The good ancestor assignment is due October 28th by 1:00 p.m. and will be shared via Canvas with the teaching team and your Dialogue Group. You will have asynchronous class time on the 28th to view the presentations of the other members of your Dialogue Group and provide feedback to them on Canvas.

2) Philosophy Statement

Just Us (Yolanda Sealy-Ruiz)

Here is my invitation
for you to bend towards
justice.
My arc of self bends
in favor of love -

Asking hard questions
& waiting for answers
that don't offer conclusions,
just more wonderings
about how to live a life
worthy of the children
who come after us.

Throughout this course, you will work to articulate your own personal philosophy of *dije* - that is, how do you intend to enact diversity, inclusion, justice, and equity in the world? This assignment is broken up into 3 submissions, with the first two offering you the opportunity to submit drafts to the members of your dialogue group and receive feedback on your work.

Each section of the statement should serve as a place for you to not only articulate your ideas about yourself in relation to the question posed, but also to incorporate your responses and analysis of the course readings that are aligned with the given question. Thus, the statement will be both an expression of your personal philosophy and a journal of sorts that logs your interactions with course readings and conversations.

Guidelines, guiding questions, and due dates for each section:

All sections of the memo should be submitted as a Microsoft word document, using [APA format](#) for quotations, citations, and references. Please see below for guidance on the individual sections.

Draft 1. 800-1500 words.

- Draft: due to Dialogue Group September 16th, 1:00p.m. via Canvas
- Peer Feedback: due to Dialogue Group members September 23rd, 1:00p.m. via "Peer Reviews" on Canvas
- Guiding Questions: Who am I? What are the facets of my identity that are salient in my life and help me determine my essence, my being, and my purpose? How much time and energy have I spent thinking about my social identities and how is that reflective of my humanity and my positionality? How do the readings from the first two sessions of the class connect to who I am, extend my thinking, and challenge me in new ways?

Draft 2. Revisions to Draft 1 + 1000-1800 new words.

- Draft: due to Dialogue Group December 2nd, 1:00p.m. via Canvas
- Peer Feedback: due to Dialogue Group members December 9th, 1:00p.m. via “Peer Reviews” on Canvas and to be discussed with Dialogue Groups in class
- Guiding Questions: Who am I in relation to others? What have I come to understand about my positionality based on my social identity and vis a vis my relationships with others? How am I positioned in relation to “DEI” work and what factors let me know about my positionality? What is my praxis for social change? What acting upon the world and reflecting is or can become a part of my regular human practice - personally, professionally, academically? What is the difference between “DEI” work and abolition? How are either or both of these types of work fundamental to who I am and what I do? What work do I need to do to *more* fundamentally incorporate abolition into my being? How do (or might) notions of abolition tie back to my initial thoughts about my identity and my very humanity?

Final Submission. Revisions to Drafts 1 & 2 (1800-3300 words)

- Due December 16th, 11:59pm, via Canvas
- Will include a self-assessment and self-grading component that are not included in the word count

Grading

In this course, we, the instructors and each student (individually), will share responsibility for grading. As part of practicing engaged pedagogy and, in an effort to interrogate normative systems of hierarchy, we feel it is important to release some of the typical hold on assigning grades that usually rests with the instructor. The numerical equivalents for letter grades will be as follows, with students eligible to earn up to 100 points throughout the semester.

A	94-100	B	84-86.99	C	74-76.99	D	64-66.99
A-	90-93.99	B-	80-83.99	C-	70-73.99	D-	61-63.99
B+	87-89.99	C+	77-79.99	D+	67-69.99	F	0-60.99

The distribution for these points is as follows:

Red type indicates student self-assessment

Green type indicates instructor assessment

Blue type indicates monitoring via Canvas submission times or attendance

Attendance* (22%)	In-person/Synchronous Class Sessions	11 meetings, 2 pts per	22 points
Submitting written items on time and completed (18%)	Good Ancestor Assignment	1 submission	2 points
	Peer Feedback on Good Ancestor Assignments	1 round	4 points
	Philosophy Statement Drafts	2 entries	4 points
	Peer Feedback on Philosophy Statements	2 rounds	8 points
Qualitative Assessments (60%)	Instructor Feedback on Good Ancestor Assignments	1 round	10
	Student Self-Assessment on Good Ancestor Assignment	1 round	15
	Instructor Feedback on Philosophy Statement	Final submission	15
	Student Self-Assessment on Philosophy Statement	Final Submission	20

* If you are unable to be in class due to an illness or an emergency, you will be able to earn “attendance” points by submitting a make-up assignment. Please contact us before class if you will be absent, with exceptions being made for extreme emergency situations. For purposes of self-care, and especially in light of public health concerns surrounding Covid-19, we encourage students who are not feeling well to stay home. With permission from the group, we will record class sessions to post for absent students.

The make-up assignment is as follows: Please post a 400-700 word reflection using the Canvas Discussion tool within 10 days of your absence. The reflection should reference all of the assigned readings for the class you missed and should represent the substantive contributions you might have made to class discussion.

Other Information for Students

Support & Resources

- GENERAL: Resources and support are available for students through the [Dean of Students Office](#) or [Counseling and Psychological Services](#) as well as additional [Inclusive Campus Resources](#) that help students find support and community on the U-M campus.
- GENDER IDENTITY: All people have the right to be addressed and referred to in accordance with their personal identity. In this class, we will share the name we prefer to be called and, if we choose, share the pronouns with which we would like to be addressed. Please keep in mind that some students may have pronoun preferences in a classroom setting that differ from their preferences in a more public space. In addition to indicating personal pronouns via Wolverine access, using the Gender Identity tab under Student Business, and telling us in class, please feel free to let us know if there are specific circumstances that we should be aware of regarding differences in preferred names and/or pronoun usage. As instructors, we will do our best to address and refer to all students accordingly and support classmates in doing so as well.
- FOOD INSECURITY: Any student who faces challenges securing food, housing, or other basic needs and believes this may affect their performance in the course is urged to contact the Dean of Students Office (734-764-7420; deanofstudents@umich.edu; 609 Tappan Street) for support. Additionally, the Maize and Blue Cupboard, can be found here <https://mbc.studentlife.umich.edu/>. Its mission is, “To ensure members of the University of Michigan community – whether on a tight budget or physically restrained from getting to a grocery store – received equitable access to healthy, nutritious, and nourishing food and the ability to prepare it for themselves or others.”
- COVID-19:
 - From Rackham’s Website: <https://rackham.umich.edu/COVID-19/>
 - For up-to-date UM info: [U-M’s coronavirus site](#) (specifically this link: <https://campusblueprint.umich.edu/faqs/> for support and resources)
 - From the SOE: <https://soe.umich.edu/covid19-updates>
- ACCOMMODATIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES: If you think you need an accommodation for a disability, please let me know at your earliest convenience. As soon as you make me aware of your needs, we can work with the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities (<https://ssd.umich.edu/>) to help us determine appropriate academic accommodations. SSD (734-763-3000; <http://ssd.umich.edu>) typically recommends accommodations through a Verified Individualized Services and Accommodations (VISA) form. Any information you provide is private and confidential and will be treated as such.

Additional Course Expectations

- COMMUNICATIONS: All course communications will be posted on Canvas and/or sent through your U-M email address. You are responsible for everything sent to that address. We expect that you will check your U-M email regularly, as well as our Canvas site for announcements and updates. If you use another email address, you can configure your U-M account to forward all emails to that address. Please know that while we check email regularly, we are not constantly on it. Maren is unlikely to be checking email the hour before class, in the evenings, and on the weekends. Please do not expect to communicate at the last minute.

- **ABSENCES & TARDIES FOR RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCES:** Although the University of Michigan, as an institution, does not observe religious holidays, it has long been the University's policy that every reasonable effort should be made to help students avoid negative academic consequences when their religious obligations conflict with academic requirements. Absence from classes or examinations for religious reasons does not relieve students from responsibility for any part of the course work required during the period of absence. Students who expect to miss classes, examinations, or other assignments as a consequence of their religious observance shall be provided with a reasonable alternative opportunity to complete such academic responsibilities. It is the obligation of students to provide faculty with reasonable notice of the dates of religious holidays on which they will be absent.
- **ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:** All members of our learning community are expected to conduct themselves with honesty and integrity. Academic dishonesty is detrimental to an environment that promotes and supports meaningful learning experiences. Academic dishonesty includes any action that provides an individual student with an unfair advantage, such as plagiarism, cheating, or misrepresentation. Please visit the [Rackham Graduate School policy](#) website for our expectations around these matters and for consequences for any infractions. As part of engaging with the readings and the core themes of this course, I expect you to explicitly draw on ongoing conversations in academic and public discourse in our discussions and in your writing. When you draw on ideas in others' work in your written assignments, please be sure to attribute that work correctly. For guidance, please see the American Psychological Association's *Publication Manual* or the Purdue Online Writing Lab (<https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/>) which has proven to be especially helpful.

Online Learning

- This course aims to be aligned with the Principles of Inclusive Teaching as outlined here by CRLT: <https://onlineteaching.umich.edu/inclusive-teaching-2/>. If you have feedback on how to improve in this area, please let me know.
- Here is the information I am using to guide me when we record class sessions: <https://safecomputing.umich.edu/be-aware/privacy/privacy-u-m/videoconferencing/recording-privacy-concerns>
- I found this “bandwidth and immediacy” framework helpful in thinking about how to structure and organize this course online: <https://www.iddblog.org/videoconferencing-alternatives-how-low-bandwidth-teaching-will-save-us-all/>
- Please use this SOE video caption guide (<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1ZODIRtVc7mADozX6g3EDN1tK2kpfpphr1a4XtvzE6cA/edit>) and these Video Conferencing Captioning Tools for Zoom (<https://documentation.its.umich.edu/node/1981#Live%20Auto%20Captioning>) to ensure that videos are accessible with both audio and visual cues.