

**EDUC 771-003: Feminist Pedagogies Across Higher Ed**  
U-M Center for the Study of Higher and Postsecondary Education

|  |  |
|--|--|
| Dr. Theresa Braunschneider<br>[REDACTED]<br>[REDACTED] | Section 003, Fall 2023<br>[REDACTED]<br>[REDACTED] |
|--|--|

### KEY QUESTIONS & GOALS

What does it mean for instructors to approach teaching from a feminist perspective, and how can such an approach help us cultivate truly equitable – even liberatory – learning environments? This course provides a critical, collaborative space for students to explore those questions by engaging with a range of feminist writings on teaching and learning in higher ed, in order to apply insights from this body of scholarship to our own teaching contexts. In this course, we think about ‘teaching’ very broadly, recognizing the value of intentional pedagogical choices in any context where we’re facilitating others’ learning – whether a residence hall activity, training session, or formal college classroom. Our readings and discussions will take a robustly intersectional approach, centering voices of scholars from groups often marginalized in higher educational institutions, creating space to think about our own complex positionalities, and engaging arguments that define feminism as fundamentally anti-racist, anti-ableist, decolonizing, queer- and trans-affirming thought and practice.

### LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the end of our seven weeks together, I hope we will all be better able to:

- Identify key themes, topics, and debates within feminist scholarship about teaching.
- Identify pedagogical challenges and opportunities that emerge when we attend to the dynamics of power and identity in teaching-learning interactions.
- Develop promising approaches to meeting those challenges in a broad range of higher ed teaching contexts.

## EXPECTATIONS & COMMITMENTS

*Expectations of students:* To meet these objectives, both individually and as part of a learning community pursuing them collectively, students are expected as the regular work of the course to:

- engage in careful reading and analysis of feminist scholarship pertaining to equity and justice in college teaching
- reflect critically upon your experiences and goals, applying insights from course readings and discussions to your particular instructional contexts (current and future)
- participate in a critical-collaborative community where everyone is challenged and supported in learning from our course materials and discussions, including thinking through ways to apply course concepts in a range of teaching contexts
- stay in communication with me about your engagement with the course, especially if circumstances arise that make it difficult or impossible for you to participate fully in class meetings or complete work as anticipated, so that we can work together to figure out alternative ways for you to succeed with the course objectives.

*Expectations of instructor:* My regular responsibilities include planning and facilitating class meetings and assignments that will help you achieve the objectives above; providing critical but supportive guidance and feedback on your writing; facilitating group interactions that are guided by principles and practices of equity and inclusiveness; and responding to your feedback about the learning environment. The ways I meet those responsibilities will vary over the course of our time together, but I can make the following general commitments:

- Transparency about my pedagogical decisions: I will proactively communicate and be ready to answer your questions about the logics -- and particularly the learning purposes -- of decisions I make about course activities and requirements.
- Support for student learning: I will hold you to high standards, provide the support and guidance necessary to meet those standards, and extend flexibility to allow you to fulfill course requirements in ways that will be most useful and accessible for you.
- Cultivation of an equitable learning environment: I will intentionally utilize a range of teaching practices to support equitable engagement, access, and assessment of learning; I will acknowledge inequities and injustices that often shape student learning and experience of higher education and take deliberate steps to interrupt those; I will welcome student feedback that helps me improve the learning environment.

## **CLASS INTERACTIONS: INITIAL INVITATIONS**

Given our course focus and objectives, we will often discuss texts and topics that feel high-stakes and emotionally charged. We will work together in several ways to figure out how we can all engage in these conversations with respect and attentiveness to our learning goals. As a starting point, I offer these basic invitations:

- Let's prioritize learning and thinking carefully together over other more competition-oriented goals that sometimes implicitly emerge in graduate seminars.
- Let's do our best to listen carefully, attend to the ways our own positionalities shape our responses to the readings and one another's ideas, and approach our conversations with a spirit of curiosity and care.

## **ACCESSIBILITY**

I am committed to designing course activities and materials that minimize barriers to learning for students with a broad range of bodies and minds. Though the responsibility for implementing an accessible course ultimately rests with me, I value students' input about how to do so and welcome your thoughts and suggestions about ways to improve accessibility in this course. In addition, if you know now or come to realize that you will require an accommodation to fully participate or effectively learn in this course, please let me know at your earliest convenience. We can work together and/or with the Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) office (734-763-3000; [ssd.umich.edu](http://ssd.umich.edu)) to design appropriate accommodations. I encourage you to ask for accommodations when you need them not only because you are entitled to an accessible education but also because activities or assignments can sometimes be adjusted in ways that improve everyone's learning. I will keep confidential any information you provide about your access or accommodation needs.

## **THE IMPORTANCE OF YOUR WELL-BEING**

I understand your lives are complicated. You may experience emerging challenges—related to your physical or mental health, your financial well-being, your family care responsibilities, and more—that make it particularly difficult to engage and learn in your courses and balance your responsibilities as a graduate student. I've tried to build in some flexibility so I can help you succeed in this course even when you're navigating such challenges. I encourage you to practice self-care and stay connected with your support networks, and I'm also happy to point you to resources I am aware of that might provide valuable support. As a starting point, I recommend the resource compiled at [tiny.cc/distresssignals](http://tiny.cc/distresssignals): it catalogs a range of university and community resources related to mental health and well-being. I also recommend that you familiarize yourself with the well-being support resources linked in the Canvas sidebar under the rainbow pinwheel.

## OVERVIEW OF COURSE REQUIREMENTS & ASSESSMENT

You will have some choices about how to complete the various requirements in this short course. I will provide detailed assignments for every written component, but please don't hesitate to consult with me if additional guidance would be useful. Here's an overview of the work you will do for this course and how it will be evaluated:

- **Contributions to our critical collaborative learning community (25%):** This is a discussion-driven course, in which everyone's contributions – listening, asking questions, sharing insights in speech and writing, participating in small group activities, etc. – will help build our learning community. To encourage and acknowledge your regular active engagement, a substantial part of your final grade will reflect your contributions to our learning community.
  - Assessment method: As a group, we will generate goals for how we want to engage with one another. Your grade will be determined by a combination of self-assessment in relation to those goals, peer feedback on your strengths as a contributor to our community, and your responsiveness to instructor feedback about your engagement.
- **"Initial Connections" Canvas posts (25%):** Beginning with our second class, there will be six opportunities to post pre-class writing; you are expected to post **4 times**, on the weeks you choose. These Canvas posts (~250-400 words each) are primarily designed as a space for you to work through some initial responses to the reading, with a particular focus on the ways the authors' insights might be relevant in contexts where you expect to teach. These posts also provide an opportunity for you to begin learning how your classmates are responding to the reading and for me to understand key ideas and questions we should address in our discussion. *To allow me time to review these before our class meetings, they are **due by 9:00am Thursday** (unless that deadline does not work for you given your particular schedule this semester, in which case please talk with me as early in the term as possible about an alternative deadline!).*
  - Assessment method: You will receive full credit for each complete post. The elements of a complete post will be detailed in the assignment on Canvas.
- **Application Exercises (30%):** You will have the choice to submit **any 2 of 3** exercises (detailed instructions to be shared separately) that apply our course learnings to specific teaching contexts you expect to have responsibility for. These Application Exercises focus on 1. student interactions, 2. policies and statements, and 3. assessment of learning; they include both developing materials and annotating them in light of our course conversations. I will provide formative feedback on your initial submissions. At the end of the course, you will choose one exercise to revise and include in a "mini portfolio" due at the end of our course.

- Assessment method: Your initial Application Exercise submissions and the revised Exercise submitted with your portfolio will each constitute one-third of this element of your grade. You will receive full credit for submitting the initial Exercises complete and on time. Your revised Exercise will be graded on a letter scale using four criteria: clarity, organization, development/complexity of ideas, and responsiveness to feedback. (Details about those criteria are included in the mini portfolio assignment on Canvas.)
- **Teaching philosophy statements (20%):** To track developments in your thinking about teaching, you will compose a statement of teaching philosophy after our first class and again at the end of the semester, as part of the mini portfolio.
  - Assessment method: The initial draft and revision will each constitute half the points for this element of your grade. You will receive full credit for submitting a complete initial draft on time. Your revised statement will be graded using the same criteria as the revised Exercise.

## SCHEDULE OF READINGS & ASSIGNMENTS (subject to revision)

| DATE    | TOPICS  | READINGS & DUE DATES   |
|---------|---|--|
| Th 8/31 | Our course goals, syllabus, community             | 1. Course syllabus<br>2. <a href="#">Excerpts</a> to be read and discussed in class<br>Individual <a href="#">pre-course questionnaire</a> due   |
| S 9/3   |   | Initial <a href="#">teaching philosophy statement</a> due  |
| Th 9/7  | Goals and promises of feminist education          | 1. hooks (1994), Introduction to <i>Teaching to Transgress</i><br>2. Lee (2014), "Teaching White Settler Subjects Antiracist Feminisms"<br><br><i>First of six opportunities to post 'Initial Connections' on Canvas</i> |
| Th 9/14 | Care and community                                | 1. Richardson (2017), "Healing Circles as Black Feminist Pedagogical Interventions"<br><br>2. Wood (2021), "Teaching Students at the Margins: A Feminist Trauma-Informed Care Pedagogy"                                  |
| Th 9/21 | Identities, privilege, the politics of difference | 1. Malatino (2015), "Pedagogies of Becoming: Trans Inclusivity and the Crafting of Being"<br><br>2. Sensoy & DiAngelo (2014), "Respect Differences? Challenging the Common Guidelines in Social Justice Education"       |

|                    |                                    |   |
|--------------------|------------------------------------|---|
| Sun 9/24           |                                    | Exercise #1 due: <a href="#">Interactions</a>   |
| Th 9/28            | Trauma, safety, trigger warnings   | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Carter (2015), "Teaching with Trauma: Trigger Warnings, Feminism, and Disability Pedagogy"</li> <li>2. Excerpt from McKittrick interview (2014)</li> <li>3. Halberstam (2017), "Trigger Happy: From Content Warning to Censorship"</li> </ol> |
| Sun 10/1           |                                    | Exercise #2 due: <a href="#">Policies &amp; Statements</a>  |
| Th 10/5            | Resistance, disagreement, conflict | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Fuller &amp; Russo (2018), "Feminist Pedagogy: Building Community Accountability"</li> <li>2. Applebaum (2015), "Hold that Thought!"</li> </ol>   |
| Sun 10/8           |                                    | Exercise #3 due: <a href="#">Assessment</a>   |
| T 10/10 or W 10/11 |                                    | Portfolio selection (revised) due to peers for workshopping   |
| Th 10/12           | Final reflections                  | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Hogan (2015), "Come Closer to Feminism"</li> <li>2. Review of peer portfolio materials for in-class workshopping</li> </ol>   |
| Th 10/19           |                                    | Mini-portfolio due: Revisited Teaching Philosophy statement + one revised exercise  |