

**ENG 776-01: Approaches to the Teaching of Writing  
Critical Pedagogy  
Course Syllabus: Spring 2013  
Dr. Tabettha Adkins**

**Class space:** Hall of Languages 306  
**Class Time:** Thursday 7:20-10 PM  
**E-mail Address:** Tabettha.Adkins@tamuc.edu  
**Office phone:** 903.886.5269  
**Office Location:** Hall of Languages 229  
**Office hours:** Monday 10-12 and 1:30-3:30; Tuesday 10-12; Thursday 3:30-4:30

This course is cross-listed with one independent study section of ENG 677. This syllabus applies to that section, as well.

**Course Information**

**Textbooks Required:**

Henry Giroux, *On Critical Pedagogy*  
Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*  
bell hooks, *Teaching to Transgress*  
Ira Shor, *Empowering Education*  
W.E.B. Dubois, *The Souls of Black Folk*  
Lisa Delpit, *Other People's Children: Cultural Conflict in the Classroom*  
Crabtree, Sapp, Licona (eds), *Feminist Pedagogy*  
Richard E. Miller, *Writing at the End of the Word*  
Jonathan Kozol, *Shame of the Nation: The Restoration of Apartheid Schooling in America*  
Mike Rose, *Why School?*

**Course Description:**

In this section of ENG 776, we will study the concept of Critical Pedagogy. The course will begin with a study of theorists who founded Critical Pedagogy. We will then study specific applications of theory-driven pedagogy. Finally, we will study some problems in education and apply a critical pedagogical lens to these problems.

**Student Learning Outcomes:**

1. Students will be able to define and describe critical pedagogy.
2. Students will be able to write critically about texts written by critical pedagogy scholars.
3. Students will be able to analyze current problems in education using a critical pedagogical lens.
4. Students will be able to demonstrate their understanding of the history of critical pedagogy and the scholarship that has followed.

## Course Requirements

### Instructional / Methods / Activities Assessments

#### Attendance Policy:

Since you are all graduate students, I assume you want to be here and will attend all classes. If you cannot attend a class due to illness, family emergency, etc., please try to let me know in advance, and be sure to e-mail me before you return to class so you will be up-to-date with class activities. More than one absence (since this is a once-a-week class) will reflect on your grade. Tardiness will be reflected in your participation grade.

#### Assignments:

**Unit Response Papers (30% of final grade. 3 papers at 10% each)-** At the end of each unit, you will complete a page response paper responding to the readings in that unit. Because these are unit response papers, I expect these response papers will be thought-out, critical, carefully written, and will reflect an understanding of texts read throughout the unit. **Due dates: Feb 21, March 28, and April 25, always in hard copy at the beginning of class.**

There are specific guidelines for each unit:

Unit 1: In the vein of a traditional “Literacy Narrative,” write an Education Narrative reflecting on your experiences as a student (at any level) using the texts from Unit 1 as a lens to examine those experiences. When I say “using texts from Unit 1 as a lens,” I mean that I expect you to analyze your experiences and cite the critical texts from this unit. This unit response paper, then, will be part narrative/personal experience and part theoretical analysis of that experience. (5-7 pages) **Due February 21 at the beginning of class—hard copy.**

Unit 2: In Unit 1, we built a foundation for better understanding Critical Pedagogy. Unit two complicates this foundation with specific, theoretically driven pedagogical approaches. In this response paper, focus on an issue or theme from this section and take a position on that issue or theme. You may use this paper to try out ideas for your final paper, identify arguments you see missing from the discussion, etc. Like the Unit 1 response paper, I expect quotation from the text and representation from texts throughout the unit—not just one text. Also, be sure that this text shows you are developing a knowledge base that begins with the foundation of Unit 1. (4-5 pages) **Due March 28 at the beginning of class- hard copy**

Unit 3: Do the texts in this unit contribute to the discipline known as Critical Pedagogy? How or why /why not? This response paper asks you to link/compare/contrast the Unit 3 texts with the foundation set by the texts in Unit 1. (4-5 pages) **Due April 25 at the beginning of class- hard copy.**

**In-class discussion (20% of final grade)-** Since this is a graduate seminar, I expect graduate students to engage in class discussion each week and come prepared to discuss texts. Being

“prepared” means that students complete all assigned reading, clarify questions (like terminology, for example) whenever possible, and come prepared with questions, arguments, and ideas concerning the texts. Of course, you can only earn in-class discussion credit when you attend class regularly and participate in discussion.

**Presentation (20% of final grade)**- Each of you will present on a book, theoretical position, or theorist not formally assigned to the rest of the class. Given the size of this class, you will work in groups of 2 (or maybe 3). It will be up to you and the other member(s) of your group to determine how to divvy up the work, but I expect to see all members of the group contribute to the actual presentation; in other words, everyone has to talk.

There are nine presentation topics:

Augusto Boal, especially *Theatre of the Oppressed*  
John Dewey, especially *Democracy and Education*  
Ivan Illich and Deschooling Movement  
Derrick Bell and Critical Race Theory  
Critical Media Literacy/ Pedagogy for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century  
Sexuality and Schooling  
Critics of Feminist Pedagogy  
Ecological Critique of Critical Pedagogy and Ecopedagogy  
Diane Ravitch, especially *Death and Life of the Great American School System*

For this presentation, you are to assume that your classmates have not read your assigned text or concept. In your presentation (which must not be simply read to your classmates and should include a visual and/or interactive element) you will:

- Briefly summarize the main arguments of the text(s)/theory/theorists (BRIEFLY—notice that this assignment is not titled “book report”)
- Contextualize the text(s)/theory/theorists within the other texts for the class
- Talk about the ways in which the text(s)/theory/theorists connect to the text the class read for that class period
- ...and texts that we have already read this semester
- Emphasize the “take away” from the text(s)/theory/theorists or show how the argument(s) and/or findings could be used to help understand and/or approach problems in education or...
- ...how the text could be used as a lens to analyze a problem
- when possible, show how the theories and/or arguments in the text might connect to a current or recent issue in education (in the news, for example)

In other words, you are expanding your classmates’ knowledge of critical pedagogy by teaching them about these scholars/texts/theories/theorists in a way that they can apply these ideas to their final projects or future endeavors. **Due on date you select at beginning of semester.**

**Final paper (25% of final grade)**- This paper should be 18 to 20 pages long (with standard font & margin size) and represent the culmination of your work in this class. This paper should illustrate that you have achieved the learning outcomes for this class, including ability to define and describe critical pedagogy, ability to write critically about texts written by critical pedagogical scholars, ability to analyze current problems in education using a critical pedagogical lens, and ability to demonstrate understanding of the history of critical pedagogy

and the scholarship that has followed. **This paper is due Monday, May 6 at noon.** You may choose to submit this paper electronically via eCollege (dropbox) or to me by hard copy. You may choose to write on the following topics or select another:

1. Identify and discuss a topic that would be considered appropriate for a scholarly journal similar to *The Harvard Educational Review*, *College English*, or other journals that have published articles about critical pedagogies.
2. Write a paper that arises from the work you have done this semester.
3. Analyze a current problem in education (not necessarily American education, though I realize this has been the focus of texts this semester) using a critical pedagogical approach to view that problem. As Ravitch argues in *The Death and Life of the Great American School System*, we should be skeptical of “pedagogical fads, enthusiasms, and movements.” I am not asking you to create one of these fads, enthusiasms, or movements. Rather, I want you to use the texts (and potentially others when appropriate) as a lens to examine important problems in education.

### Grading Scale:

90-100	A
89-80	B
79-70	C
69-60	D
59 and below	F

### Technology Requirements

You will need access to the Internet and a printer.

All assignments, including Unit Reading Responses, Proposal, and Final Paper must be typed.

You may need access to library databases to conduct research for some assignments.

Class website can be found on eCollege.

### Communication and Support

The very best way to contact me is to send me an e-mail at [Tabetha.Adkins@tamuc.edu](mailto:Tabetha.Adkins@tamuc.edu)

I am also available for meeting during my office hours (listed at the beginning of the syllabus) and by appointment. My office is located at HL 229. Appointments scheduled through e-mail are appreciated.

I can be reached via telephone during my office hours. The number is 903.886.5269.

## Course Policies and Procedures

### Academic dishonesty/ Plagiarism:

Professors in the Department of Literature and Languages do not tolerate plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty. Instructors uphold and support the highest academic standards, and students are expected to do likewise. Penalties for students guilty of academic dishonesty include disciplinary probation, suspension, and expulsion. (Texas A&M University- Commerce Code of Student Conduct 5.b [1,2,3]).

I promise to *never* use turnitin.com or other proprietary tools like it because these programs make money off your work without compensating you. Here's how it works: A university pays turinit.com for its services (with your tuition dollars). Teachers place student papers in the program's "bank," and the program compares that paper with other papers existing in the bank. At that point, the student's paper becomes part of the bank. Therefore, turnitin.com and other tools are making money from this bank full of papers written by uncompensated students. For more information on this issue, see this article in the Chronicle of Higher Education: <http://chronicle.com/article/Plagiarism-Detection-Tool/29885>.

I also promise, however, that I take academic dishonesty very seriously. *If I catch a graduate student committing plagiarism, that student should expect to fail my course and be reported to the director their graduate program.* You're in graduate school, folks; no excuses.

### Grievance Procedure:

If you have concerns about the class or about me as an instructor, please speak to me about those concerns. If you are not satisfied with the outcome of our conversation, the next person in the chain of command is the Department Head of Literature and Languages, Dr. Hayes.

### Other course policies:

1. I do not accept late work.
2. You must turn in all assignments in order to pass the course.
3. Please be courteous to me and to your classmates; come to class on time. See attendance policy for more information.

## University Procedures

### *ADA Statement*

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact:

Office of Student Disability Resources and  
Services  
Texas A&M University-Commerce

Gee Library 132  
Phone (903) 886-5150 or (903) 886-5835  
Fax (903) 468-8148

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*Student Conduct*

All students enrolled at the University shall follow the tenets of common decency and acceptable behavior conducive to a positive learning environment. (See *Code of Student Conduct from Student Guide Handbook*).

## Course Calendar

This schedule may be adjusted to accommodate for student learning needs.

Class Meeting Date	Be Prepared to Discuss:
W1 Jan. 17	<b>Begin unit one- Critical Pedagogy: Definitions, Beginnings, and Foundations</b>
W2 Jan. 24	Giroux (except Chapters 3 & 8)
W3 Jan. 31	Freire (Introduction and chapters 1 & 2) Giroux Chapter 8
W4 Feb. 7	Freire (chapters 3 & 4) Hooks (chapter 4)  Presentation: Augusto Boal (especially <i>Theatre of the Oppressed</i> )
W5 Feb. 14	Shor, <i>Empowering Education</i> chapters 1-4  Presentation: John Dewey (especially <i>Democracy and Education</i> )
W6 Feb. 21	Shor, <i>Empowering Education</i> - chapters 5-end  Presentation: Ivan Illich and the Deschooling Movement  <b>Unit 1 response paper due in class (hard copy)</b>
W7 Feb. 28	<b>Unit 2- Race, Gender, and Pedagogy</b> Dubois, <i>The Souls of Black Folk</i>  Presentation: Derrick Bell & critical race theory
W8 March 7	Delpit, <i>Other People's Children</i>  Presentation: Critical Media Literacy/ Pedagogy for the 21 <sup>st</sup> Century
April 11-15 Spring Break	

W9 March 21	hooks, <i>Teaching to Transgress</i> (except chapter 4)  Presentation: Sexuality and Schooling
W10 March 28	Crabtree, et.al. <i>Feminist Pedagogy</i> Introduction, Part I, and chapter 8  Presentation: critics of Feminist Pedagogy  <b>Unit 2 response paper due in class (hard copy)</b>
W11 April 4	<b>Unit 3- Pedagogy and the Problems of Education Today</b> Miller, <i>Writing at the End of the World</i> , chapters 1-4  Presentation: Ecological Critique of CP and Ecopedagogy
W12 April 11	Miller, <i>Writing at the End of the World</i> , chapters 5-end  <b>Final paper proposals due in class.</b>
W13 April 18	Kozol, <i>The Shame of the Nation</i>  Presentation: Diane Ravitch
W14 April 25	Rose, <i>Why School?</i>  <b>Unit 3 response paper due in class (hard copy)</b>
W15 April 2	Share final projects
	No final exam for this class. <b>Final papers due Monday, May 6 at noon.</b>