HUEC 4382: Critical Issues in Early Childhood Education
Fall 2011
Friday 8:40-11:30 a.m.

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Office Hours: Friday before and after class or by appointment;
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Course Description
The course catalog lists the course description as: "Historical and contemporary perspectives on developmental, sociocultural, and pedagogical issues in early childhood education." The purpose of the course is to help candidates closely evaluate critical issues in early childhood education and will focus on issues related to diversity, students characteristics, assessment, developmentally appropriate practices and models of early childhood education.

This course is a **communication intensive** and **service learning** course.

As a **Communication Intensive** course, students will focus on the development of written and oral communication skills as they display their expanding knowledge of critical issues. This is a certified Communication-Intensive (C-I) course which meets all of the requirements set forth by LSU's Communication across the Curriculum program, including

1. instruction and assignments emphasizing informal and formal [mode 1] and [mode 2];
2. teaching of discipline-specific communication techniques;
3. use of draft-feedback-revision process for learning;
4. practice of ethical and professional work standards;
5. 40% of the course grade rooted in communication-based work; and
6. a student/faculty ratio no greater than 35:1.

Students interested in pursuing the LSU Distinguished Communicators certification may use this C-I course for credit. For more information about this student recognition program, visit www.cxc.lsu.edu.

Service-Learning is defined as: "…a course-based, credit-bearing educational experience in which students (a) participate in an organized service activity that meets identified community needs and (b) reflect on the service activity in such a way as to gain further understanding of course content, a broader appreciation of the discipline, and an enhanced sense of civic responsibility" (from Bringle & Hatcher, 1995).

In order to accomplish this learning, students will participate in a service activity that will involve working with **Grandparents Raising Grandchildren** (GRG). Students will partner with this agency, learning about and extending its mission through the development of a comprehensive agency database. Students will work in groups to locate GRG organizations and

other national organizations that can inform the state GRG program about national best practices. Students will work in pairs to develop a database of contact information about existing agencies and develop a wiki of information about best practices that can inform the GRG program in Baton Rouge. Information about Grandparents Raising Grandchildren can be located at http://www.lagrg.org/Home.htm.

The experience will expose students to current initiatives nationwide that address issues related to young children and their families. Students will learn about agency mission statements, current areas of advocacy and existing supports for families. This information will assist students as they investigate contemporary issues in an effort to identify an advocacy issue for their advocacy project to be completed in the spring semester.

Course Objectives
At the close of the course, successful students will be able to:
1. Present conflicting perspectives on historical and contemporary issues in early childhood education
2. Explain the culture of the discipline/content area
3. Relate educational content and practice to individuals' identities associated with class, race, gender, abilities and social institutions.
4. Consider the multicultural character of the educational clientele and means of negotiating cultural differences.
5. Develop and implement skills to work effectively with the community partner. The student will learn to apply critical thinking and knowledge to understand the significance of communicating with families and individuals in diverse settings. In addition, students will use these skills to identify critical needs/issues and potential solutions.

Textbook and Readings
Goffin, S. & Washington, V. (2007). Ready or Not: Leadership choices in early care and education, Teachers College Press: NY.

Recommended
Kieff, J. (2009). Informed Advocacy in Early Childhood Care and Education. Pearson.

Morgan, Henry (2011). Early Childhood Education: History, Theory and Practice, Second edition

**Students will also need a blank spiral notebook for class.

Email
Email is a convenient and efficient method of communication and the best way to get in touch with me. Please respect a policy requiring 24 hours for a response (during the work week- not weekends). Do not email papers or other assignments without prior permission. **When emailing, please put course number and words that convey your question/issue in the subject heading (e.g., "HUEC4382.case study project question")**
Course Requirements

Written Assignments

All written assignments (except those completed in class) are to be turned in at the beginning of the class period on the date that they are due. Assignments are to be typed (10-12 point font) and submitted in the neatest possible condition. APA citation style should be used for all references. Please take care to use a variety of academic references. Grammar and spelling errors distract the readers and minimize the effectiveness of the message in your papers. Attention will be paid to such errors and may result in a lower grade. Late work (without prior notice) will not be eligible for full credit. Written assignments should **NOT** be emailed to the instructor without prior permission.

Oral Assignments

Throughout the semester you will complete several oral assignments. Both formal and informal speaking skills will be practiced throughout the semester. When speaking to an audience, presenters should engage in appropriate and professional actions, including professional dress, thorough preparation, and respectful communication.

Service Learning

Students are expected to engage in service learning activities. In small groups students will research and develop a list of GRG organizations. As a class we will work to develop a database of these organizations and a list of identified best practices.

Online projects

Some work will be completed on the moodle website and the development of a wiki. Students are expected to uphold the student conduct when posting items and comments to the class web page.

Getting Early Feedback

You are welcome to turn in any drafts of papers/projects prior to the due date to receive some feedback from me. This is most helpful if you give it/email it to me 10-14 days prior to the due date. Doing so will allow me time to really consider your work and give you feedback that you can use. When submitting drafts for feedback, please attach a page with the following: **(a)What you feel the strengths are the paper so far (b)What you are concerned about (be specific)**. If you are planning to submit a draft, please let me know when to expect it.

Student Participation with Class and the Community Partner:

Students are expected to participate in all aspects of the class, both within the University classroom setting and with the community partner setting**.** Regular attendance and participation in class discussions are essential for successful completion of this course. In order to participate, you must:

1. Read all assigned readings before coming to class.
2. Moments before each class begins, reflect on the readings and be prepared with a few comments or questions.
3. Participate in discussion and in-class activities and the GRG Database Project.

Assessment
Final grades for the course will be based on the points accumulated on all papers, projects and final exam. Grades will be assigned according to the following grading scale:

93-100%	A
85-92%	B
77-84%	C
69-76%	D
Below 69%	Fail

Course grades will be based on the following criteria:

Papers/Projects/Final	Points
Critiques (2 @ 75points each)	150
Critical Thinking Journal (CTJ)	050
Critical Thinking Minute	025
Issues Wiki project	025
Issues Speech	075
GRG Database Project	050
Final Exam	125
TOTAL	**500**

Critiques:
This semester you will be learning more about applying critical thinking to issues in the field of early childhood education. You will be preparing, writing, editing and revising critiques of various kinds of issues. A critique will address the following: the significance of the issue described, the rigor of authors' approach, the logic of author's reasoning, new knowledge or suggestions contributed, relevance of discussion to practice and policy and the quality of the presentation and writing. Critique papers will be assessed using the "*Critique Rubric*" (attached) and the *CxC Writing Rubric* (attached).

Critical Thinking Journal:
Excellent teachers engage in reflection and critical thinking. This means that they not only think about what they do, what they hear and read, but they synthesize, analyze and evaluate all of this information in order to change their practice. To practice these skills, students will keep a "critical thinking journal" (CTJ). The CTJ will be kept in a spiral notebook. If students regularly bring a laptop to class, the CTJ can be digital. This is not a journal that simply records observations or feelings. It isn't a diary. It involves the critical analysis of information about education, experiences and the application of professional knowledge to your experiences in order to improve your practices and interactions. During each class period, you will be asked to complete an entry in your CTJ based on either a reading, class discussion or other experience. While most entries will be completed during class, some will be assigned for completion outside of class time. It is expected that students will have at least 10 entries by the end of the semester. The CTJs will be assessed using the "*Critical Thinking Journal Rubric*" (see attached). This journal is a great way to showcase your critical thinking skills.

Critical Thinking Minute:
Students will prepare a minute speech based on one of their critical thinking responses in their journals. Time will be provided at the beginning of each class period for 2-3 students to present. Students are expected to present at least one Critical Thinking Minute (CTM) by the end of the semester, but are welcome, and encouraged, to share more with the class. Students will receive feedback on their oral communication skills after the CTM using the *CxC Oral Communication Rubric*.

Issues Wiki Project:
This project involves three major steps: (1) identifying 3 issues, (2) developing the presentation of a single issue and (3) commenting on other students' entries.
Step #1: Students will be expected to post at least 3 contemporary issues in early childhood education on the class wiki. These issues can be brief (i.e., low pay for childcare workers).
Step #2: In addition to identifying at least 3 issues and posting them, students must "develop" one issue. This issue can be from their own original list, or a student may choose to develop an issue another student identified. Developing an issue means to provide additional information about that issue. Students should address the following points:
(a)Provide context for the issue (i.e., childcare is private enterprise, paid by parents, sometimes employers….), (b) provide information about different points of view on the issue (cost to parent is still high even though pay to providers is low), (c) identify the stakeholders (private childcare owners, childcare providers, parents, etc…), (d) identify current initiatives to address the issue (Fair Pay Initiatives) and (e) identify existing resources (Compensation position statement by NAEYC).
Step #3: Finally students must comment on at least 3 developed issues. The comments can provide additional resources, comment on a statement or suggest an additional point of view.

Issues Speech:
Students will choose an issue from the class wiki and prepare a brief speech campaigning for attention to be given to the issue. The speech should include talking points and a structure that will provided in class. Speeches will be evaluated using the *CxC Oral Communication Rubric*.

GRG Database Project:
Students will contribute to a GRG Database Project. This will be completed on a second wiki. As a class we are working to develop a database of organizations that support grandparents raising grandchildren. Students will each be assigned 2 target states in addition to searching for national organizations. For each organization we need to find the following: (1) name of organization (2) contact information (3) website (4) mission statement (5) activities/ resources it may provide (6) resources specifically related to grandparents raising grandchildren. Students may work in groups, but each students' individual contributions will be evaluated.

Final Exam:
An in-class final exam will be administered on December 7, 1-3pm. Students will be asked to respond to essay questions that will require the use of critical thinking and writing skills developed across the semester.

A note about academic misconduct

Read carefully the sections on premeditated and unpremeditated academic misconduct in the Code of Student Conduct (pp. 2-3) and in the Student Handbook (pp. 3-4). In addition to the specified offenses, be aware falsifying one of the written journal or online entries constitutes an act of premeditated academic misconduct.

If you have knowledge or a suspicion that another student has falsified a journal/project, you have an ethical and moral obligation to intervene. I expect you to take the following steps in the following order:

First: Tell the other student of your suspicions. *Give the student the opportunity to come to me on their own.*

Second: If the student will not come to me on their own, I expect you to tell me of your suspicions and to give me the student's name.

Some students will be able to explain convincingly that a misunderstanding happened. That will be the end of that. Please note that the professor and student may not come to an informal agreement about the student's grade when there is the suspicion of misconduct. If a suspicion remains and the student refuses to redo their work, I am required by LSU to turn the matter over to the Dean of Students. I may not assign a "0" for the work and then calculate a letter grade for the course. (I may assign a "0" if the work is not done to start with, but not if a student originally claims to have done it.)

4382 Fall 2011 Tentative Course Outline

Week	Class	Topic	Reading	Assignments due
1	8/22	Introduction		
1	8/26	No Class	Find a news articles on an issue involving early childhood	
2*	9/2	What is critical thinking? What are critical issues? GRG representative presentation	Ready or Not: Introduction	Bring a news article on an issue involving early childhood
3*	9/9	Critical thinking about critical issues	Ready or Not Chapter 1	CTM opportunity
4*	9/16	Contemporary Critical issues in ECE; In Class Critique Activity	Ready or Not Chapter 2 Taking Sides reading	CTM opportunity
5*	9/23	Necessary Choices Database Project introduction	Ready or Not Chapter 3	CTM opportunity **Critique #1 draft due Issues Wiki project due 9/19**
6*	9/30	Leading by Changing/ Talking points overview	Ready or Not Chapter 4	CTM opportunity **Critique #1 due**
7*	10/7	Lessons from the past	Review: Ready or Not Appendix A	CTM opportunity **Speech draft due**
8	10/14	No Class- Fall break		
9*	10/21	Advocacy Issues in Film	Read NAEYC Advocacy Toolkit: http://www.naeyc.org/policy/toolbox/pdf/toolkit.pdf; Ready or Not Appendices B & C	CTM opportunity **Critique #1 revision due**
10*	10/28	Critical thinking about critical issues, part 2	TBA	CTM opportunity Database project check-in **Campaign Speech due**
11	11/4	No class- database project		
12	11/11	No class- database project		
13*	11/18	The Ethics of Creating Change	NAEYC Code of Ethics http://www.naeyc.org/positionstatements/ethical_conduct	CTM opportunity Database project check-in **Critique #2 due**
14	11/25	No class- Thanksgiving		**Database Project due 11/28**
15	12/2	No Class- ATM begin		**CTJ and ALL Critique Revisions due**
FINAL	12/7 1-3pm	FINAL Exam		

* Designates a CTJ entry opportunity offered in class