

Alternative Education: Motown, Media and Technology

Albion College – Course LA 101.16 – Fall 2011
Meeting Times: M, W & F– 9:15 AM to 10:20; F -- 1:00 PM to 2:05

Meeting Place: Ferguson 111 (M, W, & F) & Olin 234 (F)

SYLLABUS

Instructor: Guy Cox

Office: Olin Hall Room 225

Office Phone: (517) 629-0742
Education Office: (517) 629-0588
Email: gcox@albion.edu

Office Hours: or by appt.

Student Mentor: Morgan Len

Course Description

Students will explore alternative theories and approaches to traditional forms of education. The course will feature fieldwork in and around Michigan to observe firsthand these approaches and the issues raised by technology and media in today's classrooms. Students will investigate pre-conceptions and perspectives of schooling through its depiction in various forms of media and examine how both media and technology are used in schools today. The findings and conclusions from the fieldwork and research investigations will then be used as a lens with which to view the current possibilities for such alternatives in Albion and the surrounding area. In addition to education sources, students will read from interdisciplinary sources in the fields of cultural studies, history, geography, policy, anthropology, and sociology. Field experiences will include trips to alternative schools throughout Michigan. Students will analyze and synthesize

these experiences through writing assignments and multimedia projects, with the goal of presenting their research to the Albion community.

Course Objectives

1. The student will be able to:
 - a. identify and compare various definitions/types of alternative education
 - b. identify and discuss theories relevant to alternative education
 - c. analyze and assess educational policy decisions impact on alternative education
 - d. discuss the history of alternative education
2. The student will be able to:
 - a. examine the practical application of theory in the alternative education classroom
 - b. identify and discuss individual, family, school and community conditions for children and youth related to alternative education approaches
 - c. analyze and compare the alignment of alternative education approaches with the local school and community context
3. The student will be able to:
 - a. compare best practices in alternative education programs
 - b. examine characteristics of effective alternative education programs
 - c. identify model programs in alternative education
 - d. develop recommendations for alternative programs

Accomplishing these objectives will allow the student to develop the following skills:

- interpersonal/communication
- problem solving
- decision making
- teamwork

Course Texts

Most readings will consist of journal articles or book excerpts. These will be distributed to the class.

Recommended: Hacker, Diana and Sommers, Nancy. *The Bedford Handbook* (8th edition). Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's. 2010.

Recommended: Skloot, Rebecca. *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks*. New York: Broadway Paperbacks. 2010/11.

Additional Media

You will also be responsible for additional readings and films that are assigned in the class (these may be read or shown in class as well).

Course Requirements:

1. The major assignment for this class is a group inquiry project that will culminate in a final research paper and multimedia product. During the course you will produce intermediate drafts that lead to the final product. This will be worth 50% of the course grade. Intermediate products include:
 - a. A project proposal that presents the research question, significance of question, and describes the final product.
 - b. A proposed bibliography for the project.
 - c. An outline, script, or storyboard for the final product.
 - d. Rough draft.
 - e. The final product
2. Occasionally weekly written assignments (in or out of class) on articles, films, books discussed in class. Assignments may include a two-minute lesson plan, guerrilla teaching and articles database (10% of course grade)
3. Paper - Using resources read and discussed in class, plus other research resources, explore your personal educational philosophy with particular regard to the goals of education. (10% of course grade)
4. Field experience observations and notes—students will record their observations and notes for every field experience in a notebook (10% of course grade)
5. Presentation of final product and final exam (20% of course grade)
6. Class participation – participation in class discussions and the dialogue about teaching and learning are not graded; **it is expected**. Not participating will result in lower grades.

Grading Procedures:

- 4 - Represents work outstanding in quality. The student not only shows unusual mastery of the required work for the course, but also has independently sought out and used additional related materials, demonstrating the ability to discover new data, to develop new insights and to bring them to bear on the work at hand
- 3 - Represents work which is higher in quality than that of a 2.0, or more than satisfactory. The student has shown the ability and the initiative to fulfill more than basic requirements of the course
- 2 - Represents work which fulfills all of the basic requirements for the course. It means that the student has a grasp of the material and techniques or skills sufficient to proceed with more advanced courses in the area.

- 1 - Represents work seriously attempted but which is below the 2.0 level in quantity and quality. The student is advised not to continue advanced work in the field.
- 0 - Represents work unsatisfactory in either quantity or quality. It results in the student's not being able to continue with further work in the field and results in no credit, although it is recorded on the permanent record.

A = 4 96 - 100% B+ = 3.3 87 - 89% C+ = 2.3 77 - 79 % D+ = 1.3 67 - 69%
 A- = 3.7 90 - 95.5% B = 3.0 84 - 86% C = 2.0 74 - 76% D = 1.0 64 - 66%
 B- = 2.7 80 - 83% C- = 1.7 70 - 73% D- = .7 60 - 63%

Students will evaluate themselves at the midterm and final. Self-evaluations will be considered in the co-instructors' grading decisions at the midterm, and group evaluations will be considered at the final.

Course Outline

This is tentative guide to how the course will proceed. It seemed appropriate to teach a course about alternative education in an alternative manner, therefore this class is structured more as a purpose-driven research project than a traditional lecture and reading class. As we work through the content and activities the dates may change. Observation and data collection visits to various schools and educational establishments will be scheduled during the first half of the semester.

Introduction & Exploration

We will begin with an introduction to the course, expectations, and review of the syllabus. As a class we will also begin making the distinctions that will transform the “unmarked” space of education into a “marked” space that will allow us to designate different forms of education. The first assignment will be the “articles” activity which will enable the class to work together to survey the literature in the area. Also, Saturday, August 27 there will be an Albion Public School "Back to School" event at the High School from 10-noon.

Week 1 – Monday, August 22; Wednesday, August 24 & Friday, August 26

Reading: Dewey, “The School and Life of the Child,” chapter 2 from *The School and Society*, 1900; Arnstine, “Democracy and Education,” chapter 2 from *Democracy and the Arts of Schooling*, 1995.]

Saturday, August 27: Back to School Event, Albion High School, 10-noon

Week 2 – Monday, August 29; Wednesday, August 31 & Friday, September 2

Guest(?): Allie Moore, Librarian;

Reading: Neill, "A Note about the Title," from *Neill! Neill! Orange Peel!*, 1972.; Rathunde, "Montessori and Embodied Education," *Alternative Education for the 21st Century*, 2009.

Assignment: Articles database, (5 articles due Sept 12)

Week 3 – Monday, September 5 (Labor Day, College Closed); Wednesday, September 7 & Friday, September 9 [

Reading: O'Hair, Williams, Wilson, and Applegate, The *K20 Model for Systemic Educational Change and Sustainability*: "Addressing Social Justice in Rural Schools and Implications for Educators in All Contexts," *Alternative Education for the 21st Century*, 2009. Shlaes, "When Progressiveness Leads to Backwardness," *Hoover Digest*, 2001, No. 1.

Foundations of Alternative Education, the Albion Community & Research Proposals

In this section of the course we will continue to explore some of the theoretical and philosophical foundations of alternative education. We will also hope to go into the "field" and may bring in some outside speakers as well. By the end of week six you and your research group will have completed your project proposal. Field experiences in Albion are planned during this period.

Week 4: Monday, September 12 (CRE Speaker, Michael Rogers, 7:30 pm, Goodrich Chapel); Wednesday, September 14 & Friday, September 16

Reading: Ito, "New Media and Its Superpowers: Learning, Post Pokemon," a talk for the National Association of Independent Schools, 2010.

Assignment: Philosophy of Education paper (due Sept 23)

Week 5: Monday, September 19; Wednesday, September 21 & Friday, September 23

Reading: TBD

Assignment: Initiate project (Proposal due Sep. 30)

Week 6: Monday, September 26; Wednesday, September 28 & Friday, September 30

Reading: TBD

The Research Project

During this section of the course you will carry out your group projects producing a bibliography, outline, and draft of your project. Field experiences may also be planned during this period.

Week 7: Monday, October 3; Wednesday, October 5 & Friday, October 7 (Due: Project proposal on Oct 7)

Reading TBD

Assignment: Project bibliography (due Oct. 14)

Week 8: Monday, October 10 (Fall Break, College Closed); Wednesday, October 12 & Friday, October 14

Reading: TBD

Assignment: Outline (due Oct. 21)

Week 9: Monday, October 17; Wednesday, October 19 & Friday, October 21

Reading: TBD

Assignment: Project rough draft (due Nov 4)

Week 10: Monday, October 24; Wednesday, October 26 & Friday, October 28

Reading: TBD

Completing Your Projects

This is the time to complete your projects and rehearse your presentations to present to the Education Department and guests.

Week 11: Monday, October 31; Wednesday, November 2 & Friday, November 4

Reading: TBD

Assignment: Final draft (due Dec 2)

Week 12: Monday, November 7; Wednesday, November 9 & Friday, November 11

Reading: TBD

Week 13: Monday, November 14; Wednesday, November 16 & Friday, November 18

Wrapping Up

This is the time to polish your group projects and discuss how alternative education adjusting to the 21st century. What are the new possibilities? Is it changing? How is alternative education responding to or integrating new technologies and media?

Week 14: Monday, November 22; **Wednesday, November 23 – No Classes & Friday, November 26 (Day after Thanksgiving, College Closed)**

Week 15: Monday, November 28; Wednesday, November 30 & Friday, December 2

Reading: TBD

Final Presentation

Week 16: Finals Week (Monday, December 5- Friday, December 9)

Final exam and celebration!

Disability Statement

If you have a disability and may require accommodations or modifications in class instruction or course-related activities, please contact the Learning Support Center (LSC) staff who can arrange for reasonable accommodations for students who provide documentation of their disability/condition. If you are presently registered with the LSC and have requested accommodations through the LSC for this semester, please plan to meet with me as early as possible to discuss the best way to implement these accommodations in this class. The LSC is located on the third floor of the Seeley Mudd library or call 517-629-0825.

Statement on Attendance

Regular attendance and participation in all classes is expected. Every absence from class is inevitably a loss—usually one which can never be made up. A student has the responsibility to inform his or her faculty member, whenever possible in advance, of an absence due to serious or prolonged illness, and verification of absences due to emergency reasons, may be obtained from the Office of Residential Life.

Statement on Academic Integrity

As an academic community, Albion College is firmly committed to honor and integrity in the pursuit of knowledge. Therefore, as a member of this academic community, each student

acknowledges responsibility for his or her actions and commits to the highest standards of integrity. In doing so, each student makes a covenant with the college not to engage in any form of academic dishonesty, fraud, cheating, or theft.

[http://www.albion.edu/handbook/academic_information.asp#General Guidelines for Academic Integrity and Responsibility](http://www.albion.edu/handbook/academic_information.asp#General_Guidelines_for_Academic_Integrity_and_Responsibility)

Academic Skills Center

THE ACADEMIC SKILLS CENTER, located in the Seeley Mudd Building of the Library, supports student success at Albion College through the Learning Support Center, the Quantitative Skills Center, and the Writing Center. The ASC also coordinates academic peer tutoring services and educational technologies for enhancing student learning. For information, visit the ASC website at <http://www.albion.edu/asc>.

- THE LEARNING SUPPORT CENTER offers individualized assistance with college-level study strategy and skill development. Students frequently utilize the center to improve grades, reading speed or comprehension. In addition, the Learning Support Center provides assistance and accommodations to students who have documented learning disabilities. For more information, contact Pam Schwartz, Learning Support Specialist, (x0825; pschwartz@albion.edu).
- THE QUANTITATIVE SKILLS CENTER provides a wide range of support to students in many subject areas. Students are free to drop in for occasional help from trained student tutors or to make appointments for on-going tutorial sessions. QSC staff members are available to assist you with the use of mathematics, statistics, spreadsheets, or graphing calculators in any course. The center also offers workshops on topics such as partial derivatives in chemistry and preparing for graduate school exams. For more information, contact the QSC Director, Karla McCavit, (x0824; kmccavit@albion.edu).
- THE WRITING CENTER provides trained peer consultants prepared to work with writers at every stage of the writing process--from getting started brainstorming to writing drafts, and from organizing ideas to revising or final editing. Writing consultants support students by responding to writing in process, not by proofreading, editing, or writing students' papers. Both drop-in tutoring and scheduled appointments are available during the Writing Center's afternoon and evening hours. For more information, contact the Writing Center (x0828; writing@albion.edu) or the Director, Scott Hendrix (shendrix@albion.edu).