

POSITIVE RESTLESSNESS: RECLAIMING LEARNING FOR DEMOCRACY

Fall quarter, 2008
CRN: 10261

Tuesday evenings, 6-10 pm, Sem II E-1107
4 credits

Faculty Team

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Knowledge emerges only through invention and re-invention, through the restless, impatient, continuing, hopeful inquiry human beings pursue in the world, with the world, and with each other.

~Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*

COURSE DESCRIPTION AND GUIDING QUESTIONS:

What is the purpose of education? What is worth understanding? What practices turn learning into schooling, and schooled experience into what Paulo Freire called the “restless, impatient, continuing, hopeful inquiry human beings pursue in the world, with the world, and each other”?

We will explore the foundational principles of progressive education through writers like John Dewey, W.E.B. Dubois, Myles Horton, bell hooks, Ira Shor, and others in the context of our own diverse educational histories. In addition, this course will address the learning needs of students making the transition from the requirements of a traditional system to Evergreen’s unique approach to learning.

REQUIRED READINGS:

- Dewey, John. 1997 (1938). *Experience and Education*. Touchstone: New York.
- Tatum, Beverly Daniel. 2008. *Can We Talk About Race? And Other Conversations in an Era of School Resegregation*. Houghton-Mifflin.

Additional readings will be handed out in class and posted on the *Positive Restlessness* learning community website. (See note on the class website on page 2 of this handout.)

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COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

- *Respectful, conscientious and courteous participation in course activities.*
- *Attendance at all class sessions.* Excellent attendance, arriving on time, and participating for the entire class are critical to your success and the awarding of full credit. With the exception of *extraordinary circumstances*, missed classes or portions of classes will result in a reduction of credit. It is your responsibility to initiate conversation with faculty before the absence if possible, or, as soon as possible after the absence.
- *Completed reading and writing assignments due on day of class.* Collaborative learning not only requires personal engagement and commitment, but also the timely contributions of class and group members.
- *Attendance at scheduled conferences with faculty.*
- *Well-organized and completed portfolio turned in on day due.*
- *Thoughtful completion of student self-evaluation, student evaluation of faculty, and course evaluations.*

FACULTY EXPECTATIONS:

Classes at Evergreen are designed to be *learning communities*. We will combine reading-based seminars, exploratory writing and seminar exercises, workshops, and other activities designed to develop the habits of mind and academic skills connected to making the most of an education at Evergreen. We will prepare a *class agenda* for each week’s class that will also be posted on the class website.

Our work together will be enriched by each person's contributions, and we assume that you will invest the time and energy to make this class a memorable learning experience for all. We expect course members to set aside 8 to 10 hours every week—outside of class—to do the necessary individual preparation that is the starting point for generative, transformative, collaborative work. Two handouts offer detailed guidelines for the work you will do between classes: “Weekly Preparation Schedule” and “On Reading and Writing Assignments.”

Expect to explore the course's guiding questions from classmates' multiple and divergent perspectives. Expect to learn how to become an attentive listener, especially when ideas challenge your beliefs. Expect to rethink even what you know to be true. Struggling with questions and challenging one's own conceptions are essential aspects of learning.

Note: Please let us know if the pace of the class or the workload poses serious problems for you.

INDIVIDUAL CONFERENCES WITH STUDENTS:

We will meet with individual students three times in the quarter:

- 1) checking-in conference between weeks 3-5
- 2) conference on draft of the Integrative Paper between Oct 28 and Nov 11
- 3) evaluation conference during weeks 10-11

POSITIVE RESTLESSNESS WEBSITE:

We have created a website for the class at <http://blogs.evergreen.edu/prestlessness>. On the *public* section of the site you will find the following menu: guiding questions; syllabus; faculty team (direct links to our email and contact information); weekly preparation schedule; and class agendas. If you click on “Positive Restlessness Learning Community” – and use the password “positiveTESC” – you will go to the *private* section of our site. This part of the site is “under construction.” Currently you will find PDFs of handouts and the means to exchange announcements with classmates.

FOR YOUR REFERENCE:

EVERGREEN'S WRITING CENTER

The Evergreen Writing Center's motto—“Because you have something to say” —describes what the people at this center do best; they work *with you*, serving as thoughtful readers of your work with the aim of making your writer's voice strong and clear. The Writing Center offers free one-to-one help from trained student tutors as well as a series of skill-based workshops on a variety of topics including APA citations, paraphrasing, and using sources. Support for writing your self-evaluation is also available from the Writing Center and through Academic Advising <http://www.evergreen.edu/advising/evaluations.htm>

EVERGREEN'S SOCIAL CONTRACT AND STUDENT CONDUCT CODE

These two documents are online at the Evergreen web site and are also included in *The Evergreen State College Student Advising Handout*. Later in the quarter we will examine the origins and current status of the “Social Contract,” a revered Evergreen document.

CAMPUS SMOKING POLICY:

Evergreen is a smoke-free campus, excluding the several designated smoking areas. If you do smoke, please use the designated areas. There are three close to our classroom.