

**University of Alberta
Faculty of Education
Department of Educational Policy Studies**

**EDPS 401-B3: Sexuality, Gender, and Culture in Education
MWF 11:00-11:50am
ECHA 2-420**

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Faculty of Education Equity Statement

The Faculty of Education is committed to providing an environment of equality and respect for all people within the University community, and to educating faculty, staff, and students in developing teaching and learning contexts that are welcoming to all.

Course Description

Purpose: This course explores, in theory and practice, contemporary issues related to sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression in K-12 schools. It draws upon critical scholarship to explore issues related to the construction and regulation of teacher and student identities, school leadership, bullying, violence, and discrimination. We further consider the implications of policy and other targeted educational interventions to help create safe, caring, and respectful teaching and learning environments.

NOTE: Community Service Learning (CSL) is an integral and required component of this course. CSL is a program at the University of Alberta that provides students with an opportunity to integrate classroom learning with volunteer placements in the Edmonton area.

**The CSL component for this course requires a minimum 20 hour commitment outside of scheduled class time and a reflective paper and group presentation will be part of the course assessment. For more information on CSL, please visit:
<http://www.csl.ualberta.ca>.

Course Objectives

(1) To introduce critical contemporary and historical perspectives used in the analysis and understanding of K-12 education and broader culture in relation to sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression.

(2) To develop a better understanding of the lived realities of sexual and gender minority (LGBTQ) students and teachers and the implications for developing an inclusive teaching and learning practice.

(3) To deepen your understanding of the theoretical, policy, curricular, and legal frameworks, which support the inclusion of sexual orientation and gender identity in K-12 education.

(4) To develop knowledge of a range of professional strategies, teaching resources, educational research, and community-based services to support the creation of safe, caring, and respectful learning and teaching environments for sexual and gender minorities and allies.

(5) To help you prepare to make professional and ethical judgments in your developing teaching practice.

Course Pedagogy

This course will investigate these central course objectives using a variety of pedagogical approaches including class discussions, collaborative learning activities, community service learning placements, case studies, video and online materials, guest presentations, and narrative inquiry. It is essential that you demonstrate (1) your individual commitment to the course, and (2) your responsibility to your class colleagues and community partners in this collaborative learning venture. There are three primary ways to achieve these key objectives. First, critically read and analyze the required reading material before each class. This is absolutely necessary in order to participate in class as an active and participatory learner who is able to deliberate the issues at hand. Second, attend all classes and participate fully in individual, group learning, and community-based activities. Third, work reflectively and analytically to produce quality assignments.

Course Process

Since this course deals with content and discussions that some may deem as contentious issues, class discussions and guest presentations may engender strong opinions and debate. Students are expected to act as junior professionals and support one another in this class endeavor by respectfully sharing their views and listening to the views of others in discussion groups and presentations. Students should also be respectful of a person's preferred name and pronouns and use them accordingly. Misidentifying or misgendering a person is unacceptable behaviour. Preservice teachers should also be mindful of and model the [Alberta Teachers' Association's Code of Professional Conduct](#).

Community Service Learning Component

During the first or second week of class you will be REQUIRED to apply for a placement in a community agency or school to undertake a project that is related to the overall themes of this course. The required commitment is a minimum of 20 hours over the term. You will also be required to participate in and reflect upon [University of Alberta Pride Week](#) activities and the [Inside/OUT Speakers' Series](#) as components of this course. These requirements will be reflected in your course assignments and grading.

Required Learning Resources

Meyer, E. J. (2010). *Gender and sexual diversity in schools*. New York: Springer.

This text is available at the University of Alberta Bookstore or you can purchase an e-book directly from the publisher:

<http://www.springer.com/education+%26+language/book/978-90-481-8558-0?otherVersion=978-94-007-0487-9>

Library Resources

University of Alberta Library Guide: LGBTQ Issues in Education

<http://guides.library.ualberta.ca/lgbtq>

Journal of LGBT Youth

<http://www.tandfonline.com/loi/wjly20#.VKhmmYrF-yw>

Supplementary Resources

- Blount, J. M. (2005). *Fit to teach: Same-sex desire, gender, and school work in the twentieth century*. New York: State University of New York Press.
- DePalma, R., & Atkinson, E. (Eds.). (2009). *Interrogating heteronormativity in primary schools: The No Outsiders Project*. Stoke On Trent, UK: Trentham Books.
- Fisher, E. S., & Kennedy, K. S. (2012). *Responsive school practices to support lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and questioning students and families*. New York: Routledge.
- Killoran, I., & Pendleton Jimenez, K. (Eds.). (2007). "Unleashing the unpopular:" *Talking about sexual orientation and gender diversity in education*. Olney, MD: Association for Childhood Education International.
- Jennings, K. (Ed.). (2005). *One teacher in 10: LGBT educators share their stories (2nd Edition)*. Los Angeles: Alyson Books.
- Jennings, K. (Ed.). (1998). *Telling tales out of school: Gays, lesbians, and bisexuals revisit their school days*. Los Angeles: Alyson Books.
- Jones, T. (2015). *Policy and gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, and intersex students*. New York: Springer.
- McNinch, J., & Cronin, M. (Eds.). (2004). *I could not speak my heart: Education and social justice for gay and lesbian youth*. Regina, SK: University of Regina Press.
- Meiners, E. R., & Quinn, T. (Eds.). (2012). *Sexualities in education: A reader*. New York: Peter Lang.

- Meyer, E. J., & Pullen-Sansfacon, A. (Eds.). (2014). *Supporting transgender and gender creative youth: Schools, families, and communities in action*. New York: Peter Lang.
- Meyer, E. J., & Carlson, D. (Eds.). (2014). *Gender and sexualities in education: A reader*. New York: Peter Lang.
- Sensoy, O., & DiAngelo, R. (2012). *Is everyone really equal? An introduction to key concepts in social justice education*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Short, D. (2013). *“Don’t be so Gay!”: Queers, bullying and making schools safe*. Vancouver, BC: UBC Press.
- Walton, G. (Ed.). (2014). *The gay agenda: Claiming space, identity, and justice*. New York: Peter Lang.
- Wells, K., Roberts, G., & Allan, C. (2012). *Supporting transgender and transsexual students in K-12 schools: A guide for educators*. Ottawa: ON: Canadian Teachers’ Federation.

Course Requirements and Evaluation

Student evaluation will be based upon the following assignments/exams:

CSL Reflection Paper	20% Due: March 9
Seminar & Event Participation Self-Assessment	20% Due: March 23
CSL Group Presentations	20% Due: April 1 to 8
Final Essay	40% Due: April 10

* All assignments must be submitted on the due date. I will deduct 5% per day from late assignments. Any exceptions must be discussed with me and approved in advance.

** Please note: There is no midterm or final exam for this course.

1. CSL Placement and Reflection Paper 20%

To complete this assignment, students must participate in a CSL project. It is expected that students will spend at least 20 hours engaged in volunteering or advocacy associated with their project. NOTE: Failure to complete your required project hours may result in failure of this course component.

To complete this course component, you will need to:

- Review the CSL placement list and select your top 3 placements of interest.
- When choosing a placement, consider your interest in the organization, whether you want a set schedule or flexible hours (as well as your travel/distance, availability and/or flexibility in relation to placement activities), what skills you can offer or want to develop, whether you want to work alone or in a group, etc.
- Remember, you are making a commitment to an organization and need to carry through on that commitment. Please refer to the [CSL Student Webpage & Guidebook](#).

- You must email your top 3 choice placement choices by **9am on Friday, January 16**. Unfortunately, given our class size, we cannot guarantee placement choices. However, we will do our best to accommodate your preferences.
- You will be notified of your CSL placement by email. You should then contact your placement supervisor by **Friday, January 23**.
- Depending on your placement, you may also need to complete a **police and youth intervention check (before Wednesday, January 21)**. All students will need to complete and sign a **CSL Student Agreement Form**, which must be submitted no later than Monday, January 26.

Your CSL Reflection Paper (20%) will involve a 750 word written reflection on your project, which is due on **Monday, March 9**.

Written Reflection: In the first part of your reflection (250 words maximum), please describe your CSL experience to date (brief background on organization, your activities, your relationships). In the second part, please address the following questions: (1) How do you relate your CSL placement to course materials, class conversations, and theories discussed? (2) In what ways has your learning in your CSL placement confirmed or challenged a particular theoretical position? (3) How has your personal view of the “way the world works” changed (why or why not)?

2. Seminar and Event Participation Self-Assessment 20%

This grade will be based on classroom seminar and event participation, including attendance. The goal is respectful and insightful contributions about course content, reflection on lived experience and campus events/culture, and encouragement of regular class attendance. To achieve this goal you will be required to fully participate in class discussions and attend at a combination of at least 4 Pride Week events, Inside/OUT Speakers’ Series presentations, or other approved campus talks or events. Students will be asked to submit a 750 word self-assessment (see criteria below) on class participation and critical reflection on events attended, which will be considered in assigning the grade.

Self-Assessment Rubric

Excellent (A range: 17-20): Complete all pre-class readings, attend all classes, participate in at least 4 campus events, and constructively contribute to almost every class discussion, and listen actively. Offers questions and comments that generate discussion. Know readings very well, including some of the more difficult or optional ones, and reflects on the issues they raise. Make strong connections between readings and school and/or CSL placement situations. All assignments are submitted on time.

Good to Very Good (B range: 14-16): Same as “excellent” but with less consistency.

Average (C range: 12-13): Speaks up regularly, but mainly offers points from readings without own critical insights. Generally demonstrates knowledge and

comprehension of concepts, but doesn't connect concepts to personal or school-based experiences. Less than regular attendance, did not attend at least 4 campus events, and most assignments are submitted on time.

Fair (D range: 10-11): Offers own opinion without much connection to the readings or activities. It's hard to tell that you've actually done the readings. Often misses classes and is late with assignments. Has missed some CSL placement times/commitments and did not attend at least four required campus events.

Not Satisfactory (F range: 0-9): Highly unlikely unless you do not complete readings, are regularly absent, don't submit assignments on time, missed several CSL placement commitments, barely contributes to class discussions, and attended very few, if any, required campus events.

3. CSL Group Presentation 20%

For this component you should introduce your project and discuss how it extends/reinforces/challenges your classroom learning. You should develop a 1-page (double-sided) handout, which may take the form of a fact sheet, info graphic, resource list, or teaching material, which serves as a supplement to your CSL placement. Depending on your CSL placement, this presentation and handout can be done as a group. We will discuss the presentation details and assign dates in class.

4. Final Essay 40%

The purpose of this assignment is to encourage you to demonstrate and reflect critically on your learning in the course by responding in-depth to a topic of interest based on our classroom discussions, course readings, campus events, and/or your CSL experience.

Option 1: Critical Autoethnography – “What does it mean to be an LGBTQ ally?”

Autoethnography is reflective research and writing about one's own personal or subjective experience. This work is critical in the ways in which you reflect on or examine the impact of social, cultural, historical, or political forces shaping your personal and professional perceptions as a beginning teacher. Use concepts from the course readings to deepen your analysis. You can find many additional thought-provoking readings in the supplementary reading list, and in journal articles and books in the UofA library.

The purpose of this assignment is to take up the challenge posed by sexual and gender minority inclusive education and reflect critically on your own experiences and what it means to become a teacher ally. You might consider questions such as: What forms of sexual and gender diversity are you aware of in your teaching practice? What signs of sexuality and gender power dynamics have you observed inside and outside of K-12 schools? How is your identity “read” in the heterosexual matrix of school culture? What difference has your own social identity (gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, ability, religion, age, culture, etc) made to your interactions with students or colleagues on LGBTQ issues and topics? How have discourses of race, class, gender, the body, etc., shaped your sexuality and gender values, and how might they continue to be at work in your relationships with other people, and your sense of

possibility (including classroom possibilities)? What do you perceive as the risks and realities of becoming an ally? You should explore how these discourses work to establish the forms and limits of your subjectivity, and any ways in which you have resisted or could resist the shaping forces of these discourses in your perceptions and in your professional practice.

Option 2: Contemporary Research Essay

In this assignment, you should tackle a contemporary issue or challenge to sexual and gender minority inclusive education. For example, you might research and write about the challenge of addressing LGBTQ issues in elementary schools; the decision to come out or not come out in the classroom; the importance of sexual and gender minority inclusive school district policies; or the current opposition to gay-straight alliances and the government's Bill 10 and its controversial attempt to provide a balanced and compromise position on the issue. What are the benefits and drawbacks to this kind of LGBTQ-inclusive work, policy, or legislation? What are the social, cultural, political, moral, and religious forces at work when it comes to addressing LGBTQ issues in K-12 schools? How might reactionary influences be redirected or overcome?

Your essay should have a clear thesis statement and be well-grounded in the research literature. In addition, you may wish to reflect upon your own experiences and/or conduct one or more mini-interviews with students, teachers, administrators, community leaders, advocates, etc. as part of your research base. If so, please consult with me about the need for research ethical requirements.

For either option, your essay should integrate your learning from course readings, personal experiences, class discussions, CSL placement experiences, and guest presentations. You must take a clear position and provide supporting evidence (e.g., at least 5 academic references, and observations in community placement, etc.). You must use APA style in this and all other course assignments. The final essay should be about 2,000 words in length.

All assignments (including reflection papers) need to reflect *critical analysis* and *synthesis* rather than mere description or summation. The criteria for evaluation are as follows:

- clarity and depth of analysis and synthesis;
- demonstrated knowledge and understanding of theories, concepts, and issues related to the course; and
- organization and articulation of ideas.

Evaluation Procedures & Grading System

Evaluation and grading in the course follows the guidelines as described in the 2014-2015 University of Alberta Calendar, section 23.4.4, which can be found at the following URL: <http://www.registrar.ualberta.ca/calendar/Regulations-and-Information/Academic-Regulation/23.4.html>

Grading Standards

Evaluation is both formative and summative and will be expressed in raw marks throughout the course. Grades reflect judgments of student achievement made by the instructor. These judgments are based on a combination of absolute achievement and relative performance in a class. Students will receive a letter grade from their instructor as their final grade. These grading standards follow the distribution established for 4th year undergraduate courses, which historically have been in the range of 3.00 – 3.20.

Undergraduate Student Grading Scale

<u>Descriptor</u>	<u>Letter Grade</u>	<u>Point Value</u>
Excellent	A+	4.0
	A	4.0
	A-	3.7
Good	B+	3.3
	B	3.0
	B-	2.7
Satisfactory	C+	2.3
	C	2.0
	C-	1.7
Poor	D+	1.3
Minimal Pass	D	1.0
Fail	F or F4	0.0

Grading in General

Your grade for this course will reflect the degree to which your written work and class presentations exemplify quality work that is organized, rigorous, and critically analytical. Your work must also demonstrate your ability to integrate theory and practice. APA style is required for all written work (See APA Style Guide:

<http://guides.library.ualberta.ca/content.php?pid=57725&sid=1857812>)

Fair Warning...

Since presence at lectures, participation in classroom discussions and presentations, and the completion of group assignments and community service learning components are important elements of this course, students will serve their interests best by regular attendance both in class and at CSL placements. Those who choose not to attend must assume whatever risks are involved. In connection to attendance requirements, including at midterms and final exams, students should review section 23.3 of the 2014-15 University of Alberta Calendar. See:

<http://www.registrar.ualberta.ca/calendar/Regulations-and-Information/Academic-Regulation/23.3.html> - 23.3.

You are responsible for the content covered in class and attending your CSL placement. Regular attendance is expected, however, if you are unable to attend, you are responsible for arranging to obtain information about the content of that class from a classmate. As a professional responsibility, you should also notify your CSL placement of any absences.

Failure to attend class on the day of a midterm test or attend the final exam at the assigned time and place will result in a mark of zero on the test/exam except for religious, medical, or extraordinary compassionate grounds *with appropriate documentation*. See: <http://www.registrar.ualberta.ca/calendar/Regulations-and-Information/Academic-Regulation/23.5.html#23.5>.

Need to know....

“The University of Alberta is committed to the highest standards of academic integrity and honesty. Students are expected to be familiar with these standards regarding academic honesty and to uphold policies of the University in this respect. Students are particularly urged to familiarize themselves with the provisions of the *Code of Student Behaviour* (online at: <http://www.governance.ualberta.ca>) and avoid any behaviour which could potentially result in suspicions of cheating, plagiarism, misrepresentation of facts, and/or participation in an offence that can result in suspension or expulsion from the University.”

Truth in Education resources for students can be found at:

<http://www.tie.ualberta.ca/en/ResourcesforStudents.aspx>

“Audio or video recording of lectures, labs, seminars or any other teaching environment by students is allowed only with the prior written consent of the instructor or as part of an approved accommodation plan. Recorded material is to be used for personal study only, and is not to be used or distributed without the prior written consent of the instructor.”