School of Education

EDST5141
Critically Engaging with Indigenous Education in Australia

Summer 2016
Contents

1. LOCATION .............................................................................................................................................. 2
2. STAFF CONTACT DETAILS ............................................................................................................... 2
3. COURSE DETAILS ................................................................................................................................. 2
   Aims of the Course ................................................................................................................................. 2
   Student Learning Outcomes .................................................................................................................. 3
   Graduate Attributes ............................................................................................................................... 3
4. RATIONALE FOR THE INCLUSION OF CONTENT AND TEACHING APPROACH .... 3
5. TEACHING STRATEGIES ..................................................................................................................... 4
6. COURSE CONTENT AND STRUCTURE ................................................................................................. 4
7. ASSESSMENT .......................................................................................................................................... 5
   Assessment Details ................................................................................................................................. 6
8. RESOURCES .......................................................................................................................................... 10
   Required Readings ................................................................................................................................. 10
   Further Readings ................................................................................................................................... 10

IMPORTANT:
For student policies and procedures relating to assessment, attendance and student support, please see website, https://education.arts.unsw.edu.au/students/courses/course-outlines/

The School of Education acknowledges the Bidjigal and Gadigal people as the traditional custodians of the lands upon which we learn and teach.
1. LOCATION

Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences
School of Education
EDST 5141 Critically engaging with Indigenous education in Australia (6 units of credit)
Summer Semester, 2016

2. STAFF CONTACT DETAILS

Course Coordinator: Greg Vass
Office Location: John Goodsell 110
Email: g.vass@unsw.edu.au
Phone: 9385 2524
Availability: Please email to arrange an appointment

3. COURSE DETAILS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Name</th>
<th>Critically engaging with Indigenous education</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Credit Points</td>
<td>6 units of credit (uoc)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workload</td>
<td>Includes 150 hours including class contact hours, readings, class preparation, assessment, follow up activities, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schedule</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lecture</td>
<td>January 18, 19, 21, and 22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9:30am - 4.30pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>John Goodsell – LG 21</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Summary of Course

This course will immerse students in the competing and politicised discourses that play a part in what is known as Indigenous education in Australia. The aim of the course is to equip students with skills, knowledges and confidence that will support them in becoming active and aware contributors to improving teaching practices and learning outcomes within the Indigenous education landscape. Informed by ideas and strategies coming from a range of theoretical frameworks, this course will critically engage with the literature and research that underpins Indigenous education, challenging students to reflexively position themselves within this landscape as active agents of change.

The course is organised in four interrelated sections. Initially, students will explore the challenges and opportunities of working with different theoretical approaches, with the aim of developing a more critically informed awareness of the possibilities and limitations of each in relation to the varied contexts across the Indigenous educational landscape. The second section will deepen the students understanding of Indigenous studies by investigating the policy, curricular and pedagogic implications of a largely non-Indigenous teaching profession being asked to work with Indigenous knowledges/perspectives in educational settings. The next section turns attention to the teaching and learning experiences of Indigenous students in schooling, with the aim here being to critically unpack the ‘deficit’ perspective by shifting focus to consider what educators and schooling can start doing differently. The final phase of the course brings the different threads together to invite students to consider their own location within the Indigenous education landscape.

Aims of the Course

This course aims to:

- To distinguish, clarify and investigate concerns with the teaching of Indigenous studies, the teaching of Indigenous students, and how these come together as Indigenous education
- To encourage students to develop a deeper understanding of their location and relationships within the Indigenous education landscape
- To develop students knowledge, skills and confidence to critically engage with research and literature that contributes to constructing and sustaining Indigenous education
4. RATIONALE FOR THE INCLUSION OF CONTENT AND TEACHING APPROACH

At present there is a renewed concern and focus on Indigenous education within Australia. While primarily this is directed towards teaching and learning in the primary and secondary sectors, attention has also turned to higher education and in particular to the preparation of educators for these sectors. This course aims to contribute to these efforts by providing students with an opportunity to deepen their engagement with, and understanding of, the complexities of working within the Indigenous educational landscape. The approach taken for the course accepts that one of the reasons why little sustained or wide-spread improvement has occurred despite nearly 40 years of concerted effort, is to do with an ongoing inability to effectively account for impacts arising from socio-historical issues such as race, socio-economic status, language, and geographic location as continuing to underpin policy, curricula and pedagogic practices.
5. **TEACHING STRATEGIES**

The course is designed to be a reflective and collaborative investigation of the highly politicised Indigenous education landscape. To develop the students' understanding and familiarity with the competing and at times contradictory discourses that construct this landscape, the course will use a combination of lectures, guided reading, small group discussion, and individual reflection. As the students are being asked to locate and consider their relationships within this landscape, some students may find the readings and discussions challenging and confronting, with the approach to the course designed to create an environment that is encouraging, supportive and safe to explore, take risks, and make mistakes. Students are asked to keep in mind that everybody will be entering the course with different levels of knowledge, understanding and confidence, and to promote deep and enriching learning for all, students are expected to attend classes fully prepared to engage with the readings, share their ideas, listen to the ideas of others, and be committed to learning to think in different ways and to respect the learning of others.

6. **COURSE CONTENT AND STRUCTURE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Lecture Topic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
### Assessment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment Task</th>
<th>Length</th>
<th>Weight</th>
<th>Learning Outcomes Assessed</th>
<th>Graduate Attributes Assessed</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A critical response to policy</td>
<td>2000 words</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>1, 2, 5</td>
<td>1, 2, 3, 6</td>
<td>8th Jan Friday midnight</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research essay</td>
<td>4000 words</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6</td>
<td>1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6</td>
<td>5th Feb Friday midnight</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Assessment Details

Task One: Using theory to critically engage with education policy.

Aims of the task:

i. To critically examine one of the most influential policy documents that currently shapes Indigenous education in Australia, and

ii. To use one of the key theoretical frameworks from this course in support of this policy analysis.

Administrative details:
Due: Friday the 8th January (11.59 pm)
Length: 2000 words
Weight: 40%

Description of the task:
For this task, you are to investigate and use theory to assist you with constructing a critical discussion about one of the key education policies that currently influences the experiences of Indigenous students in schooling. The document itself is the 2009 Federal policy, Closing the gap on Indigenous disadvantage: The challenge for Australia, which includes a target that aims to address disparities when comparing the achievements of Indigenous with non-Indigenous students on NAPLAN tests. The table included below comes from this policy document, it clearly indicates the scope and scale of the achievement ‘gaps’.

It is worth keeping in mind that concerns to do with the experiences and achievements of Indigenous learners in schools predate this policy document. However, this policy emerged at a particular time that warrants closer inspection. It is a policy that requires that schools and educators put into action a range of different practices that also invites careful consideration. And it is a policy that locates and directs attention towards Indigenous learners in ways that raise questions about the perspective and position of those that exert power and influence in educational contexts.

Commenting on this line of thinking, Rizvi & Lingard (2010, p. 4) note, ‘A policy expresses patterns of decisions in the context of other decisions taken by political actors on behalf of state institutions from positions of authority. Public policies are thus normative, expressing both ends and means designed to steer the actions and behavior of people. Finally, policy refers to things that can in principle be achieved, to matters over which authority can be exercised.’ From this, it is important to note that an analysis of policy involves considering more than the document itself. An analysis of policy must also account for the historical underpinnings of the document, the political framing, how and why it influences the actions of people, and to consider the implications arising from its efforts to demonstrably achieve goals.

To complete this task …
Choose one (1) of the following theoretical frameworks:
- Critical race theory; postcolonial; decolonising; critical multicultural; culturally responsive

Your response should include consideration of the following:

a) A brief and succinct explanation about the theoretical framework you have selected;

b) A justification for why you think this is suitable/useful theoretical framework for analysing this policy;

c) A critical and theoretically informed understanding of the socio-political circumstances underpinning why there is a discrepancy when comparing the achievements of Indigenous and non-Indigenous learners;

d) A critical and theoretically informed awareness of the potential for unintentional negative consequences impacting on Indigenous students in schools attempting to ‘close the gap’;

e) Demonstrate how and why the current education policy climate in Australia is connected with broader globalising patterns and trends.
Task Two: A research essay

**Aims of the task:**

i. To investigate the curricular and pedagogic challenges and opportunities when engaging with Indigenous perspectives and knowledges within the discipline (teaching area) that you work, and

ii. To demonstrate a theoretically informed understanding of the practices involved in effectively responding to the Cross-Curricular Priorities related to the educational settings you operate within.

**Administrative details:**

Due:   Friday the 5th February (11.59 pm)
Length:  4000 words
Weight:  60%

**Description of the task:**

For this task, you are being invited to investigate and construct a response that considers the challenges and opportunities of contributing to Indigenous education from your perspective and location within the educational landscape itself. For many of you, this will be based on being a classroom teacher, however, if you are involved in education as a school leader or education researcher (for example), you can undertake this task from this location. The policy framework connected with this task is the National Cross-Curriculum Priorities that require all teachers to embed Indigenous knowledges, histories and perspectives in teaching and learning. It is important to note that this policy document is primarily concerned with the learning experiences of non-Indigenous students and the work of the largely non-Indigenous dominated profession that is responsible for this.

You are to investigate and discuss examples of ‘good practice’ teaching and learning related to your teaching context and discipline. Your response will need to succinctly demonstrate an understanding of the curricular and pedagogic requirements related to your educational context. This will include offering a rationale that illustrates a philosophical and political awareness of why Indigenous knowledges and/or perspectives offer valuable contributions to the teaching and learning in this setting. The examples that you draw on will most likely come from settings that differ from yours in significant ways (potentially from other countries), meaning that you will need to additionally explain why these strategies are suitable for your context, and how you will change the practices to better suit your setting.

For this, you should either use one of the theoretical frameworks covered in the course, or alternatively you can draw from across several frameworks. In either case, you need to demonstrate a clear understanding of why you believe the theoretical framework and the ‘good practices’ that you aim to take up are suitable and relevant for the setting you work within.

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**Figure 5:** Percentage of students at or above the national minimum standard, 2008

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Reading</th>
<th>Writing</th>
<th>Numeracy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Indigenous %</td>
<td>Non-Indigenous %</td>
<td>Gap in percentage points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 3</td>
<td>68.3</td>
<td>93.5</td>
<td>25.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 3</td>
<td>78.8</td>
<td>96.4</td>
<td>17.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 5</td>
<td>63.4</td>
<td>92.6</td>
<td>29.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 5</td>
<td>69.7</td>
<td>93.9</td>
<td>24.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 7</td>
<td>71.9</td>
<td>95.4</td>
<td>23.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 7</td>
<td>67.9</td>
<td>93.2</td>
<td>25.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 9</td>
<td>70.7</td>
<td>94.2</td>
<td>23.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 9</td>
<td>59.7</td>
<td>88.8</td>
<td>29.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 9</td>
<td>72.5</td>
<td>94.8</td>
<td>22.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: 2008 National Assessment Program Literacy and Numeracy, MCETYA 2008

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UNSW SCHOOL OF EDUCATION
FEEDBACK SHEET
EDST5141 CRITICALLY ENGAGING WITH INDIGENOUS EDUCATION

Student Name: Student No.:
Assessment Task: Task one: Policy response

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SPECIFIC CRITERIA</th>
<th>(-)</th>
<th>(+)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Understanding of the question or issue and the key concepts involved</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Understanding of the task and its relationship to relevant areas of theory, policy and Indigenous education</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Clarity and accuracy in use of key theoretical terms and concepts in relation to policy and schooling practices</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Depth of analysis and/or critique in response to the task</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Depth of understanding of relevant key concepts, politics and concerns linked with Indigenous education policy</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Depth of analysis regarding socio-historical concerns linked with Indigenous education</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Clarity and depth of argument in relation to effects of policy on schooling practices</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Clarity and depth of explanation regarding the theoretical approach chosen</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Demonstration of synthesising knowledge and understanding to use theoretical concepts in support of the analysis</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Familiarity with and relevance of professional and/or research literature used to support response</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Ability to locate relevant, recently published (&lt;10 yrs old) literature from high-quality, peer reviewed journals or edited books (beyond those used in the course)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Ability to locate and effectively use literature that demonstrates an understanding of the relevance and sensitivity to including different researcher perspectives (i.e. drawing on contributions from Indigenous knowledges/scholars)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Ability to synthesise and present research findings that supports your response</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Structure and organisation of response</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• A clear and logical structure that includes an introduction, body, and conclusion (as per UNSW essay writing guide)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Clarity and coherence of organisation of ideas within paragraphs and across the response</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presentation of response according to appropriate academic and linguistic conventions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Accurate and thorough attention to written textual requirements: sentence structure; vocabulary; spelling; punctuation; grammar</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Clarity, appropriateness and effectiveness in terms of persuasive/analytical/reflective writing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Clarity, consistency and appropriateness of academic written conventions: quoting; paraphrasing; citing sources/information; and the reference list</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Adheres to word length: inclusive of reference list; within 10% over/under</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Correct and thorough referencing according to APA 6th edition style guide</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

GENERAL COMMENTS/RECOMMENDATIONS FOR NEXT TIME

Lecturer Date
Recommended: /20 (FL PS CR DN HD) Weighting: 40%

NB: The ticks in the various boxes are designed to provide feedback to students; they are not given equal weight in determining the recommended grade. Depending on the nature of the assessment task, lecturers may also contextualize and/or amend these specific criteria. The recommended grade is tentative only, subject to standardisation processes and approval by the School of Education Learning and Teaching Committee.
### SPECIFIC CRITERIA

#### Understanding of the question or issue and the key concepts involved
- Understanding of the task and its relationship to relevant areas of curricular and pedagogic practices linked with Indigenous education
- Clarity and accuracy in use of key curriculum and pedagogic terms and concepts in relation to schooling practices

#### Depth of analysis and/or critique in response to the task
- Depth of understanding of relevant key concepts, politics and concerns linked with schooling practices and Indigenous education
- Depth of analysis regarding socio-historical concerns linked with Indigenous education, your teaching discipline, and your schooling context
- Clarity and depth of argument in support of ‘good practice’ schooling
- Clarity and depth of explanation regarding the theoretical approach chosen
- Demonstration of synthesising knowledge and understanding to use theoretical concepts in support of the analysis

#### Familiarity with and relevance of professional and/or research literature used to support response
- Ability to locate relevant, recently published (<10 yrs old) literature from high-quality, peer reviewed journals or edited books (beyond those used in the course)
- Ability to locate and effectively use literature that demonstrates an understanding of the relevance and sensitivity to including different researcher perspectives (i.e. drawing on contributions from Indigenous knowledges/scholars)
- Ability to synthesise and present research findings that supports your response

#### Structure and organisation of response
- A clear and logical structure that includes an introduction, body, and conclusion (as per UNSW essay writing guide)
- Clarity and coherence of organisation of ideas within paragraphs and across the response

#### Presentation of response according to appropriate academic and linguistic conventions
- Accurate and thorough attention to written textual requirements: sentence structure; vocabulary; spelling; punctuation; grammar
- Clarity, appropriateness and effectiveness in terms of persuasive/analytical/reflective writing
- Clarity, consistency and appropriateness of academic written conventions: quoting; paraphrasing; citing sources/information; and the reference list
- Adheres to word length: inclusive of reference list; within 10% over/under
- Correct and thorough referencing according to APA 6th edition style guide

### GENERAL COMMENTS/RECOMMENDATIONS FOR NEXT TIME

Lecturer: [Name]
Date: [Date]
Recommended: [Score] (FL PS CR DN HD) Weighting: 60%

NB: The ticks in the various boxes are designed to provide feedback to students; they are not given equal weight in determining the recommended grade. Depending on the nature of the assessment task, lecturers may also contextualize and/or amend these specific criteria. The recommended grade is tentative only, subject to standardisation processes and approval by the School of Education Learning and Teaching Committee.
RESOURCES

Required Readings
As listed above in section 6.

Further Readings


