

Professional Issues in Teaching

Cora Reikofski-Ross, M.Ed.

UNT Catalog Course Description

Overview of American education, including history, purposes, legal bases, school organization, education as a profession and analysis of characteristics required for professional success.

Course Prerequisites

None

Course Learning Objectives

The course is designed in alignment with the TEA Pedagogy and Professional Responsibilities EC-12 standards. The goal of the course is to prepare students for their certification exam and their role as future educators. The course touches on the various professional responsibilities of Texas teachers.

Standard I	The teacher designs instruction appropriate for all students that reflects an understanding of relevant content and is based on continuous and appropriate assessment.
Standard II	The teacher creates a classroom environment of respect and rapport fostering a positive learning, equity, and excellence climate.
Standard III	The teacher promotes student learning by providing responsive instruction that makes use of effective communication techniques, instructional strategies that actively engage students in the learning process, and timely, high-quality feedback.
Standard IV	The teacher fulfills professional roles and responsibilities and adheres to legal and ethical requirements of the profession.

Course Texts

The UNT Library and course instructors will provide course readings, which will be accessible in Canvas.

Assignments

In addition to course readings, class activities, and participation, the instructor will use the following assignments as indicators of progress and understanding over the semester. Additional details will be provided at the beginning of the semester and/or before each assignment due date. All assignments will be submitted through Canvas.

- Accountability Tasks (21%): Throughout the semester, students will complete individual tasks to demonstrate their progress in the course.
- Reading Discussion (13%): Students will have one opportunity during the semester to facilitate a reading discussion for their learning community.
- District Analysis (13%): Students will identify a district in the metroplex and complete an analysis using a template provided in class.
- TExES Content Study Guide (13%): Students will develop a study plan for their content exam.
- Mursion (18%): Students will complete an activity with UNT's avatar-based teaching simulation.
- Building a Classroom Community Plan (25%): Students will use a template provided in class to outline their plan for building a classroom community. The plan will demonstrate students' understanding of TEA PPR standards 2-4.

Course Overview

The course is broken into three parts. INSTRUCTORS TO ADJUST AS NEEDED

	Topic	Assignments	TEA Primary Standards	TEA Sub Standards
1	Welcome	Entry + Exit Ticket		
2	What are public schools and what is their purpose?	Entry + Exit Ticket Did you review	4: The teacher fulfills professional roles and responsibilities and adheres to legal and ethical	4.18k

		Canvas and the syllabus?	requirements of the profession.	
3	How are public schools connected to political systems?	Entry + Exit Ticket	<p>1: The teacher designs instruction appropriate for all students that reflects an understanding of relevant content and is based on continuous and appropriate assessment.</p> <p>3: The teacher promotes student learning by providing responsive instruction that makes use of effective communication techniques, instructional strategies that actively engage students in the learning process and timely, high-quality feedback.</p> <p>4: The teacher fulfills professional roles and responsibilities and adheres to legal and ethical requirements of the profession.</p>	1.7k, 1.12k, 1.13k, 1.14k, 1.15k, 1.19k, 1.30k, 3.1k, 4.17k
4	What pressing challenges does U.S. education face today?	Entry + Exit Ticket District analysis	<p>1: The teacher designs instruction appropriate for all students that reflects an understanding of relevant content and is based on continuous and appropriate assessment.</p> <p>4: The teacher fulfills professional roles and responsibilities and adheres to legal and ethical requirements of the profession.</p>	1.11k, 4.1k, 4.2k

5	How do I create a classroom environment of respect and rapport that fosters a positive climate for learning, equity, and excellence?: SPED/inclusion	<p>Entry + Exit Ticket</p> <p>Reading discussion 1</p>	<p>1: The teacher designs instruction appropriate for all students that reflects an understanding of relevant content and is based on continuous and appropriate assessment.</p> <p>2: The teacher creates a classroom environment of respect and rapport that fosters a positive climate for learning, equity, and excellence.</p> <p>4: The teacher fulfills professional roles and responsibilities and adheres to legal and ethical requirements of the profession.</p>	1.3k, 2.11k, 4.13k, 4.3s, 4.4s
6	What strategies best support students with a specialized education plan?: SPED/inclusion	<p>Entry + Exit Ticket</p> <p>Reading discussion 2</p>	<p>1: The teacher designs instruction appropriate for all students that reflects an understanding of relevant content and is based on continuous and appropriate assessment.</p> <p>2: The teacher creates a classroom environment of respect and rapport that fosters a positive climate for learning, equity, and excellence.</p> <p>3: The teacher promotes student learning by providing responsive instruction that makes use of effective communication techniques, instructional strategies that actively engage students in the learning process and timely, high-quality feedback.</p> <p>4: The teacher fulfills professional roles and responsibilities and adheres to legal and ethical requirements of the profession.</p>	1.3k, 2.7k, 2.22k, 3.5k, 3.9k, 3.17s, 4.3s, 4.4s

7	How do I create a classroom environment of respect and rapport that fosters a positive climate for learning, equity, and excellence?: Bilingual/ESL education	Entry + Exit Ticket Reading discussion 3	1: The teacher designs instruction appropriate for all students that reflects an understanding of relevant content and is based on continuous and appropriate assessment. 4: The teacher fulfills professional roles and responsibilities and adheres to legal and ethical requirements of the profession.	1.5k, 1.6k, 4.3s, 4.4s
8	What strategies best support emerging bilinguals?: Bilingual/ESL education	Entry + Exit Ticket Reading discussion 4	1: The teacher designs instruction appropriate for all students that reflects an understanding of relevant content and is based on continuous and appropriate assessment.	1.5k, 1.6k
9	How do I create a classroom environment of respect and rapport that fosters a positive climate for learning, equity, and excellence?: Classroom management	Entry + Exit Ticket Reading discussion 5	2: The teacher creates a classroom environment of respect and rapport that fosters a positive climate for learning, equity, and excellence.	2.11k, 2.15k, 2.18k, 2.23k,
10	MURSION VISIT AND LEARN			
11	What strategies are considered best practices for classroom management?: Classroom management	Entry + Exit Ticket Reading discussion 6	2: The teacher creates a classroom environment of respect and rapport that fosters a positive climate for learning, equity, and excellence. 3: The teacher promotes student learning by providing responsive instruction that makes use of effective communication techniques, instructional strategies that actively engage students in the learning process and timely, high-quality feedback.	2.2.k, 2.9k, 2.13k, 2.14k, 2.18k, 2.19k, 2.20k, 2.23k, 3.1k, 3.2k, 4.1k, 4.2k, 4.2s,

			4: The teacher fulfills professional roles and responsibilities and adheres to legal and ethical requirements of the profession.	
12	What does it mean to be a professional?	Entry + Exit Ticket Reading discussion 7	1: The teacher designs instruction appropriate for all students that reflects an understanding of relevant content and is based on continuous and appropriate assessment. 4: The teacher fulfills professional roles and responsibilities and adheres to legal and ethical requirements of the profession.	1.18k, 4.5k, 4.6k, 4.9k, 4.10k, 4.12k, 4.13k, 4.14k, 4.16k
13	COMPLETE MURSION ASSIGNMENT			
14	What do students need to succeed?: Feedback, assessment, data tracking, and planning instructional interventions.	Entry + Exit Ticket Reading discussion 8	1: The teacher designs instruction appropriate for all students that reflects an understanding of relevant content and is based on continuous and appropriate assessment. 3: The teacher promotes student learning by providing responsive instruction that makes use of effective communication techniques, instructional strategies that actively engage students in the learning process and timely, high-quality feedback.	1.25k, 1.26k, 1.27k, 1.28s, 3.12k, 3.13k, 3.14k, 3.17s
15	FALL BREAK			
16	How will I be evaluated as a teacher?	Entry + Exit Ticket Exam study plan	4: The teacher fulfills professional roles and responsibilities and adheres to legal and ethical requirements of the profession.	4.11k
12/7	Classroom community plan			

*I reserve the right to change the course plan. All changes will be communicated promptly.

*Students will be notified by Eagle Alert if there is a campus closing that will impact a class. Please refer to the campus closures policy (<https://policy.unt.edu/policy/15-006>).

Grading and Assessment

Letter grades will be allocated on the following percentage scale:

A	90-100
B	80-89
C	70-79
D	60-69
F	50-59

Course instructors' approach to assessments aligns with UNT policies concerning academic integrity (UNT Student Academic Integrity Policy, 06.003).

Attendance and Participation

Because this course involves collaboration, participation is essential to learning. Class activities require you to be actively engaged in discussions and group work. I have a strict policy because you will be entering a profession in which you cannot consistently be absent. For example, most districts provide teachers with about 10 sick days per year out of about 180 teaching days.

The following will be the attendance policy for our course:

# of Unexcused Absences	Deduction from Final Grade
0 – 1	No point deduction
2	5 points (e.g., 95-90)
3	10 points (e.g., 95-85)
4 or more	Failure of course

Whether an absence is excused or unexcused, students can only get the 6 points from the entry and exit tickets by completing and submitting an alternative assignment in Canvas within one week of the missed class.

According to UNT Policy 06.039, illness is “deemed a matter between the student and their faculty member.” Therefore, you are given one day this semester to take as your sick day unless it is an extenuating circumstance in which you should reach out to Dr. Smith. Please save your one unexcused absence for when you are ill.

Accommodations

The University of North Texas makes reasonable academic accommodation for students with disabilities. Students seeking reasonable accommodation must first register with the Office of Disability Access (ODA) to verify their eligibility. If a disability is verified, the ODA will provide you with a reasonable accommodation letter to be delivered to faculty to begin a private discussion regarding your specific needs in a course. You may request reasonable accommodations at any time; however, ODA notices of reasonable accommodation should be provided as early as possible in the semester to avoid any delay in implementation. Note that students must obtain a new letter of reasonable accommodation for every semester and must meet with each faculty member prior to implementation in each class. Students are strongly encouraged to deliver letters of reasonable accommodation during faculty office hours or by appointment. Faculty members have the authority to ask students to discuss such letters during their designated office hours to protect the privacy of the student. For additional information, refer to the

Office of Disability Access website
(<https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/office-disability-access>).

You may also contact ODA by phone at (940) 565-4323.

Supporting Your Success and Creating an Inclusive Learning Environment

I value the many perspectives students bring to our campus. Please work with me to create a classroom culture of open communication, mutual respect, and belonging. All discussions should be respectful and civil. Although disagreements and debates are encouraged, personal attacks are unacceptable. Together, we can ensure a safe and welcoming classroom for all. If you ever feel like this is not the case, please stop by my office and let me know. We are all learning together.

COURSE SYLLABI REQUIREMENTS (UNT Policy 06.049)

Academic Integrity and Academic Dishonesty

Academic Integrity is defined in the UNT Policy on Student Standards for Academic Integrity. Academic Dishonesty includes cheating, plagiarism, forgery, fabrication, facilitating academic dishonesty, and sabotage. Any suspected case of Academic Dishonesty will be handled in accordance with university policy and procedures. Possible academic penalties range from a verbal or written admonition to a grade of "F" in the course. Further sanctions may apply to incidents involving major

violations. The policy and procedures are available at: [Academic Integrity Policy \(PDF\)](https://policy.unt.edu/policy/06-003) (<https://policy.unt.edu/policy/06-003>).

AI

In this course, I want you to engage deeply with the materials and develop your own critical thinking and writing skills. For this reason, the use of Generative AI (GenAI) tools like Claude, ChatGPT, and Gemini is not permitted. While these tools can be helpful in some contexts, they do not align with our goal of fostering the development of your independent thinking. Using GenAI to complete any part of an assignment will be considered a violation of academic integrity, as it prevents the development of your own skills, and will be addressed according to the [Student Academic Integrity policy](https://policy.unt.edu/policy/06-003) (<https://policy.unt.edu/policy/06-003>).

Acceptable Student Behavior

Student behavior that interferes with an instructor's ability to conduct a class or other students' opportunity to learn is unacceptable and disruptive and will not be tolerated in any instructional forum at UNT. Students engaging in unacceptable behavior will be directed to leave the class and the instructor may refer the student to the Dean of Students to consider whether the student's conduct violated the Code of Student Conduct. The university's expectations for student conduct apply to all instructional forums, including university and electronic classroom, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc. The Code of Student Conduct can be found at [UNT Policy 07.012 Code of Student Conduct](#).

ADA Accommodations

The University of North Texas makes reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities. To request accommodations, you must first register with the Office of Disability Access (ODA) by completing an application for services and providing documentation to verify your eligibility each semester. Once your eligibility is confirmed, you may request your letter of accommodation. ODA will then email your instructor a letter of reasonable accommodation, initiating a private discussion about your specific needs in the course. You can request accommodations at any time, but it's important to provide ODA notice to your instructor as early as possible in the semester to avoid delays in implementation. Keep in mind that you must obtain a new letter of accommodation for each semester and meet with each faculty member before accommodations can be implemented in each class. You are strongly encouraged to meet with faculty regarding your accommodations during office hours or by appointment. Faculty have the authority to ask you to discuss your letter during their designated office hours to protect your privacy. For more information and to access resources that can support your needs, refer to the [Office](#)

of Disability Access website (<https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/office-disability-access>).

EagleConnect

All UNT students should activate and regularly check their EagleConnect (e-mail) account. EagleConnect is used for official communication from the University to students. Many important announcements for the University and College are sent to students via EagleConnect. For information about EagleConnect, including how to activate an account and how to have EagleConnect forwarded to another e-mail address, visit <https://eagleconnect.unt.edu>. This is the main electronic contact for all course-related information and/or material.

Emergency Notifications and Procedures

UNT uses a system called Eagle Alert to quickly notify students with critical information in the event of an emergency (i.e., severe weather, campus closing, and health and public safety emergencies like chemical spills, fires, or violence). In the event of a university closure, please refer to Canvas for contingency plans for covering course materials.

Observation of Religious Holy Days

If you plan to observe a religious holy day that coincides with a class day, please notify your instructor as soon as possible.

Retention of Student Records

Student records pertaining to this course are maintained in a secure location by the instructor of record. All records such as exams, answer sheets (with keys), and written papers submitted during the duration of the course are kept for at least one calendar year after course completion. Course work completed via the Canvas online system, including grading information and comments, is also stored in a safe electronic environment for one year. Students have the right to view their individual record; however, information about students' records will not be divulged to other

individuals without proper written consent. Students are encouraged to review the Public Information Policy and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) laws and the University's policy.

Sexual Discrimination, Harassment, & Assault

UNT is committed to providing an environment free of all forms of discrimination and sexual harassment, including sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking. If you (or someone you know) has experienced or experiences any of these acts of aggression, please know that you are not alone. The federal Title IX law makes it clear that violence and harassment based on sex and gender are Civil Rights offenses. Because of Texas Senate Bill 212, as a UNT employee, I am required by law to report sexual misconduct, relationship violence, stalking, and crimes. I cannot keep those things confidential if you reveal any of those to me. If you need a confidential resource available on campus or in the local community then I can refer you. UNT has staff members trained to support you in navigating campus life, accessing health and counseling services, providing academic and housing accommodations, helping with legal protective orders, and more.

UNT's Dean of Students' website offers a range of on-campus and off-campus resources to help support survivors, depending on their unique needs: http://deanofstudents.unt.edu/resources_0. UNT's Student Advocate can be reached through e-mail at SurvivorAdvocate@unt.edu or by calling the Dean of Students' office at 940-565-2648. You are not alone. We are here to help.

Student Perceptions of Teaching (SPOT)

Student feedback is important and an essential part of participation in this course. The student evaluation of instruction is a requirement for all organized classes at UNT. The survey will be made available during weeks 13 and 14 of the long semesters to provide students with an opportunity to evaluate how this course is taught. Students will receive an email from "UNT SPOT Course Evaluations via IASystem Notification" (no-reply@iasystem.org) with the survey link. Students should look for the email in their UNT email inbox. Simply click on the link and complete the survey. Once students complete the survey, they will receive a confirmation email that the survey has been submitted. For additional information, please visit the spot website at www.spot.unt.edu or email spot@unt.edu.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

Accessibility. I expect that students in our class will have a variety of physical,

mental, sensorial and emotional ways of being, learning, and engaging in a virtual classroom. I encourage you to privately discuss your specific needs with me as soon as possible in order to make the classroom and the course more accessible.

Name Change. As a UNT student, you are able to change how your name shows up on class rosters, Canvas, and MyUNT. Additionally, if your name changes at any point during the semester, please let me know and we can develop a plan to share this information with others in a way that is safe for you. Should you want to update your name, you can do so by looking at [these guidelines](#).

Food/Housing Insecurity. Any student who has difficulty affording groceries or accessing sufficient food to eat every day, or who lacks a safe and stable place to live, and believes this may affect their performance in the course, is urged to contact the Dean of Students, Suite 409 at the University Union (or by calling 940-565-2648). The UNT Food Pantry is a useful resource for students who may need it. Please visit the website for more details, or feel free to come see me about this:
<https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/desresources/programs/food-pantry/index.html>

Social Media and Online Sharing. Sharing class ideas and learning experiences on social media allows educators opportunities to show successes, receive critical feedback, and grow with others. Students, staff, and faculty in the College of Education often use the #UNTedu hashtag for such purposes. You are welcome to share class learning experiences in this class with broader audiences via social media platforms. However, you should first secure consent from instructors and classmates before posting their ideas, images, or work online. ***You may NOT capture images or record video from online or in-person meetings and share those outside our class community without consent.*** Similarly, you should not post images of PK-12 students even if consent is provided through school districts as social media platforms are increasingly mined for dubious reasons including targeted harassment, facial recognition, or personal data extraction and selling. Please know I am available if you have concerns, questions, or need support in this area.

University Mental Health Services. I recognize that it is not easy to be a student. The demands for economic, intellectual, social, and emotional stability are often in competition, and it can grow weary. School is one aspect of your busy life, and while it's important to stay the course, it's also important to acknowledge when you may need more support. UNT's Counseling Center, as well as the Student Health and

Wellness Center, offer support through counseling, care for your well-being and psychiatric health, workshops for socio-emotional challenges, etc. These services are confidential, and most of these services are covered by your tuition. Feel free to see me for more support on this, call 940-565-2333 and/or refer to the following website: <https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/counseling-and-testing-services/student-counseling/index.html>
