

EDCI 3800 | Section 001 | Fall 2026

PROFESSIONAL ISSUES IN TEACHING

Matthews Hall 308
Tuesdays 8:00am-10:50am

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Mondays: MH 206Q: 10am-12pm, 3:30-5:30pm;
Tuesdays: 11:30-1:30pm;
and by appointment

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 Learning Objectives

By the end of the course, students should be able to:

- Analyze major historical developments, purposes, and recurring debates in American education.
- Identify and question assumptions embedded in familiar school structures and practices.
- Explain basic legal, ethical, organizational, and policy foundations of public schooling and the teaching profession.
- Examine how race, language, disability, culture, and other dimensions of difference shape access and opportunity in schools.
- Apply inclusive, culturally responsive, and discipline-appropriate approaches to planning and supporting student learning.
- Articulate a developing professional philosophy and practical approach to teaching through a lesson plan and professional portfolio.

Required Course Text & Readings

Students can obtain access to the following course text through [the UNT library](#) or purchase their own copy. Additional readings, course documents, and selected excerpts will be available through Canvas or provided in class.

- Goldstein, D. *The Teacher Wars: A History of America's Most Embattled Profession*. We will read the Introduction and Chapters 1–4.

Additional readings will be made available in the course calendar.

Assignments

The instructor will use the following assignments as indicators of progress and understanding over the duration of the semester. Additional details will be provided at the beginning of the semester and/or before each assignment due date.

1. Active Participation & Assessment (75 points; 5 points for 15 weeks)

Students are expected to attend class, actively participate, complete readings prior to class, and engage with weekly course activities. This category is worth 5 points per class meeting across 15 instructional weeks. Points can be subtracted for failure to fully attend class or actively participate, and points are earned through in-class assessments and preparation.

A) Attendance: Attendance is critical to success in this class because much of our learning will take place through discussion, inquiry, collaborative activities, and application that cannot be replicated outside of class. Students are therefore required to attend class in its entirety. Students may miss one class with no penalty to their grade as long as they submit a summary of what they missed, but every class after the first one will result in a 5-point subtraction from the week's grade. Two late arrivals or early departures also constitute an absence. **Whenever a student misses a class they should:**

(1) Submit a **Missed Class Form** explaining their absence at <https://tinyurl.com/MissedClassExplanation>

(2) Submit a **Missed Class Summary** that explains what you missed at <https://tinyurl.com/MissedClassSummary>. The summary is approximately one paragraph or 100 words that discusses the readings and in-class activities you missed that week. You can accomplish this by (a) reviewing the In-Class

Activities in the class calendar and (b) reaching out to a classmate or Dr. K for an update. In some cases, Dr. K may send out a summary to the class. The purpose of this summary is to ensure you are up to date on what you missed since many class assignments and activities build on each other over the course of the semester. **You must submit this before the next class, or you will lose one point from your Active Participation & Assessment grade.**

# of Absences	
0 – 1	No point deduction
2 - 3	• 5 points deducted from weekly participation grades for each absence • 2 late arrivals and/or early departures constitute 1 absence
4 or more	Failure of course

B) Active Participation: Students are expected to support their learning by actively listening to class participants, taking notes in their Education Journals, and contributing to class discussions with ideas or questions. If students face an issue in the class that disrupts their learning, it is their responsibility to communicate with the instructor and suggest means for improving the situation. Disengaging from class, including using devices in ways unrelated to and distracting from the class, can result in a reduction of participation points for the class session.

- **Education Journal:** Students will be provided a notebook for note-taking and journaling on class readings and in-class lectures, discussions, and activities. Recent studies indicate that while students can take more notes on computers, they have better achievement (e.g., grades) when hand-writing them ([Flanigan et al., 2024](#)), potentially because hand-writing requires more summarizing and paraphrasing ([Mueller & Oppenheimer, 2014](#)) and better facilitates spatial organizing strategies (e.g., diagramming, concept mapping) that can benefit comprehension. This difference may primarily be due to digital distractions on computers ([Voyer et al., 2022](#)), which can lead to distracted attention-shifting (a.k.a. “multitasking”). For each class, students should write notes in their notebook on the assigned reading *before* the class session and then take notes *during* class. For each class, students should write notes in their journal on the assigned reading before the class session and then take notes during class. The Education Journal should collect and organize the most important ideas, questions, activities, and resources from the course and provide material students can later revise for their Professional Portfolio.
- **Assessment:** Students should complete assigned readings and assignments by the class due date so they are fully prepared to

contribute. Students will earn up to 5 points for each class through activities such as whole-class or group discussion, analysis of documents or films, case studies, Portfolio Builder activities, lesson-planning activities, individual or group projects, and closed- or open-note quizzes. The form of assessment each week will be determined by the instructor. Some weeks also include required TEA trainings listed in the course calendar. Students retain their right to contest grades they do not feel accurately reflect their knowledge, effort, or contributions.

2. Lesson Plan (10 points)

Students will develop a lesson plan for their certification and subject area that applies course ideas to meaningful classroom learning. Students will begin with a topic, standard/TEKS, text, artwork, performance, problem, or disciplinary idea and use the UNT Common Lesson Plan format to develop a coherent plan that includes learning goals, assessment, instructional activities, student supports and accommodations, and attention to culturally responsive practice. Inquiry-centered planning will be emphasized when it is appropriate to the discipline. Students will receive feedback and revise the lesson for inclusion in the final Professional Portfolio.

3. Professional Portfolio (15 points)

For the final assignment, students will create a practical Professional Portfolio that brings together and revises work developed throughout the semester. Portfolio Builder items are short components or notes created across the course and then refined into resources students can use as future educators.

The portfolio should include students' developing beliefs about the purposes of education; professional ethics and responsibilities; equity and access commitments; approaches to supporting disabled students and emergent bilingual students; culturally responsive practice; the revised lesson plan; a map or guide to school-system leadership and support roles; and practical classroom communication and management resources. The goal is to demonstrate how course ideas will inform students' own professional practice.

Course Overview

This course runs for 17 weeks, including holidays. The calendar below includes major readings and assignments, but to be responsive to student needs, short readings, activities, or modifications may be added during the semester. Please refer to the calendar in Canvas throughout the semester. The online

calendar will be updated with planned in-class activities before class and, when useful, with notes about what we completed after each class session.

Tentative Course Calendar Preview This is a tentative calendar. Short readings, assignments, and in-class activities may be adjusted based on class needs. Please see the Canvas calendar for updates.	
1 • 08/18 What do we believe about education, and how will we learn together?	• None!
2 • 08/25 Why does school look like this?	• Eisner, "Questionable Assumptions About Schooling" • Lewisville ISD Secondary School Teacher Official Job Description • Portfolio Builder: Identify one assumption about schooling you want to question this semester.
3 • 09/01 Why do we have schools?	• Goldstein, The Teacher Wars, Introduction + Chapter 1, "Missionary Teachers" • Portfolio Builder: Revise your "What is education for?" response using evidence from the reading.
4 • 09/08 What does it mean to be a teacher and a professional?	• Goldstein, Chapter 2, "Repressed Indignation" • Code of Ethics for Texas Educators • FERPA and an Educator's Duty to Protect Students
5 • 09/15 Who has American schooling served?	• Goldstein, Chapter 3, "No Shirking, No Skulking" • Portfolio Builder: Identify one historical inequity that still shapes schooling today.
6 • 09/22 Who has power over teachers and teaching?	• Goldstein, Chapter 4, "School Ma'ams as Lobbyists" • Portfolio Builder: What kinds of professional autonomy/power should teachers have, and why?
7 • 09/29 Disability, access, and the right to education: How did we get here?	• Selected disability history source options (to be added) • Bring one question about disability, access, or inclusion in schools. • Portfolio Builder: How can educational systems support disabled people?
8 • 10/06 What do disability rights and special education mean in classroom practice?	• Types of Special Education Teachers • TEA Special Education Support Guidance (selected sections) • Review Sample High School IEP and one sample content-area lesson plan • Portfolio Builder: How can teachers support disabled people?
9 • 10/13	• Watch Stolen Education documentary

Language, race, and schooling: What can the history of bilingual education teach us?	• Portfolio Builder: How should teachers support emergent bilingual students?
10 • 10/20 How do schools support emergent bilingual students today?	• Second Language Acquisition: An Introduction • English Language Proficiency Standards (ELPS): An Overview • Review Sample LPAC (ESL) Accommodations Document
11 • 10/27 What does culturally responsive teaching require?	• Villegas & Lucas (2007), "The Culturally Responsive Teacher" • Muhammad, Unearthing Joy, selected excerpt/chapter (TBD) • "How to Be a Warm Demander"
12 • 11/03 How do we plan meaningful learning across different disciplines?	• Review UNT/common lesson-plan expectations and one discipline-specific sample lesson plan • Inquiry planning resource from Dr. K (to be added) • Bring a topic, standard/TEKS, artwork, text, performance, problem, or disciplinary idea you may want to teach.
13 • 11/10 How do schools work, and whom will you work with?	• Organization of Texas Public School District Leadership • Organization of School Campus Leadership • Professional and Paraprofessional Roles in Public Schools • Complete 2 required TEA Trainings
14 • 11/17 Who governs schools, and how do policy and accountability shape classrooms?	• Watch The Revisionaries (2012) • TEA: Who We Are • Texas Public Education Laws and Rules • Texas Accountability Measures for Student Achievement • How Stakeholder Decisions Shaped New STAAR Legislation
15 • 11/24 Thanksgiving Break No Class	• Thanksgiving Break No Class
16 • 12/01 What kind of classroom and professional practice will you create?	• Professional Portfolio draft • Complete final 2 required TEA Trainings • Optional: Complete the SPOT review for our class.
17 • 12/08 No In-Person Class	• Final Professional Portfolio Due • Final revisions to portfolio lesson plan and implementation resources

*I reserve the right to modify readings or assignments in the course in an effort to improve students' educational experiences in the course. All changes will be communicated in advance.

* While there is no final exam for this course, the instructor reserves the right to use the scheduled exam time of Tuesday, December 8th, 8:00-10:00am (see [Finals schedule](#)).

Grading and Assessment

The class is out of 100 points, which means points and percentage will be the same for the course. Letter grades will be allocated on the following percentage scale:

A	90-100
B	80-89
C	70-79
D	60-69
F	0-59

The course instructor's approach to assessments aligns with UNT policies concerning academic integrity (UNT Student Academic Integrity Policy, 06.003).

Texas Educator Standards

The UNT Educator Preparation Program curriculum includes alignment to standards identified by the Texas State Board of Educator Certification (SBEC) for beginning educators. These standards are addressed throughout your preparation and assessed through the TExES Certification exams required for your teaching certificate. Additionally, the Commissioner of TEA has adopted these rules pertaining to Texas teaching standards:

Texas Teaching Standards

Standards required for all Texas beginning teachers fall into the following 6 broad categories:

Standard 1--Instructional Planning and Delivery. Standard 1Ai, ii, iv; 1Bi, ii (Lesson design)

Standard 2--Knowledge of Students and Student Learning

Standard 3--Content Knowledge and Expertise

Standard 4--Learning Environment

Standard 5--Data-Driven Practice

Standard 6--Professional Practices and Responsibilities

EC-12 Professional Pedagogy and Responsibilities (PPR) Standards

The beginning EC-12 teacher knows and understands:

- **Competency 001:** human developmental processes and applies this knowledge to plan instruction and ongoing assessment that motivate students and are responsive to their developmental characteristics and

needs

- **Competency 002:** student diversity and knows how to plan learning experiences and design assessments that are responsive to differences among students and that promote all students' learning
- **Competency 005:** how to establish a classroom climate that fosters learning, equity and excellence and USES this knowledge to create a physical and emotional environment that is safe and productive
- **Competency 007:** principles and strategies for communicating effectively in varied teaching and learning contexts.

EC-12 Tech Apps Standards

The beginning EC-12 teacher knows and understands how to:

- **Standard I.** use and promote creative thinking and innovative processes to construct knowledge, generate new ideas, and create products
- **Standard II.** collaborate and communicate both locally and globally using digital tools and resources to reinforce and promote learning.
- **Standard III.** make informed decisions by applying critical-thinking and problem solving skills.

English Language Proficiency Standards (ELPS)

This course incorporates the ELPS in lesson planning and instructional delivery in order to improve language acquisition and content area knowledge of students who are English learners. The ELPs will be implemented by teacher candidates during instruction of the subject area for students who are English learners. The ELPs can be accessed via the Texas Education Agency using the following link:

<http://ritter.tea.state.tx.us/rules/tac/chapter074/ch074a.html#74.4>.

Texas College and Career Readiness Standards

The Texas College and Career Readiness Standards can be accessed at the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board Web site using the following link:

<http://www.theccb.state.tx.us/index.cfm?objectid=EADF962E-0E3E-DA80-BAAD2496062F3CD8>

Technology Applications

[Technology Applications \(All Beginning Teachers, PDF\)](#) The first seven standards of the Technology Applications EC-12 Standards are expected of all beginning teachers and are incorporated into the Texas Examination of Educator Standards (TEXES) Pedagogy and Professional Responsibilities (PPR) test.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) Use in This Course

In this class, my approach to AI use begins with transparency about my own practices. I will not use Generative AI (GenAI) to answer your emails, provide feedback, or grade your work. These tasks are central to the relationships I build with students, and I value those relationships more than the efficiencies GenAI might offer. On occasions when I do use GenAI, for example, to assist in translation of course materials into Spanish, I will clearly identify what was generated by AI and explain how it was used.

This course uses the [AI Assessment Scale \(AIAS\)](#) to help clarify expectations about the role of GenAI in your work. The AIAS identifies five different kinds of assessment: **Level 1: No AI; Level 2: AI Planning; Level 3: AI Collaboration; Level 4: Full AI; and Level 5: AI Exploration.** These levels are not a ranking from “bad” to “good.” Instead, they describe different roles that GenAI may play depending on what an assignment is intended to help you learn or demonstrate.

For individual assignments, I may identify a particular AIAS level or specify which types of GenAI use are permitted or prohibited. I may also determine that generative GenAI is not permitted for some or all coursework when its use would interfere with the learning goals of the course. Always follow the directions for the individual assignment. If the expectations are unclear, it is your responsibility to ask me before using GenAI.

You are encouraged to reflect on your own approach to GenAI in this course by crafting a brief statement in your Education Journal about how you will or will not use it, guided by what you value about your learning, the course experience, and your relationships with peers and me. Your stance may evolve over the semester.

Regardless of your stance, you must always disclose GenAI use through an AI Use Disclosure Statement for each class assignment. If an AIAS level has been designated for the assignment, identify that level. If no level has been designated, identify the AIAS level that best describes your actual GenAI use. Provide a brief, two- to three-sentence explanation of whether and how you used generative GenAI, including activities such as research, brainstorming, planning, writing feedback, editing, translation, or content generation. If you did not use Generative AI, simply state that you did not use it.

If you use a Generative AI chat, you must also provide a **shareable link to the relevant GenAI chat log or logs** with your AI Use Disclosure Statement. This is a course transparency requirement that allows you to document your process. It is also

consistent with current APA Style guidance for citing a specific retrievable AI chat through its shareable URL.

More generally, this course does not assume that using GenAI is educationally beneficial. GenAI can encourage us to offload thinking and other cognitive work that is central to learning. You are therefore encouraged to use as little GenAI as necessary and may choose not to use it at all when GenAI use is optional. The central question is not simply *How can I use GenAI?* but *Does using GenAI in this particular way support or diminish my learning?*

Because writing is an important form of thinking, some assignments will limit or prohibit the use of AI to generate writing for you. When GenAI performs writing that you are expected to develop yourself, it can offload the learning process and undermine the purpose of the assignment. Other assignments may invite or require AI use when doing so serves the learning goals of the course. The assignment directions and any designated AIAS expectations will make these differences explicit.

If you have broader ethical, pedagogical, environmental, social, or other concerns about generative AI, you may also use the [Civics of Technology technology audit](#) to consider the larger question of whether, when, and under what conditions generative AI should be used.

If you are unsure whether a GenAI use violates our class policy, it is your responsibility to ask Dr. K. **Undisclosed or unauthorized uses of GenAI will be considered academic dishonesty under the University's Academic Integrity Policy.** This policy is not only about compliance. It is also intended to protect your opportunities to learn. Over-reliance on GenAI can limit opportunities to practice critical thinking, communication, writing, and other skills this course is designed to develop.

Course policy adapted in part from [Watkins \(2025\)](#) and incorporates the [AI Assessment Scale](#) (AIAS 2.1).

Academic Freedom Statement

Some Texas laws have banned diversity, equity, and inclusion programs at public colleges and universities in Texas. These laws do not in any way affect content, instruction or discussion in a course at public colleges and universities in Texas. Expectations and academic freedom for teaching and class discussion have not been altered post-SB 17, and students should not feel the need to censor their speech pertaining to topics including race and racism, structural inequality, LGBTQ+ issues, or diversity, equity, and inclusion.

The concept of academic freedom applies in this class. Higher education is predicated on the exchange, vetting, and deliberation of often controversial

and unsettled ideas. In this class, for example, we explore the purposes and history of schooling, inequities in educational systems, disability rights and special education, bilingual education, culturally responsive teaching, teacher power and professionalism, and the effects of governance and accountability on classrooms. We are not here to simply express personal opinions or repeat talking points, but rather to engage ideas, evidence, and research that have a long and complicated history and are therefore subject to ongoing debate. Committed students and scholars can, and do, disagree on the topics we will be discussing.

This course has been designed to bring these controversies and disagreements to the fore. Students are also invited to introduce additional challenges in a serious and open-minded manner. Such conversations require mutual trust and respect. It is therefore essential that students feel free to express their deeply held views and continually developing perspectives. This means ensuring that all students and faculty feel included and welcomed to engage in discussion. Because hateful or discriminatory speech and behavior degrades the possibility for a free exchange of ideas, it will not be tolerated.

University Statements

Academic Integrity Standards and Consequences

According to UNT Policy 06.003, Student Academic Integrity, academic dishonesty occurs when students engage in behaviors including, but not limited to cheating, fabrication, facilitating academic dishonesty, forgery, plagiarism, and sabotage. A finding of academic dishonesty may result in a range of academic penalties or sanctions ranging from admonition to expulsion from the University.

ADA Accommodation Statement

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 faculty 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 faculty 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](https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/office-disability-access) website (<https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/office-disability-access>).

Digital Materials

This course has digital components. To fully participate in this class, students will need internet access to reference content on the Canvas Learning Management System and other technology. If circumstances change, you will be informed of other technical needs to access course content. Information on how to be successful in a digital learning environment can be found at [Learn Anywhere](https://online.unt.edu/learn) (<https://online.unt.edu/learn>).

Emergency Notification & 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 the UNT Learning Management System (LMS) for contingency plans for covering course materials.