

EDEC 3750
Fall 2025
Young Children in Schools, Families, and Communities
 University of North Texas
 Department of Teacher Education and Administration

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Note on email: **When you email, please include **EDEC 3750** in the subject line**

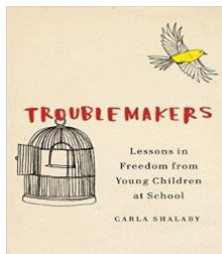
CATALOG COURSE DESCRIPTION

Focuses on children's relationships with their peers, adults, and environments using dynamic ecological frameworks that account for children's local and global contexts. Through case studies, we will explore the ways that children's sociocultural identities and funds of knowledge play a role in their negotiations of their social environments.
 Prerequisite: EDEC 3613.

OVERVIEW & BIG IDEAS

This course examines the involvement of families from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds and discusses different forms of culturally sustaining praxis in early childhood programs. Ways to establish collaborative relationships with parents and others involved with children in early childhood settings are discussed. Strategies for communicating with parents and guardians about their children and incorporating the families' goals and desires for their children into the early childhood programs will be included.

REQUIRED TEXTS



Shalaby, C. (2017). *Troublemakers: Lessons in freedom from young children at school*. The New Press. This book is available in the bookstore, online retailers, and as an e-book via Willis library, using the link <http://iii.library.unt.edu/record=b6074460~S12>

OBJECTIVES

By the end of this course, you should be able to:

1. Seek and maintain collaborative relationships with parents, guardians, families, community agencies, and other professionals to meet the needs of each child.
2. Create and maintain a safe and welcoming environment for families and community members.
3. Demonstrate knowledge of and respect for variations across cultures, in terms of family strengths, expectations, values and familial practices.
4. Demonstrate the ability to incorporate families' desires/goals for their children into classroom and forms of support.
5. Develop ways that schools can form partnerships with families, caregivers, and community members.

COURSE STRUCTURE

- The course will be interactive and will include a mix of interactive lectures, small/large group discussions, group led activities, and visits to the Center for Young Children at UNT. Your attendance, as well as your active participation, are important to the success of the class. All readings should be done before class, **and you should come prepared to each class with notes, ideas, and questions to pose to your classmates**. As

an instructor, I understand that there are multiple ways of participating in class, and therefore, I have designed the course to honor the multiple modes we use to engage with course content. While you will not be required to be a vocal contributor to every large group discussion, everyone will be expected participate in dialogue within our small group discussions. Our class meetings are a space for us to be a community and support one another.

- **Please put your cell phones away during class.** If you are on-call for work, please keep the ringer off and let the instructor know that you may need to leave the room to take a call. Computers are only allowed as needed for appropriate class assignments.

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS

You will have the following assignments during the course. More information will be provided closer to the deadlines. The following provides for you an overview:

Attendance and participation: Attendance at all class meetings is **required** and is **essential** to your success in this course. This class is highly interactive and learning occurs through participation in class discussions and activities that are impossible to be duplicated outside of class. It is very difficult to be enriched by discussions and collaborations if you are not physically present or prepared for class. **Please note that attendance and participation points, which are 140 points of your grade this semester, will be based on activities that will be completed during class. Each in class activity will be submitted at the end of class and will require that you have completed the readings for the week.**

Students must let the instructor know as soon as possible if they will be missing class. It is the students' responsibility to obtain all notes and handouts missed during their absence. All assignments are due on dates indicated on the syllabus regardless of student absences.

Communication with the instructor is very important in this class. **In the event that a student misses four more classes, they will receive a failing grade.** Chronic tardiness or early departure will result in the lowering of a final grade at the instructor's discretion (arriving more than 15 minutes late or leaving more than 15 minutes early).

Parent/guardian interview: You'll be asked to conduct an interview with a parent/guardian. You will have opportunities to learn about their priorities in facilitating home, school, community partnerships. After the interview, you will be asked to write a 3-4 page reflection paper about what you learned, what surprised you, how the interviews help you grow as a professional, and how you would build a strong family and school partnership differently.

Book Read Aloud: You will work in pairs to select a children's book with a topic that focuses on a family or families. The book should be for children anywhere between the ages of birth to 2nd grade. You can choose to utilize your local library or the UNT library (to check out a book) or a bookstore (in person or online to purchase a book). If you are currently placed at the CYC for 3700, you could also seek support from the CYC to utilize their library to borrow a book. Once you have selected a book, you will read it aloud in class on your pair's designated day in the semester (see sign-up sheet).

Community Resource Exploration Project: You will work in groups to search community organizations or resources from surrounding/neighborhood areas and compile a resource guide and pamphlet.

Letter to Yourself: You will write a reflection in the form of a letter to yourself. In your letter, include **three** takeaways from the book entitled Troublemakers. In each takeaway, please include 1) a description of the takeaway idea, 2) an explanation of why this is important for you as a teacher, and 3) an explicit connection to the content of the book and our class discussions.

Family Engagement Project: With your group member(s), you will create a family engagement project and home-school connection activities. This is a collaborative project creating a plan that is inclusive and considers the multiple forms of family demographics we have considered during the course. For this collaborative assignment, you are

going to practice how to work with each other, what roles each member of your group will carry out to complete the project plan, and how you will ensure equitable participation of group members.

COURSE EVALUATION

Parent/Guardian interview (50 pts)

Book Read Aloud (50 pts)

Community Resource Project (100 pts)

Letter to Yourself (40 pts)

Family Event/Engagement Project (120 pts)

Attendance and Participation (140 pts)

COURSE GRADING SCALE

A = 450-500 points (90%-100%)

B = 400-449 points (80%-89%)

C = 350-399 points (70%-79%)

D = 300-349 points (60%-69%)

F = <299 points (<59%)

COURSE CALENDAR

***The instructor reserves the right to change the course calendar, readings, and assignments to meet the needs of the class.**

Week/Date	Topic	Readings DUE	Assignment DUE
1 08/21	Course introduction		*This week, find a parent/guardian that you can interview next week
Week/Date	Topic	Readings DUE	Assignment DUE
2 08/28	Teacher Identity, Building Community	Souto-Manning, 2013, Chapter 2, See canvas	Bring art making supplies to class *This week, interview a parent/guardian. Assignment is due next week!
3 09/04	The purpose of schooling In class activity to create parent survey for the Family Event at the CYC; This is Phase I of Family Engagement/Event and will be due at end of class.	1. Shalaby (2017): Foreword, Preface & Introduction, pp. xi-xxv AND about the Forest School pp. 1-8	Parent/guardian interview DUE by start of class
4 09/11	1. Learning from Zora 2. From At-Risk to At-Promise	1. Shalaby(2017): p.9-39 2. Patton Davis & Museus, 2019, see canvas	2 Book Read Alouds (see sign up sheet)
5 09/18	1. Learning from Lucas	1. Shalaby (2017): pp. 41-72	Bring laptop to class

	2. Food Desserts and Family Resources Begin Community Resource Project (will work on in class)	2. Ring 2023, see canvas	2 Book Read Alouds (see sign up sheet) Community Resource Project Phase I DUE at end of class
6 09/25	Attending Class is Optional Today. Work in your small groups to complete your Community Resource Project Due Today! Our classroom is available as a workspace, and I will be available to assist!		Bring laptop to class Community Resource Project Phase II & III DUE at end of class
7 10/02	Group Presentations of Community Resource Projects Review feedback from parent surveys and decide on groups and family event activities		2 Book Read Alouds (see sign up sheet)
Week/Date	Topic	Readings DUE	Assignment DUE
8 10/09	Learning from Sean Work on preparations for family engagement event	Shalaby (2017): pp. 73-114	2 Book Read Alouds (see sign up sheet) Phase II of Family Event/Engagement Project, Due by end of class on Canvas Family Event Orders Due by End of Class
9 10/16	Special Guest Speakers from Local Community Outreach and Support Programs In class activities related to readings due today.	Please Find the Readings Due for today on Canvas.	
10 10/23	1. Learning from Marcus 2. Families We Serve	1. Shalaby (2017): pp. 115-149 2. Lutherman, 2022, Wamsley, 2021, & Majeski, 2021, see canvas	2 Book Read Alouds (see sign up sheet)
11 10/30	Federal Food Programs and Diaper Disparities	See Canvas for Readings Due, in addition to:	2 Book Read Alouds (see sign up sheet)

		Hunter, 2024, see canvas Food Research & Action Center, 2019, pages 1-20 and 27-28, see canvas	
Week/Date	Topic	Readings DUE	Assignment DUE
12 11/06	1. Teachers' roles in enacting modes of social belonging 2. Families We Serve Work on final preparations for family engagement event	1. Shalaby (2017): pp. 151-169 2. Dillard, 2018, see canvas	2 Book Read Alouds (see sign up sheet)
13 11/13	Full Class Meets at CYC for Family Engagement Event Hosted by our Class		
14 11/20	1. Thinking differently about young children 2. Families We Serve	1. Shalaby (2017): pp. 171-187 2. Lee, 2019, see canvas	
15 11/27	NO CLASS- FALL BREAK		
16 12/04	Class will not meet. Take this time to work on Final (Letter to Yourself)		Letter to Yourself DUE December 4

COURSE POLICIES

Canvas: We will use Canvas as the platform for the course. It is your responsibility to check Canvas for the readings, which will be uploaded there unless it is the primary text. From time to time, I may make revisions, based on the needs of the class. Those revisions will be announced on Canvas, and the appropriate changes will be made to the module.

Class Attendance: Your attendance at weekly meetings is key to your success in this class. Each week your attendance and participation will count towards your final grade. Each week's attendance counts as 10 points towards your final grade. The attendance policy is not meant to be punitive but simply to ensure that you are able to fully engage in this course and that there is equity in how final grades are determined. **In the event that a student misses four or more classes, they will receive a failing grade.**

If you have to be absent, please contact me via email as soon as you know you will be absent. You are allowed 1 excused absence for which there is no penalty. After that, for each excused absence, while you will not be able to make up the work for full credit, you can make up the work for up to 5 points. Makeup work will be based on the class topic that you missed. All makeup work must be completed within two weeks of your absence, and no extensions will be granted.

See [this link](#) for university defined excused and unexcused absences. If your 2nd absence and beyond are due to extenuating circumstances please reach out to me. As per university policy I may use my discretion in excusing absences. Life is full of so many unexpected moments and challenges, so just as you commit to engaging in this course to the fullest extent, I commit to engaging in compassion, understanding and grace to the fullest extent!

Assignments: All written assignments must be completed on time. If you are unable to turn in your assignment on the specified due date, please make arrangements with me ahead of time (not the weekend the assignment is due). **Without prior arrangements, ten percentage points will be deducted for each day late beyond the due date. No assignments will be accepted after one week.** If you are absent the day an assignment is due, please make arrangements to submit by the due date to avoid late penalties. All written assignments must be completed in APA style (<http://www.apastyle.org/> or <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/>). You must submit assignments via Canvas. Please note that many submissions will go through Turnitin, a plagiarism checker, so make sure that your work is original.

Assignments have been intentionally assigned throughout the semester to align with the course readings and meetings. Like you, I have a full schedule that has been carefully arranged. These assignments have been assigned to time points that allow me to give you ample and timely feedback so please be respectful of this. **If you turn an assignment in late, you will receive less feedback.** In addition, turning assignments in after the due date can put undue pressure on you to compensate for the tardiness.

You should be proactive in looking ahead at assignments so that you can ask any clarifying questions well before it is due.

Incompletes: All assignments need to have been completed for a grade to be issued. Incompletes will not be granted, with the exception of a documented emergency.

Technology in the Classroom: You can bring your digital devices to class, but I trust that you will use it to take notes or conduct class-related inquiries. In this technological age, let's use our computers for good and not in a way that distracts ourselves or others. In other words, please use your devices in class for course purposes. Use your phones only if necessary. Let me know ahead of time if you have family responsibilities or personal situations that require the use of your phone during class.

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 AI to answer your emails, provide feedback, grade your work, or write letters of recommendation. These tasks are central to the relationships I build with students, and I value those relationships more than the efficiencies AI might offer.

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 are 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, exam, or coursework 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. Additionally, tools like Grammarly, spellcheck, predictivetext, speech-to-text, and translation tools are not allowed as they blur authorship and misrepresent your independent work. All work must be your own.

This policy is not only about compliance, but it is also about protecting your own learning. Over-reliance on AI can limit your ability to practice critical thinking, communication, and other skills this course is designed to develop. Course policy is adapted from Watkins, 2025.

Students who submit work either not their own or without clear attribution to the original source, fabricate data or other information, engage in cheating, or misrepresentation of academic records will be subject to charges. **Any infraction of this nature, whether it be a phrase or more, will result in a grade of a 0 (zero) for the assignment.**

Please also see the department policies in the following section for more on this.

Integrity beyond question is expected of every student. Every source used to inform written work, whether expressed in quotation marks or simply integrated into the substance of the paper, accessed in print or Internet publication, must be appropriately cited. Documented plagiarism will be reported to the appropriate College official. All work submitted in this course must be the student's own and original, which means that it has not been submitted for any other course or publication.

Plagiarism violates academic integrity (**and it also affects my personal relationship with you**). Any attempt to present someone else's work as your own, on papers, exams, transcripts, etc. constitutes plagiarism, a form of theft and fraud. There are various forms of plagiarism of which the following are most common. It is your responsibility to ensure that you clearly distinguish between your words and ideas and those of other authors, and to understand proper ways to give credit to other authors and sources.

1. *Word-for-word plagiarism*. This includes (a) the submission of another student's work as your own; (b) the submission of work from any source whatever (book, magazine, or newspaper article, unpublished paper, or thesis, internet) without proper acknowledgement by footnote or reference within the text of the paper; (c) the submission of any part of another's work without proper use of quotation marks and citation.
2. *Patchwork plagiarism*. This consists of piecing together of unacknowledged phrases and sentences quoted verbatim (or nearly verbatim) from a variety of sources. The mere reshuffling of other people's words does not constitute "original" work.
3. *Unacknowledged paraphrase*. It is perfectly legitimate to set forth another author's facts or ideas in one's own words, but if one is genuinely indebted to the other author for these facts or ideas, the debt must be acknowledged by footnote or reference within the text of the paper.
4. *Self-plagiarism*. Work created for a class may be turned in only for credit in that class. Attempting to receive academic credit for work done for another class is a form of academic dishonesty. Please speak with me if you are considering combining your work for this class with work for another class.

NOTEWORTHY

Title IX Services: 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, stalking, etc. The federal Title IX law makes it clear that violence and harassment based on sex and gender are civil rights violations. UNT's Dean of Students' website offers a range of resources to help support survivors, based on their needs: <http://deanofstudents.unt.edu/resources>. Renee LeClaire McNamara is UNT's Student Advocate and she can be reached via email at SurvivorAdvocate@unt.edu or by calling the Dean of Students' office at 940-565-2648.

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 and/or refer to the following website: <https://speakout.unt.edu/content/mental-health-resources>

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. 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://deanofstudents.unt.edu/resources/food-pantry>

More about the UNT Food Pantry: The Food Pantry helps students access healthy and nutritious foods for free once per week. The pantry offers a rotating selection of shelf stable foods and produce to help fight food insecurity among UNT's student population. The pantry also provides SNAP benefits consultations, mobile food pantries, and food sovereignty resources to help students take control of their nutritional journeys.

Suit Up & Clothing Closets: The Diamond Eagle Clothing Closet offers free everyday wear for students for free - it's like thrifting, but without having to pay! The Suit Up Closet provides free rentals of professional attire for job interviews, job fairs, headshots, presentations, or other professional development opportunities. Students can visit the closets by making an appointment through [Navigate360](#).

Mean Green Gowns for Grads: Gowns for Grads supports the academic accomplishments of our low-income and first-generation students by providing free rentals of graduation caps and gowns.

The We Mean Green Fund: The WMGF empowers UNT students, faculty, and staff to improve our institution by providing funding for a greener campus. WMGF projects embody passion and spirit for ecological sustainability and care for the environment. This year's applications for WMGF proposals open on September 16th and close on October 18th. **Below are a couple WMGF programs:**

UNT Community Garden: The Community Garden originated as a student-led project funded by the UNT WMGF. The mission of the garden is to promote environmental education, grow food organically, and foster a community focused on a greener, healthier future for everyone. Students can apply to be on a garden plot and will be provided with all materials, seeds, gardening education, and tools for free. All produce grown by students is theirs to keep. Any extra produce will be donated to the UNT Food Pantry.

Sustainable Arts Garden: The Sustainable Arts Garden (SAG) is a space for students to embrace their creativity and build community through natural resources to make art, while learning about sustainable practices. We host garden workdays and various workshops throughout the academic year. The SAG also creates the 'Environmental Volunteerism Graduation Cord' with natural dyes made from plants grown in the garden.

UNT's Standard Syllabus 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. UNT makes reasonable academic accommodation for students with disabilities. Students seeking accommodation must first register with the Office of Disability Accommodation (ODA) to verify their eligibility. If a disability is verified, the ODA will provide a student with an accommodation letter to be delivered to faculty to begin a private discussion regarding one's specific course needs. Students may request accommodations at any time, however, ODA notices of 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 accommodation for every semester and must meet with each faculty member prior to implementation in each class. For additional information see the ODA website at disability.unt.edu.

Course Safety Procedures (for Laboratory Courses). Students enrolled in [insert class name] are required to use proper safety procedures and guidelines as outlined in UNT Policy 06.038 Safety in Instructional Activities. While working in laboratory sessions, students are expected and required to identify and use proper safety guidelines in all activities requiring lifting, climbing, walking on slippery surfaces, using equipment and tools, handling chemical solutions and hot and cold products. Students should be aware that the UNT is not liable for injuries incurred while students are participating in class activities. All students are encouraged to secure adequate insurance coverage in the event of accidental injury. Students who do not have insurance coverage should consider obtaining Student Health Insurance. Brochures for student insurance are available in the UNT Student Health and Wellness Center. Students who are injured during class activities may seek medical attention at the Student Health and Wellness Center at rates that are reduced compared to other medical facilities. If students have an insurance plan other than Student Health Insurance at UNT, they should be sure that the plan covers treatment at this facility. If students choose not to go to the UNT Student Health and Wellness Center, they may be transported to an emergency room at a local hospital. Students are responsible for expenses incurred there.

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 Blackboard for contingency plans for covering course.

Department Syllabus Statements

Foliotek ePortfolio (where applicable). Foliotek is a software data management system (DMS) used in the assessment of your knowledge, skills, and dispositions relevant to program standards and objectives. You will be required to use your Foliotek account for the duration of your enrollment in the College of Education in order to upload required applications, course assignments, and other electronic evidences/evaluations as required. This course may require assignment(s) to be uploaded and graded in Foliotek. The College of Education will track your progress in your program through this data to verify that you have successfully met the competencies required in your program of study. All students must register in the program portfolio that aligns with their degree plan. Registration codes and tutorials can be found on this site: <https://coe.unt.edu/educator-preparation-office/foliotek>

Student Evaluation Administration Dates. 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, 14 and 15 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 or email spot@unt.edu.

Sexual Assault Prevention. UNT is committed to providing a safe learning environment free of all forms of sexual misconduct. Federal laws and UNT policies prohibit discrimination on the basis of sex as well as sexual misconduct. If you or someone you know is experiencing sexual harassment, relationship violence, stalking and/or sexual assault, there are campus resources available to provide support and assistance. The Survivor Advocates can be reached at SurvivorAdvocate@unt.edu or by calling the Dean of Students Office at 940-565- 2648.

COURSE STANDARDS

This course meets the following TEKS standards for social studies:

Kindergarten:

- (11) Culture. The student understands similarities and differences among people.
- (12) Culture. The student understands how people learn about themselves through family customs and traditions.

1st Grade:

- (11) Government. The student understands the purpose of rules and laws.
- (12) Government. The student understands the role of authority figures, public officials, and citizens.
- (13) Citizenship. The student understands characteristics of good citizenship as exemplified by historical figures and other individuals.
- (15) Culture. The student understands the importance of family beliefs, customs, language, and traditions.

2nd Grade:

- (13) Citizenship. The student understands characteristics of good citizenship as exemplified by historical figures and other individuals.

3rd Grade:

- (11) Citizenship. The student understands characteristics of good citizenship as exemplified by historical and contemporary figures.
- (12) Citizenship. The student understands the impact of individual and group decisions on communities in a constitutional republic.
- (13) Culture. The student understands ethnic and/or cultural celebrations of the local community and other

communities.

4th Grade:

(19) Culture. The student understands the contributions of people of various racial, ethnic, and religious groups to Texas.

5th Grade:

(22) Culture. The student understands the contributions of people of various racial, ethnic, and religious groups to the United States.

6th Grade:

(12) Government. The student understands various ways in which people organize governments.

(13) Citizenship. The student understands that the nature of citizenship varies among societies.

(14) Citizenship. The student understands the relationship among individual rights, responsibilities, duties, and freedoms in societies with representative governments.

(15) Culture. The student understands the similarities and differences within and among cultures in various world societies.

TeXes Pedagogy and Professional Responsibilities (PPR). The following PPR domains, competencies, and skills correspond to the information presented in this course:

Domain II, Creating a Positive, Productive Classroom Environment

Competency 005: The teacher knows 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 [A, B, C, D, E, F, G]

Competency 006: The teacher understands strategies for creating an organized and productive learning environment and for managing student behavior [A, B, C, D, E, H, I, J]

Domain III, Implementing Effective, Responsive Instruction and Assessment

Competency 007: The teacher understands and applies principles and strategies for communicating effectively in varied teaching and learning contexts [A, B, C, D]

Competency 008: The teacher provides appropriate instruction that actively engages students in the learning process [A, B, C, F]

Domain IV, Fulfilling Professional Roles and Responsibilities

Competency 011: The teacher understands the importance of family involvement in children's education and knows how to interact and communicate effectively with families [A, C, D, F]