

EDEC 3700.501: Pedagogies and Practices of Early Childhood
Fall 2023
University of North Texas
Department of Teacher Education and Administration



Picture from Abundant Beginnings Summer Camp

Instructor:	Ranita Cheruvu [she/her]
Course Meets:	Wednesdays 9:30-12:20 FRLD 400
Office hours:	T/Th 1-2pm Denton; Wednesdays (after class) Frisco and by appointment
Email:	Ranita.cheruvu@unt.edu
Communication:	With the exception of weekends, please allow 24 hours for a response if you send an email. Include the course number in the subject line to help me know what section you are in.

BRIEF OVERVIEW

This course considers the significant role that environments and aesthetics play in children's experiences, learning, and development and will examine school environments, as well as the children and childhoods produced in and through the policies, practices, and pedagogies of schools. This course serves as the centering course for Block A and requires attendance in seminars. Students will also need to participate in a 20-hour field experience that engages them in thinking critically about anti-racism, anti-bias, and trauma-informed educational practices.

COURSE PREREQUISITES

Admission to Teacher Education program. Concurrent enrollment in EDEC 3750. Enrollment in Block A.

REQUIRED FIELD HOURS

Students will be expected to observe and participate in 20 hours of classroom activities at the UNT-affiliated lab school for young children or a local preschool (Frisco section). Students will spend 2 hours a week for 10 weeks (20 hours total). The placements will start around the 3rd or 4th week of class as we begin to discuss classroom and school processes and practices and the ways they come to impact young children. Each week students will be asked to observe and assess multiple processes and practices. These will include 1) caregiving practices (e.g. toileting, feeding, napping); 2) discursive practices (e.g. how adults talk to and about children); 3) material and aesthetic practices (e.g. how children are encouraged to create; how materials are used in the classroom; what materials are made available to children); 4) play practices (e.g. how are children allowed to play and how their play can inform curriculum); and 5) academic practices (e.g. how children and adults negotiate times like calendar time, morning meeting, read-alouds). Students will be expected to use reflexive journaling to analyze these practices and provide recommendations.

OBJECTIVES

This course is designed to denaturalize typical ways of seeing and understanding early childhood pedagogies and practices. To do this, you will engage with the following course goals:

1. Critically assess how the aesthetics of schools impact the learning experiences and well-being of young children, families, and communities;
2. Identify anti-Black, ableist, patriarchal, imperialist, capitalist, and settler-colonial ideologies that may undergird the design, approaches, and processes of different school practices for children;
3. Contrast and analyze longstanding practices and pedagogies within traditional and progressive Western classroom environments in relation to Afro-centric and Global South ways of knowing, doing, and thinking about learning and school;
4. Evaluate aesthetic and pedagogical choices that communicate anti-oppressive and anti-racist pedagogies in school;
5. Enact critical changes in the classroom environment to assess their impact on children's relationships, well-being, and learning.

TEXTS

All texts will be uploaded to Canvas, corresponding with each week.

ASSIGNMENTS

Further details will be provided about the assignments during the semester.

Assignments: You will have the following assignments during the course. More information will be provided closer to the deadlines, but these assignments include:

Class Attendance and Participation: In class is where and when we discuss the conceptual frameworks that guide our analysis of classroom and school environments. It's imperative that you participate in our discussions and activities. Thus, attendance at all class meetings 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.

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 five or 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). Your success in this course requires your attendance and participation.

Reflexive Journaling: You will complete three reflexive journal entries based on your experiences at your preschool placement using the prompts provided in class.

Documentation Panel: You will collect four artifacts from your classroom visits. Then, using these artifacts, you'll create a digital documentation panel to tell the story of a child's (or children's) inquiries. You will share this in class and then write a short reflection, answering the following questions about the provocation your panel was based on: 1) How does this provocation support and/or impede children's inquiries? 2) Who is included and/or excluded in this provocation?

School Practices Padlet and Analysis: Many traditional practices and policies we live with in school are considered "normal" and a "natural" part of school. We rarely ever question their purpose, how they are enacted, and how they might be beneficial and/or harmful (or exclusionary). In this analysis assignment, you will be asked to post (once a week for five weeks) in a course Padlet that focuses on anti-oppressive early childhood practices and pedagogies. You will then write a memo discussing any three posts, how they relate to your time in your placement, and why (or why not) they are anti-oppressive. You'll use course texts, classroom discussions, and field placement experiences to support your thinking. You are asked to really uncover things that you did not know about these school practices and policies.

Reimagining Schooling Practices: In the final reflective project, you will reflect on one of the major topics of the course and discuss the ways you would incorporate what you have learned related to this topic into classroom practice. Broad topics include- Cultural Diversity, Racialized Identities, Gender Diversity, Economic Class, Differing Abilities, Who Makes Up a Family.

COURSE EVALUATION

Assignment	Points
Attendance & Participation	225 points
Reflexive Journaling (3 Entries)	75 points
Documentation Panel	200 points
School Practices Padlet & Analysis	200 points
Reimagining Schooling Practices Final Reflection	100 points
Observation Hours (20 Hours Total)	200 points

COURSE GRADING SCALE

A = 895-1000 points (90%-100%)

B = 795-894 points (80%-89%)

C = 745-794 points (75%-79%)

D = 695-744 points (70%-74%)

F = <695 points (<70%)

ON GRADES

In this course, I want you to stay focused on the formulation of critical ideas and pushing your thinking around children and schooling. To do well in this course, you need to:

1. Complete and turn in assignments;
2. Unlearn any previously held ideas that learning is solely lecture-oriented or teacher-directed. I am asking you to think about learning as happening within our experiences in the world;
3. Rethink your role of being a teacher as being a facilitator of environments and as learning alongside children.

All of this is to say a few things:

1. It is your responsibility to keep track of your grades. Grades on Canvas may be inaccurate so to figure out your grade, total up your points and divide it by the total possible number of points.
2. If you want to dispute your grade on an assignment, wait 24 hours and then send me an email with a rationale as to why you believe your grade should be higher.
3. If you have severe anxiety around grades, do let me know early on so that we can find a grading procedure that works best for you.

Note on late assignments: All written assignments should be completed on time. I will accept all assignments up to 24 hours after the due date with no questions asked or explanations needed. I encourage you to use this grace period as needed, but at the same time to not plan around the grace period. If you are unable to turn in your assignment beyond the grace period, please make arrangements with me ahead of time (not on the due date/grace period). Late assignments beyond the grace period may be subject to grade reduction. If you turn assignments in late, I reserve the right to only provide a grade and minimal comments. Late assignments may be subject to grade reduction.

Looking at assignments ahead of time and redoing assignments: With a large class, I cannot look at your work ahead of time to make sure you are "on track" or allow assignments to be redone for a higher grade. I will provide you with rubrics for all of the assignments so be sure to use them as guides for your own. If you use them and edit your work for clarity, you should be okay.

IMPORTANT DATES

8/2 First day of class
9/1 Last day to drop without grade of W
11/10 Last day to drop with a W
11/11 First day to request incomplete (eligible if you are passing at the time of the request)
12/7 Last class meeting day
12/15 Last day of session
12/18 Grades due

CALENDAR

**The readings and assignments on this calendar are subject to revision.*

Week	Topic	Readings	Assignments
1 August 23	Course Introduction Progressive Early Childhood Approaches to Education & Care	Read Allen, et al. (2021) Watch Reflecting on anti-bias in education Listen to Early Link Podcast	Getting to know you survey EDEC 3700 Placement Questionnaire
2 August 30	Teachers as Researchers	Read Baker (2019) Bentley	
3 September 6	Reggio-Emilia and Classroom Environments as a Third Teacher	Wurm (2005) Ch. 2 Tarr (2014)	
4 September 13	Discursive Practices	Edwards & Derman-Sparks (2020) King (2021)	Observation Hours begin
5 September 20	Caregiving Practices	Leavitt & Power (1997)	
6 September 27	Material and Aesthetic Practices	Cabral, Fincham, & Templeton (2019) Sullivan (2020)	DUE: Reflexive Journal Entry #1
7 October 4	Play Practices	That Early Childhood Nerd - Liberated by Play Solomon (2016)	
8 October 11	Schooling Practices	Leu, Templeton, & Yoon (2016) Woke Read Aloud -	

		Wings or Woke Read Aloud - Mr. Tiger Goes Wild or Woke Read Aloud - Saturday (Student Choice)	
9 October 18	Provocations & Children's Artifacts	Biermeier (2015) Excerpt from Quinn & Rodriguez (2019)	DUE: Reflexive Journal Entry #2 Collect 2 artifacts in the classroom this week
10 October 25	Pedagogical Documentation	Wurm (2005) Ch. 5 Schroder-Yu (2008)	
11 November 1	Pedagogical Documentation	It's About Documenting: Documentation Panels Escamilla (2021)	
12 November 8	Environments as Spaces for Families and Communities	Cole & Verwayne (2018) Nimmo, et al. (2019)	DUE: Reflexive Journal Entry #3
13 November 15	Environments as Ecological Spaces	Learning Through A Forest School Approach Saint-Orens & Nxumalo (2018)	Last week of observation (unless you need to makeup hours) DUE: Pedagogical Documentation
Week 14 Fall Break November 20-24th No class			
15 November 29	Anti-Oppressive and Anti-Racist Spaces for Young	Creating Anti-Racist Early Childhood Spaces	

	Children	McKamey (2020)	
16 December 6	Anti-Oppressive and Anti-Racist Spaces for Young Children		
Final Exam Week- Reimagining Practices Reflection Due Wednesday, December 13th December 11-14			

NOTEWORTHY

Land and Labor Acknowledgement

We would like to acknowledge this university sits on unceded Indigenous land and pay our respects to the, "wichita, caddo, Kickapoo, Tawakoni, Waco and Keechi land", and all the American Indian and Indigenous Peoples and communities who have been or have become a part of these lands and territories in Texas, as UNT was built on this sacred ground. Land acknowledgements are a small step toward unlearning the stories and practices that erase Indigenous histories and the ongoing presence of Indigenous peoples today. As teacher educators, researchers, and scholars, we are often complicit in this harm, and it is imperative that we recognize, support, and advocate for the sovereignty of Native nations in our work.

We also want to honor Black bodies. Many parts of the United States were built by enslaved Africans and their enslaved descendants, and only within the past generation were Black people afforded full rights. Today, Black individuals and people of Color disproportionately work as service staff and essential workers across the country. This community is largely responsible for the maintenance of our daily lives, the food, food services, child care, health care, and many other basic necessities that make our lives easy.

University Mental Health Services: This is undoubtedly an incredibly difficult time for everyone, and for some students, current and ongoing events may be challenging your fortitude. Please know that UNT has resources to support students who may find it difficult to find joy at this time: <https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/student-health-and-wellness-center/> . You can also contact the center at 940-565-2333 or askSHWC@unt.edu. For mental health resources, please refer to the following website: <https://speakout.unt.edu/content/mental-health-resources>

Food/Housing Insecurity: The UNT Food Pantry is open for curbside deliveries. Please visit the website for more details: <https://deanofstudents.unt.edu/resources/food-pantry>. A student with difficulty affording groceries or accessing sufficient food to eat every day, or who lacks a safe and stable place to live, is urged to contact the Dean of Students, Suite 409 at the University Union.

Title IX Services: Sexual discrimination, harassment, & assault: 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 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.

POLICIES

Attendance. Students are expected to attend class meetings regularly and to abide by the attendance policy established for the course. It is important that you communicate with the professor and the instructional team prior to being absent, so you, the professor, and the instructional team can discuss and mitigate the impact of the absence on your attainment of course learning goals. Please inform the professor and instructional team if you are unable to attend class meetings because you are ill, in mindfulness of the health and safety of everyone in our community.

If you are experiencing any symptoms of COVID-19 (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html>) please seek medical attention from the Student Health and Wellness Center (940-565-2333 or askSHWC@unt.edu) or your health care provider PRIOR to coming to campus. UNT also requires you to contact the UNT COVID Team at COVID@unt.edu for guidance on actions to take due to symptoms, pending or positive test results, or potential exposure.

Incompletes: All assignments need to have been completed for a grade to be issued.

Assignments: Submit assignments via Canvas. *If you turn an assignment in late, you will receive zero to little feedback. I reserve the right to simply give a grade in the case of a late assignment.*

Technology. *Please put your cell phones/laptops away during class.* If you are on-call for work or home, 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.

Integrity: 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, can result in a grade of a 0 (zero) for the assignment. Please also see the UNT policies below for more on this.

Academic integrity is essential to maintaining an environment that fosters excellence in teaching, research, and other educational and scholarly activities. Therefore, any acts of plagiarism, use of AI technology to complete course work, or the use of any other materials/methods/means not one's own, is prohibited. These types of offenses will be judged by the instructor, who will determine the best course of action to rectify these issues.

Course Materials for Remote Instruction. Remote instruction may be necessary if community health conditions change or you need to self-isolate or quarantine due to COVID-19. Students

will need access to a [webcam and microphone – faculty member to include what other basic equipment is needed] to participate in fully remote portions of the class. Additional required classroom materials for remote learning include: [list specific software, supplies, equipment or system requirements needed for the course]. Information on how to be successful in a remote learning environment can be found at <https://online.unt.edu/learn>

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. (UNT Policy 16.001)

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.

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 at www.spot.unt.edu 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.

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 classroom 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 deanofstudents.unt.edu/conduct.

Educator Standards Addressed in this Course

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
- Competence 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.

Department of Teacher Education and Administration

The Department of Teacher Education and Administration seeks to improve educational practice through the generation of knowledge and to prepare education professionals who serve all students in an effective, inclusive and equitable manner. Its focus is on the preparation of highly competent educators, researchers and administrators who employ current theory and research as they fill these important roles.

Mission. The Department of Teacher Education and Administration integrates theory, research, and practice to generate knowledge and to develop educational leaders who advance the potential of all learners.

Vision: We aspire to be internationally recognized for developing visionary educators who provide leadership, promote social justice, and effectively educate all learners.

UNT Teacher Education Program Commitments

While teaching has always been a relational and intellectual endeavor, we acknowledge that *teaching is also both an ethical and a political act*. We recognize that many of the practices and traditions in schools today perpetuate long-seated historical and social oppressions. These social inequities are structural *and* socially constructed along dimensions of intersecting identities, including, but not limited to, race, color, ethnicity, national origin and identity, dis/ability, gender identity and expression, sex, sexual orientation, religion, immigration status, language, social class, age, and genetic orientation.

It is through our radical imaginations that we can create spaces for critical inquiry and engagement in schools at multiple levels: intellectual, ethical, physical, social, emotional, ecological, and aesthetic. We envision classrooms to be inclusive places that serve as complex and just ecosystems that allow for multiple identities, modes of expression, and ways of engagement to thrive together. We do this because we are committed to dismantling oppression. Teachers play an important role in this movement. Our teacher education program supports the development of core values related to:

- **Identity.** Preparing teachers who have agency and critically reflect on their lived experiences and identities as a way of informing their professional knowledge and humanizing pedagogies.
- **Inquiry.** Preparing teachers who value and inquire into the complex identities, as well as intellectual and transformational capacities, of children and youth.
- **Activism.** Preparing teachers who create curriculum that responds to children's and youth's inquiries and identities, as well as the sociopolitical and socioeconomic conditions of the world outside of schools—in neighborhoods, communities, and society-at-large.
- **Community.** Preparing teachers who recognize and honor the unique sociocultural experiences and communities of children and youth with whom they work.

We commit to teaching and teacher preparation that takes a transformative stance toward school change. We believe—acting in solidarity with teachers, children, youth, school leaders, and communities—we can radically reimagine and reconstruct schools and, thus, our society.

Teacher Preparation at The University of North Texas: Core Commitments

Commitments->	As Teachers	To Children and Youth	In our Practice	To Radically Imagine
Identity	We are individuals with cultural histories, knowledges, talents, and interests that we use as resources in our teaching.	We value and nurture the love, grace, humor, compassion, creativity, patience, joy, and peace young people bring into our teaching spaces.	We practice humanizing pedagogies that are asset-based, equitable, and appreciative of who we are and who we are becoming.	We imagine schools as spaces where teachers are encouraged and given space to be different in what they do with young people and their communities.

Inquiry	We are intellectuals with a deep understanding of academic content, curriculum development, and flexible pedagogies.	We value young people's knowledge, creativity, curiosity, aesthetics, imagination, and embodied ways of being as essential, educative and liberating	We practice curriculum as critical inquiry and research where children and youth are positioned as capable, knowledgeable and social agents for change.	We imagine a curriculum in schools that is shaped by societal goals and influenced daily by events unfolding in the world around us.
Advocacy & Activism	We are activists working against injustice for young people, teachers, and communities rooted in racism and other forms of discrimination.	We value and embody caring in all its forms – personal, social, cultural, linguistic, and ecological – as essential to growing a positive learning and living environment.	We practice activism in the curriculum by engaging children and youth in work that contributes to the creation of more just, more caring, and more peaceful world.	We imagine metaphors for schools as nurturing spaces for the whole individual rather than as efficient factories or businesses that produce products and profit.
Communities	We are members of multiple communities — connected in ways that make our successes intertwined.	We value inclusive learning communities that connect us within and outside of our classrooms.	We practice humility through our vulnerability; hope in the face of adversity; and resilience in response to our efforts that have fallen short.	We imagine schools as sustaining intersecting ways of being, knowing, and languaging.