

EDUC 395:
Controversy, Politics and Intellectual Freedom in Schools, from Kindergarten to College
Spring 2018
T/TH: 1010-1155AM
Library 305

Jeff Snyder

Willis 108

jsnyder@carleton.edu

Office Hours: M: 1030AM-1230PM; TH: 315-415PM; and by appointment

Course Description

How have political struggles over power, status and authority played out in American schools? This course examines past and present school controversies, from creationism to trigger warnings. How do—and how *should*—we teach contentious issues such as religion, racism and climate change? How much freedom do—and *should*—teachers have over the curriculum? What rights do—and *should*—students have to shape their own educational experiences? With an emphasis on the concept of intellectual freedom, we will examine big questions about the purpose of schooling in a diverse, multicultural nation as well as the relationship between knowledge and power.

Course Readings

Zimmerman, Jonathan and Emily Robertson. *The Case for Contention: Teaching Controversial Issues in American Schools*. Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2017.

All additional readings will be available on Moodle. Please bring hard copies of all course readings to class with you.

Course Requirements

Assignment

Due Date

Participation (20%)

Every class

Notes (20%)

April 19 & May 17 before class

Lead Discussion (15%)

dates vary

Banned Book Letter to the Editor (15%)

April 25 by 11:59PM

Group Presentation (30%)

1-page Proposal May 2 before 1159PM

May 22 or May 24

Course Outline**INTRODUCTIONS**

T, March 27

- course syllabus

TEACHING CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES

TH, March 29

TEACHER FREEDOM?

- *Case for Contention*, chs.1 & 2
- Horace Mann, Twelfth Annual Report (1848)

T, April 3

WHAT'S IN A "CONTROVERSY"?

- *Case for Contention*, chs.3 & 4

GOD IN THE CLASSROOM

TH, April 5

PROTESTANTS, CATHOLICS & NATIVE AMERICANS

- James W. Fraser, *Between Church and State*, chs.2, 3 & 5

T, April 10

THE *SCOPES* TRIAL & SCHOOL PRAYER

- Adam Laats, "Monkeys, Morality and Modern America"
- Fraser, *Between Church and State*, ch.10
- Jonathan Zimmerman, "Religious Education in Public Schools" & "School Prayer and the Conservative Revolution"

TH, April 12

EVOLUTION, CREATIONISM & INTELLIGENT DESIGN

- Adam Laats and Harvey Siegel, *Teaching Evolution in a Creation Nation*, chs.5-8 & conclusion
- Explore the websites of the National Center for Science Education & the Discovery Institute

INTELLECTUAL FREEDOM

T, April 17

THE FIRST AMENDMENT & FREE EXPRESSION IN A GLOBALLY CONNECTED DIGITAL AGE

- Timothy Garton Ash, “Cosmopolis”
- Tufekci Zeynep, “The {Divisive, Corrosive, Democracy-Poisoning} Golden Age of Free Speech”
- Listen to [“Floyd Abrams and the Soul of the First Amendment”](#)
- Explore the Newseum “Is Your Speech Protected by the First Amendment?” Primer

TH, April 19

INTELLECTUAL FREEDOM PRINCIPLES AND IDEALS

- American Library Association, “Intellectual Freedom and Censorship Q&A”
- Timothy Garton Ash, “Ideals,” “Lifeblood” & “Knowledge”
- Listen to bell hooks “Speaking Freely” [interview](#)

*** NOTES DUE ***

STUDENT ACTIVISM I

T, April 24

STUDENT PROTEST IN THE PAST: VIETNAM & LONG HAIR

- Gael Graham, “Flaunting the Freak Flag: *Karr v. Schmidt* and the Great Hair Debate in American High Schools, 1965-1975”
- Catherine J. Ross, *Lessons in Censorship*, ch.1

*** Wednesday, April 25: Banned Book Letter to the Editor Due ***

INTELLECTUAL FREEDOM REDUX

TH, April 26

BANNED BOOKS

- Mark Hemingway, “In Defense of Book Banning”
- Emily J.M. Knox, *Book Banning in 21st Century America*, skim “Introduction,” read chs.4-6
- Explore the websites of [Parents Against Bad Books in Schools](#) & [Banned Books Week](#)
- Generate at list 3 questions for Professor Knox

Skype with Professor Knox

STUDENT ACTIVISM II

T, May 1

STUDENT PROTEST IN THE PRESENT: PARKLAND, #NEVERAGAIN & THE MARCH FOR OUR LIVES

- Readings/Materials TBD

*** Wednesday, May 2: 1 Page Group Presentation Proposal Due ***

CAMPUS POLITICS

TH, May 3

MICROAGGRESSIONS AND TRIGGER WARNINGS

- Bradley Campbell and Jason Manning, “Microaggression and Moral Cultures”
- Sarah Colbert, “A History of Posttraumatic Stress Disorder and the Trigger Warning”
- Teresa Jusino, [“Educators Whine About Trigger Warnings at Colleges”](#)
- Greg Lukianoff and Jonathan Haidt, “The Coddling of the American Mind”
- Derald Wing Sue, [“Microaggressions in Everyday Life”](#)
- AAUP Statement on Trigger Warnings
- “Racial Microaggressions in Every Day Life”
- Explore microaggressions.com

T, May 8

FLAMETHROWERS & WORDS THAT WOUND

- Mari J. Matsuda, “Public Response to Racist Speech: Considering the Victim’s Story”
- [“When Flamethrowers Like Ann Coulter Come to Campus”](#) (*New York Times*)
- Additional Readings/Materials TBD

TH, May 10

“HATE SPEECH”

- Nadine Strossen, *HATE*, introduction, chs.1, 4, 6 & 7
- Nathan Heller, “Amos Yee: YouTube Star, Teenager, Dissident”
- Watch Amos Yee, [““Lee Kuan Yew is Finally Dead”](#)

T, May 15

CAMPUS PROTESTS, CIVIL RIGHTS & FREE SPEECH

- Henry Louis Gates, Jr., “Critical Race Theory and Freedom of Speech”
- Leah Libresco, “Here Are the Demands from Students Protesting Racism at 51 Colleges”
- Listen to *So to Speak* [podcast](#) featuring Randall Kennedy
- Explore thedemands.org

TH, May 17

ACADEMIC FREEDOM, SPEECH CODES & CAMPUS CENSORSHIP

- AAUP 1940 Statement on Academic Freedom
- FIRE, “Spotlight on Speech Codes 2018”
- Jeffrey Aaron Snyder, “The Fear of Contagion and the Rage to Censor”
- Jeffrey Aaron Snyder and Amna Khalid, “The Rise of ‘Bias Response Teams’ on Campus”
- Joan W. Scott, “On Free Speech and Academic Freedom”
- Explore Bias Response Team websites
- Listen to Howard Jacobson, [“Daring to Marvel”](#)

*** Notes Due ***

CONCLUSIONS

T, May 22

Group Presentations

TH, May 24

Group Presentations

T, May 29

Wrap Up

Course Assignments and Grading

Participation, 20%

“Be Prepared.” The Scout motto sums up the crux of participation. Because this course places a premium on classroom and small-group discussions, students are expected to come to every class on time with the assigned readings completed, ready to participate meaningfully in all class activities. Speaking up, while important, is not the only hallmark of participation. Active listening and engaging with others’ ideas respectfully are also key components of participation. *Air-time* is less important than the relevance and sincerity of your contributions.

Please *power-down* your electronic devices—laptops, cell-phones, etc.—before the start of class.



"Before I read about my summer vacation, I'd like to ask that all pagers, beepers, and cell phones be turned off."

Notes, 20%

April 19 & May 17

Submit your notes on our course readings. I will look for evidence of careful, critical reading that distills and analyzes key points, poses thoughtful questions and draws meaningful connections among different materials. Notes will be graded on a “Satisfactory” (A), “Credit” (C) or “No Credit” (F) basis.

Banned Book Letter to the Editor (750 words), 15%

April 25 by 1159PM

Read a book that has been banned or *challenged*. Research why the book caused a stir in a particular community. Write a letter to the editor explaining your position on banning the book in question. Include a bibliography with at least three sources that you used to inform your analysis.

Lead Discussion, 15%

Variable dates

Working in pairs, facilitate a 30-minute discussion. Integrate into the discussion a succinct, critical analysis of one additional reading of your choosing. Each pair will meet with me in advance to discuss their ideas and plans.

Group Presentation, 30%

1-page proposal due on May 2 by 1159PM

May 22 or May 24

In small groups, investigate a particular school controversy. Consult at least a dozen texts/resources (news stories, academic articles and books, websites, podcasts, etc.) to inform your analysis. Create a handout and present your findings to your peers.

The Fine Print**Attendance:**

Given the importance that all Educational Studies classes place on learning with peers through classroom discussions, students are expected to come to every class session. After two unexcused absences from class, each subsequent absence will result in the lowering of your course grade by a third (e.g. from an A to an A-).

Guidelines for Written Assignments:

1. All written assignments should be double-spaced and written in 12-point *Times* font
2. Include a word-count at the top of each assignment
3. Use a standard format (APA, Chicago, etc.) for all citations
4. Submit all of your assignments using the dropboxes on Moodle
5. No late assignments will be accepted without prior approval from the instructor

Guidelines for Critical Reading:

As a critical reader of a particular text, you should use the following four questions to guide your reading:

1. What are the author's main claims? This is the analysis issue—what is the author's angle?
2. Who says? This is the validity issue—what is the author's evidence?
3. What's new? This is the value-added issue—what does the author contribute that we don't already know?
4. Who cares? This is the significance issue—is the text worth reading?

Academic Honesty:

Sharing ideas with friends is central to the academic enterprise at Carleton. So too is availing yourself of the ever-expanding universe of print and digital resources available through the Libe. In your written work, of course, it is imperative that the words you present as your own are in fact original to you. When you borrow somebody else's ideas or words, make sure to cite the original author.

For more on academic honesty at Carleton, including a helpful overview of citations, see: <http://apps.carleton.edu/campus/doc/honesty/>

Disability Services:

Carleton is committed to providing reasonable accommodations to students with disabilities. Students seeking accommodations should contact the Coordinator of Disability Services, Andy Christensen, at 222-4464 or anchrist@carleton.edu, to begin the process.