EDCI 6360: Critical Issues in Curriculum Studies: 
The Complexity of Contested Knowledge 

**Spring 2018**

**Instructor:** Sarah Smitherman Pratt, Ph.D.
**Office:** Matthews 204-J
**Phone:** 940.565.2030 (office)
**E-mail:** sarah.pratt@unt.edu (*Note: Please allow up to 24 hours for a response.*)

**Class Location:** Matthews Hall 114
**Class Dates/Times:** Monday, 5:30–8:20 p.m.
**Office Hours:** Monday & Thursday, 3:30–5:30 & 8:30–9:30 p.m.; or by appointment

**Catalog Description:**
Critical examination of current topics and issues in the field of curriculum studies. Students analyze trends in U.S. and international education in terms of social transformation and globalization.

**Required Texts:**

**Recommended Books:**

Students may wish to consider these books:

**Course Goals and Objectives:**
Interpretations of curriculum are often informed by personal experiences and perceived understandings. In this course, we will examine historical interpretations of knowledge and curriculum. Alongside emerging scholars who challenge assumptions of knowledge, question whose knowledge is valued, and inquire through an ethics of difference, we will engage in conversations about what it means to contest knowledge. We will use complexity theory as a lens through which these will be discussed. By the end of this course, students will

➢ Be familiar with major concepts in complexity theory;
➢ Have explored how educational research can be viewed from an informed complex perspective;
➢ Provide a vision for how a field in education might be perceived differently when viewed from the perspective of complexity theory.

Grading:

Questions & Answers to Readings ........................................ 30%
Selected Article Presentations ............................................ 30%
Final Project........................................................................... 40%

100%

Grading Scale: A= 90-100%; B=80-89%; C=70-79%; D=60-69%; F< 60%

Assignments and Expectations:
Questions & Answers to Readings
You are expected to read all class assignments and post your Questions related to the readings on the course web site no later than 5:00 p.m. before the next class meeting (as outlined on the course calendar). These questions will pertain to the required texts and articles as listed. You must also be prepared to discuss the readings in class. There are ten (10) Q&A sessions that will be held during class, and you will be graded each time using the following rubric:

3 – There are three (3) questions that bring forward excellent thoughts with respect to the reading, are pertinent to the objectives of this course, and are open-ended so as to prompt good conversations during class time.
2 – There are two (2) questions that bring forward excellent thoughts with respect to the reading, are pertinent to the objectives of this course, and are open-ended so as to prompt good conversations during class time.
1 – There is one (1) question that brings forward excellent thoughts with respect to the reading, are pertinent to the objectives of this course, and are open-ended so as to prompt good conversations during class time.
0 – There are no (0) questions that bring forward thoughts with respect to the reading, pertinent to the objectives of this course, or open-ended so as to prompt good conversations during class time.

Reading assignments are provided on the course web page under “Readings.” There are 10 reading assignments for the course, so the total points for Q&A will be 30 points (10 assignments x 3 points each).

Selected Article Presentations
During three class sessions, as listed on the course calendar, you will be responsible for leading a conversation about the article that you have selected. You will be the discussion leader for 10 minutes. You must use the following structure for your discussion lead:

• Close Reading of a Passage (5 minutes): You will provide the class with a passage in the article that you believe is particularly important or compelling, a passage that requires careful, close reading to understand. You will guide us through a reading of the passage, explaining precisely what the passages states, what the ideas in the passage mean, a summary of the article, and what the author(s) provide that assist our understandings of chaos and complexity theories as they relate to education research.
• Guided Inquiry (5 minutes): After your close reading of a passage, you will pose a question or questions designed to foster conversation among your classmates about the readings. Meaningful intellectual conversations require guidance, facilitation, and encouragement.
Therefore, you must be prepared to support the conversation as it unfolds. Further, you must be prepared to elicit meaningful discussion if there is none.

There are 3 article presentations required for the course, so the total points will be 30 points (3 assignments x 10 points each). See the class web page for due dates. The rubric is provided below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rubric for Each Article Presentation</th>
<th>Points Possible</th>
<th>Points Earned</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prepared (organized with materials)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selected Close Reading</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Passage is important/compelling passage</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Passage is explained well</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Connects the passage to the field of chaos &amp; complexity theories and education research</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Connects the passage to a specific field of education research</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guided Inquiry</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Prompts class to participate with good questions</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Facilitates the conversation well</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

GRADE FOR PROJECT: 10

Final Project

The final project is comprised of two parts, a paper and a presentation. The paper, a manuscript of 8,000 to 10,000 words, must be based on an educational research topic in your field of interest with a complex contesting of knowledge in your field not only present but also central to the major focus of the paper. One main criterion is that it demonstrates a link with the idea of complexity in its technical, applied, philosophical, theoretical, or narrative manifestations in education. References to course readings is another criterion. The paper must be uploaded before class on Thursday, May 10 to the class web page. It is important for this manuscript to be scholarly in nature and to be of quality to submit to a journal for consideration for publication. Proof that the manuscript was submitted to a conference or journal must be included.

In class on Thursday, May 10, each student will be responsible for giving a presentation. The presentation should follow the format of a conference presentation. Each student has 10 minutes for presenting and 5 minutes for questions/answers. You must use the following structure for your discussion lead:

- **Content of Research Paper (10 minutes):** You will provide the class with a succinct overview of the research paper, which includes reading key parts of the paper to the class. You will highlight how you are meeting the course objectives in this paper, address how an informed perspective of chaos and/or complexity theories inform your particular research field, and in what ways theories and/or methodologies can be perceived through this lens. Make sure you highlight with which researchers you have read during this course you are aligned.
- **Guided Discussion (5 minutes):** After your presentation, you will pose a question or questions designed to foster conversation among your classmates about the readings. Meaningful intellectual conversations require guidance, facilitation, and encouragement. Therefore, you must be prepared to support the conversation as it unfolds. Further, you must be prepared to elicit meaningful discussion if there is none.
Attendance, Participation, and Dispositions Policies:
This course is designed and organized to be highly collaborative and experiential. It will involve literature discussion groups, and small and large group discussions. Therefore, your attendance and participation are essential to your learning. It is not possible to be enriched by discussions and collaborations if you are not present or prepared for class. If you decide to miss an entire class period or part of it for any reason, then you will not receive full participation credit for that class session. Involvement in class activities cannot be made up, thus it is imperative that you are present and prepared for each class session. Poor or late attendance, not attending for the full class time, or lack of preparation (i.e., not completing reading assignments or other non-graded assignments) will adversely affect your grade for this course. If you miss more than 30 minutes of a class, you will be counted as absent. Whether you have an excused or unexcused absence, you are still missing important components to the course. You are responsible for material covered during absences.

- 2 absences = final grade in the course will be lowered by one full letter grade
- 3 absences = final grade in the course will be lowered by two full letter grades
- 4 absences = F in the course
- 3 tardies = 1 absence, this means arriving to class late and/or leaving class early

If you miss class, you are responsible for all announcements, assignments and information presented or discussed in class. It is your responsibility to contact other members of the class or the instructor to obtain information missed during your absence. Please make an appointment to see the course instructor.

* If you are absent for a professional reason, you must inform the instructor prior to the event. The next class meeting, you may present to the class what you did to count as your attendance. (Encouraging academic engagement is part of this course.)

General Classroom Policies:
- All course readings must be read before class.
- Be punctual to class — if you are late, see the course instructor after class.
- Please be respectful by not speaking while others are presenting during class.
- Please do not eat in class.
- All grades/points for assignments are final.
- If you have any questions about grades/points awarded to assignments, make an appointment to see the course instructor during the course instructor’s office hours.
- Course instructor will not discuss grades/points during class time. Please make an appointment.
- All citations must be in the APA format.
- Do not upload draft copies of assignments onto Blackboard.
- All assignments are required to be uploaded onto Blackboard.
- All deadlines are final.
- NO CELL PHONE USE/CELL PHONE TEXTING during the scheduled class session!
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class:</th>
<th>Assignment(s) Due:</th>
<th>Class Topic(s):</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3: Feb 1</td>
<td>Morin (2008), Chapters 2-5 Q&amp;A - Reading</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4: Feb 8</td>
<td>Doll (1993) Q&amp;A - Reading</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5: Feb 15</td>
<td>Doll (1993) Q&amp;A - Reading</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6: February 22</td>
<td>No Class – Dr. Pratt attending RCML conference</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7: March 1</td>
<td>Selected Article #1 from <em>Educational Philosophy and Theory, Vol. 40</em>, No. 1, 2008 Q&amp;A - Reading</td>
<td>Selected Article Presentations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8: March 8</td>
<td>Morin (2008), Chapters 6-7 Derrida (1967/2016), Introduction Q&amp;A - Reading</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 19</td>
<td>No Class – Happy Spring Break!</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9: March 22</td>
<td>Derrida (1967/2016) Q&amp;A - Reading</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10: March 29</td>
<td>Selected Article #2 from <em>Educational Philosophy and Theory, Vol. 40</em>, No. 1, 2008</td>
<td>Selected Article Presentations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11: April 5</td>
<td>Derrida (1967/2016) Q&amp;A - Reading</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12: April 12</td>
<td>Derrida (1967/2016) Q&amp;A - Reading</td>
<td>Discussion of Final Project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14: April 26</td>
<td>Selected Article #3 from <em>Educational Philosophy and Theory, Vol. 40</em>, No. 1, 2008</td>
<td>Selected Article Presentations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15: May 3</td>
<td>Writing Session</td>
<td>Preparation for Final Project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16: May 10</td>
<td>Final Paper</td>
<td>Presentations of Final Project</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Improving the quality of education in Texas schools and elsewhere is the goal of programs for the education of educators at the University of North Texas. To achieve this goal, programs leading to teacher certification and advanced programs for educators at the University of North Texas (1) emphasize content, curricular, and pedagogical knowledge acquired through research and informed practice of the academic disciplines, (2) incorporate the Texas Teacher Proficiencies for learner centered education, (3) feature collaboration across the university and with schools and other agencies in the design and delivery of programs, and (4) respond to the rapid demographic, social, and technological change in the United States and the world.

The educator as agent of engaged learning summarizes the conceptual framework for UNT’s basic and advanced programs. This phrase reflects the directed action that arises from simultaneous commitment to academic knowledge bases and to learner centered practice. "Engaged learning" signifies the deep interaction with worthwhile and appropriate content that occurs for each student in the classrooms of caring and competent educators. "Engaged learning" features the on-going interchange between teacher and student about knowledge and between school and community about what is worth knowing. This conceptual framework recognizes the relationship between UNT and the larger community in promoting the commitment of a diverse citizenry to life-long learning. In our work of developing educators as agents of engaged learning, we value the contributions of professional development schools and other partners and seek collaborations which advance active, meaningful, and continuous learning.

Seeing the engaged learner at the heart of a community that includes educators in various roles, we have chosen to describe each program of educator preparation at UNT with reference to the following key concepts, which are briefly defined below.

1. **Content and curricular knowledge** refer to the grounding of the educator in content knowledge and knowledge construction and in making meaningful to learners the content of the PreK-16 curriculum.
2. **Knowledge of teaching and assessment** refers to the ability of the educator to plan, implement, and assess instruction in ways that consistently engage learners or, in advanced programs, to provide leadership for development of programs that promote engagement of learners.
3. **Promotion of equity for all learners** refers to the skills and attitudes that enable the educator to advocate for all students within the framework of the school program.
4. **Encouragement of diversity** refers to the ability of the educator to appreciate and affirm formally and informally the various cultural heritages, unique endowments, learning styles, interests, and needs of learners.
5. **Professional communication** refers to effective interpersonal and professional oral and written communication that includes appropriate applications of information technology.
6. **Engaged professional learning** refers to the educator’s commitment to ethical practice and to continued learning and professional development.
Through the experiences required in each UNT program of study, we expect that basic and advanced students will acquire the knowledge, skills, and dispositions appropriate to the educational role for which they are preparing or in which they are developing expertise.

A broad community stands behind and accepts responsibility for every engaged learner. UNT supports the work of PreK-16 communities through basic and advanced programs for professional educators and by promoting public understanding of issues in education.

**Ethical Behavior and Code of Ethics:** The Teacher Education & Administration Department expects that its students will abide by the Code of Ethics and Standard Practices for Texas Educators (Chapter 247 of the Texas Administrative Code www.sbec.state.tx.us) and as outlined in Domain IV: Fulfilling Professional Roles and Responsibilities of the Pedagogy and Professional Responsibilities (PPR) Texas Examination of Educator Standards (TExES); and as also addressed in codes of ethics adopted by professionals in the education field such as the National Education Association (NEA) and the American Federation of Teachers (AFT).

**Submitting Work:** All assignments will be submitted via Blackboard Learn. Assignments posted after the deadline will be considered late and points will be deducted from the final grade.

**Grading and Grade Reporting:** Grading rubrics for all assignments can be found on the course Blackboard Learn website with the assignment. Students are encouraged to review the grading rubrics to guide them in successfully completing all assignments.

**Writing Policy:** Teachers are judged on the accuracy of everything they write, whether it is a letter to parents or an email to a principal or a worksheet for students. Your written products – including, but not limited to, papers, lesson plans, and emails – should include appropriate and accurate spelling, grammar, punctuation, syntax, format, and English usage. You should expect that all assignments will be evaluated on these writing skills, in addition to any other expectations of a particular assignment. The UNT Writing Lab (Sage Hall 152) offers one-on-one consultation to assist students with their writing assignments. To use this resource, call (940) 565-2563 or visit https://ltc.unt.edu/labs/unt-writing-lab-home.

**Teacher Education & Administration Departmental Policy Statements**

**UNT Career Connect:** All undergraduate students are expected to participate in “UNT Career Connect.” Each student needs to set up a UNT e-portfolio for this purpose. As a UNT student engages in real-life, career-related experiences in curricular and/or co-curricular settings, s/he should upload documentation of these experiences into his/her UNT e-portfolio. Course instructors will help students identify appropriate experiences and accompanying documentation/artifacts for inclusion in the e-portfolio. Through their respective e-portfolios, students are able to make connections across their student experiences and reflect upon their learning and skills in order to prepare them with marketable skills for careers and graduate degrees. The e-portfolio also serves as a useful device for future job interviews. Career Connect places emphasis on important job skills such as communication, teamwork, and critical thinking. For students seeking teacher certification, these on-the-job skills will be evaluated during student teaching using the North Texas Appraisal of Classroom Teaching (NTACT) or its successor instrument. Follow this link to learn more and to set up your personal e-portfolio: http://careerconnect.unt.edu/default.
Disabilities Accommodation: “The University of North Texas complies with Section 504 of the 1973 Rehabilitation Act and with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. The University of North Texas provides academic adjustments and auxiliary aids to individuals with disabilities, as defined under the law. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring accommodation, please see the instructor and/or contact the Office of Disability Accommodation at 940-565-4323 during the first week of class.” Dr. Jemimah Young is the compliance officer and contact person for the Department of Teacher Education & Administration.

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

Academic Integrity: Students are encouraged to become familiar with UNT’s policy on Student Standards of Academic Integrity: http://policy.unt.edu/sites/default/files/untpolicy/pdf/7-Student_Affairs-Academic_Integrity.pdf Academic dishonesty, in the form of plagiarism, cheating, or fabrication, will not be tolerated in this class. Any act of academic dishonesty will be reported, and a penalty determined, which may be probation, suspension, or expulsion from the university.

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 https://deanofstudents.unt.edu/conduct

Attendance: See the instructor’s attendance policy.

Eagle Connect: All official correspondence between UNT and students is conducted via Eagle Connect and it is the student’s responsibility to read their Eagle Connect Email regularly.

Cell Phones and Laptop: Students should turn off cell phones when they are in class unless the phones are being used for learning activities associated with the course.

SETE: The Student Evaluation of Teaching Effectiveness (SETE) is expected for all organized classes at UNT. This brief online survey will be made available to you at the end of the semester, providing you a chance to comment on how this class is taught. I am very interested in the feedback I get from students, as I work to continually improve my teaching. I consider the SETE to be an important part of your participation in this class.

Collection of Student Work: In order to monitor students' achievement, improve instructional programs, and publish research findings, the Department of Teacher Education and Administration collects anonymous student work samples, student demographic information, test scores, and GPAs to be analyzed by internal and external reviewers.

TK20: Some undergraduate and graduate education courses require assignments that must be uploaded and assessed in the UNT TK20 Assessment System. This requires a one-time purchase of TK20, and
student subscriptions are effective for seven years from the date of purchase. Please go to the following link for directions on how to purchase TK20: [http://www.coe.unt.edu/tk20-campus-tools](http://www.coe.unt.edu/tk20-campus-tools)

Announcements regarding TK20 will also be posted on this website.

*Comprehensive Arts Program Policy*. The Elementary Education program area supports a comprehensive arts program to assist preservice and inservice teachers to design and implement curricular and instructional activities which infuse all areas of the arts (visual, music, theater, and movement) throughout the elementary and middle school curriculum.

*Technology Integration Policy*. The Elementary, Secondary, and Curriculum & Instruction program areas support technology integration to assist preservice and inservice teachers to design and implement curricular and instructional activities which infuse technology throughout the K-12 curriculum.

*TExES Test Preparation*. To meet state requirements for providing 6 hours of test preparation for teacher certification candidates, the UNT TExES Advising Office (TAO) administers the College of Education TExES Practice Exams. Students who want to take a practice exam should contact the TAO (Matthews Hall 103). Students may take up to two exams per session that relate to their teaching track/field at UNT. Students should also plan accordingly, as they are required to stay for the entire testing period. Current students must meet the following criteria in order to sit for the TExES practice exams: Students must (1) be admitted to Teacher Education, (2) have a certification plan on file with the COE Student Advising Office, and (3) be enrolled in coursework for the current semester. For TExES practice exam information and registration, go to: [http://www.coe.unt.edu/texes-advising-office/texes-exams](http://www.coe.unt.edu/texes-advising-office/texes-exams) If you need special testing accommodations, please contact the TAO at 940-369-8601 or e-mail the TAO at coe-tao@unt.edu. The TAO website is [www.coe.unt.edu/texes](http://www.coe.unt.edu/texes). Additional test preparation materials (i.e. Study Guides for the TExES) are available at [www.texas.ets.org](http://www.texas.ets.org)

“Ready to Test” Criteria for Teacher Certification Candidates. Teacher certification candidates should take the TExES exams relating to their respective certification tracks/teaching fields during their early-field-experience semester (i.e. the long semester or summer session immediately prior to student teaching).

Six Student Success Messages. The Department of Teacher Education & Administration supports the six student success messages on how to succeed at UNT: (1) Show up; (2) Find support; (3) Take control; (4) Be prepared; (5) Get involved; and (6) Be persistent. Students are encouraged to access the following website: [https://success.unt.edu](https://success.unt.edu). The site contains multiple student resource links and short videos with student messages.

>This course syllabus is intended to be a guide and may be amended at any time by the instructor.