In this course, students will explore the theory and practice of what the Brazilian pedagogue Paulo Freire called “education as the practice of freedom.” We will read and discuss a wide array of texts drawn from the overlapping corpuses of progressive, critical, antiracist, feminist, indigenous, queer, crip and decolonial pedagogy, and seek to activate the insights those texts supply in our teaching and learning. Remaining attentive to our individual positionalities and to the ways in which the classroom has historically served as a site of political and social control, we will move beyond critique to explore the nuts-and-bolts of teaching at the university level. Graduate students and interested undergraduates will practice teaching techniques in a laboratory setting, from crafting an antiracist syllabus to designing “transgressive” assignments. All students will finish the semester with a portfolio of materials that represent their current thinking on teaching, learning and the politics of higher education.

By the end of the semester, all students will have:
- gained an in-depth understanding of decolonial pedagogical theory and praxis
- familiarized themselves with the institutional politics of higher education
- reflected in depth on their positionality within the U.S. academy
developed a critical framework within which to place their own learning

Additionally, graduate students and interested undergraduates will have:
- engaged in sustained reflection on the commitments that animate their pedagogy
- practiced effective strategies for syllabus and curriculum design
- explored the techniques involved in impactful classroom teaching
- prepared a portfolio of materials for future use on the academic or alt-ac job market

**COURSE SCHEDULE**

*(Subject to Change)*

Recommended readings are indicated with an asterisk. Graduate students are asked to complete all readings, while undergraduates should use their discretion.

**Aug. 26**
Introduction  
Dewey, *Democracy and Education* (excerpts)

**Aug. 31 & Sep. 2**
Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth* (excerpts)  
Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*  
*Freire, Pedagogy of Indignation* (excerpts)  
*Freire, Pedagogy of the Heart* (excerpts)  
*Freire, Pedagogy of Hope* (excerpts)

**Sep. 3**
Due: Process Letter 1

**Sep. 9 & 10**
Aronowitz, *Against Schooling* (excerpts)  
*Giroux, On Critical Pedagogy* (excerpts)  
*Giroux, Theory and Resistance in Education* (excerpts)  

**Sep. 14 & 16**
Amirault, “Good Teacher, Good Student”  
Ellsworth, “Why Doesn’t This Feel Empowering?”  
*Singh, Unthinking Mastery* (excerpts)

**Sep. 17**
Due: Self-Reflection

**Sep. 21 & 23**
hooks, *Teaching to Transgress*  
*hooks, Teaching Community* (excerpts)

**Sep. 30**
*Jaimungal, “A Race to Whiteness”*  
Macaulay, “Minute on Indian Education”  
Mignolo, “What Does It Mean to Decolonize?”  
Ngũgĩ, *Decolonising the Mind* (excerpts)  
*Smith, Tuck and Yang, Introduction*

**Oct. 1**
Due: Teaching Observation Write-Up
Oct. 5 & 7
*Santos, *The End of the Cognitive Empire* (excerpts)
Smith, “Articulating an Indigenous Research Agenda”
*Walsh, “On Decolonial Dangers....”

Oct. 12 & 14
*Eizadirad, “The University as a Neoliberal and Colonizing Institute”
*Ferguson, *The Reorder of Things* (excerpts)
Kerr, *The Uses of the University* (excerpts)
Meyerhoff, *Beyond Education* (excerpts)
paperson, *A Third University is Possible*
Savio, “Bodies Upon the Gears”

Oct. 15
**Due: Process Letter 2**

Oct. 19 & 21
Ahmed, *On Being Included* (excerpts)
*Chuh, “On (Not) Mentoring”
Dolmage, *Academic Ableism* (excerpts)
*Musser, “Specimen Days”
Phruksachart, “On Mentoring Future Faculty of Color”

Oct. 26 & 28
*Hamera, “Exposing the Pedagogical Body”
Khubchandani, “Lessons in Drag”
Lee, “I’m concerned for your academic career...”
Spatz, *What a Body Can Do* (excerpts)

Oct. 29
**Due: Syllabus**

Nov. 2 & 4
*Kohl, “I Won’t Learn From You!”
Shor, *When Students Have Power*

Nov. 9 & 11
*Keesing-Styles, “Critical Pedagogy and Assessment....”
Kohn, “The Case Against Grades”
*Inoue, Antiracist Writing Assessment Ecologies* (excerpts)
*Schinske and Tanner, “Teaching More by Grading Less...”
*Stommel, “How to Ungrade”

Nov. 12
**Due: Pedagogical Statement**

Nov. 16 & 18
Christian, “Race for Theory”
*Christian, “Diminishing Returns”
*Puri, “Postcolonial Feminisms and Introducing Sociology....”
Tompkins, “We Aren’t Here to Learn What We Already Know”

Nov. 30 & Dec. 2
hooks, *Teaching Critical Thinking*

TBA:
**Due: Portfolio & Process Letter 3**
READINGS

All readings for this course will be available either in hard copy from the campus bookstore or digitally on Latte. Please make sure to have all readings available during class time for easy reference and come prepared for in-depth discussion. Unless advised otherwise, assume that all readings indicated for a given week should be completed in advance of our Monday class session.

UNDERGRADUATE STUDENT ASSIGNMENTS

These assignments are geared towards undergraduates with a general interest in the politics of learning. Students with a particular interest in teaching should feel free to complete some or all of the graduate student assignments instead. These can be adapted in consultation with me to fit your interests and goals.

All assignments should be submitted on Latte by 11:59PM Eastern Time on the day they are due.

Process Letters: Because this course will be student-graded (see “Assessment,” below) I ask that you submit a process letter to me at the beginning, middle and end of the semester. In each of these letters, you will reflect on the intellectual labor you have done and have still to do, assessing yourself according to the criteria you feel are most relevant to your circumstances and goals.

Self-Reflection: Please submit a short personal reflection on your particular positionality at Brandeis and in U.S. higher education more generally. In what ways do you feel at home here? In what ways do you feel like a novice, a guest, an intruder? What forms of knowledge do you bring to the table? Are they valued as they should be? What is your political stake in the learning you do here? What forms of oppression have you internalized? What kinds of privilege do you fall back on? What forms of authority do you feel you have, and what forms are reserved for others? I recognize that you might not be comfortable sharing certain aspects of this reflection with me at this (or any) stage, so feel free to produce two versions of this document: one that is just for you and one that you are willing to show me.

Teaching Observation: Secure permission from one of your favorite professors to observe one of their classes. (Please note that you should not do this exercise with a course in which you are currently enrolled, as learning the material as a student and studying teaching techniques as an observer are largely incompatible.) Write up a thick ethnographic description of the class you observed and reflect on the forms of power, authority, mutuality and joy that structure that pedagogical space.

Learning Demo: We have become habituated to thinking of learning styles in terms of broad categories (visual vs. oral learners, for example). While these metrics can be useful in aggregate, they rarely capture the complexity of our own highly idiosyncratic approaches to our education. For this assignment, you will reflect in detail on how you learn. What comes easily to you? What do you struggle with? In what circumstances do you want to simply take in information and in what circumstances do you want to experiment, collaborate, create? What does learning feel like? What does not learning feel like? Please synthesize whatever insights you want to share from this reflection into a 10-minute presentation that you will...
share with the rest of the class. This presentation can take whatever form you like but it should be a window onto your unique way of learning your world.

**Annotated Syllabus:** Choose a course that you’ve already completed and that you found particularly engaging, and analyze the syllabus, paying particular attention to how it is structured. Note the readings that were chosen and what they conveyed, the classroom dynamic that the course policies sustained, etc. Feel free to annotate the syllabus directly and turn it in to me – but, if you do, honor your former professor’s intellectual labor by anonymizing their syllabus beforehand.

**Pedagogical Statement:** What role should universities play in our society? What pedagogical and political principles ought to guide them? Please write a statement of roughly five pages that articulates your vision for the future of higher education and the pedagogical orientation we all ought to adopt to make that vision a reality.

**Portfolio:** At the end of the semester, please submit a portfolio containing your self-reflection, your ethnographic description of your teaching observation, notes or slides from your learning demo, your annotated syllabus and your pedagogical statement. You are encouraged to include updated or revised versions of each of these documents in your portfolio so that it represents the current state of your thinking about your own learning and the politics of education more generally.

**GRADUATE STUDENT ASSIGNMENTS**

*All assignments should be submitted on Latte by 11:59PM Eastern Time on the day they are due.*

**Process Letters:** Because this course will be student-graded (see “Assessment,” below) I ask that you submit a process letter to me at the beginning, middle and end of the semester. In each of these letters, you will reflect on the intellectual labor you have done and have still to do, assessing yourself according to the criteria you feel are most relevant to your circumstances and goals.

**Self-Reflection:** Please submit a short personal reflection on your particular position within the U.S. academy. In what ways do you feel at home here? In what ways do you feel like a novice, a guest, an intruder? What forms of knowledge do you bring to the table? Are they valued as they should be? What is your political stake in the work you do? What forms of oppression have you internalized? What kinds of privilege do you fall back on? How does your own claim to authority – over your students, over your research subject, etc. – manifest itself, and why? I recognize that you might not be comfortable sharing certain aspects of this reflection with me at this (or any) stage, so feel free to produce two versions of this document: one that is just for you and one that you are willing to show me.

**Teaching Demo:** Because this course is at its heart a teaching laboratory, on at least one occasion this semester, you will lead the class in a short (roughly fifteen-minute) pedagogical exercise of your choice. Make this useful for yourself by teaching materials you know well, practicing for an upcoming class or presentation, etc. If you need the rest of us to prep a short reading or adopt a certain student persona, feel free to give us instructions the week
before your teaching demo session. You are of course encouraged to try to incorporate some of the ideas and techniques we have been discussing in class, but the format and content of your teaching demo is up to you. We will devote roughly half an hour of discussion following your demo to giving you in-depth feedback and encouragement.

**Teaching Observation:** Please arrange to visit a mentor’s class so that you may observe how they teach undergraduates. Write up a thick ethnographic description of the class you observed and reflect on what you might like to incorporate into your own teaching practice.

**Syllabus:** Produce a draft syllabus – including all readings, assignments and course policies – for a course you are either already slated to teach or would like to teach someday. We will use Brandeis’ own new course proposal process as a guide. How might the pedagogical theories and practices we are exploring in this course enrich teaching in your particular field or discipline?

**Pedagogical Statement:** Most job applications in the humanities and social sciences now require a teaching statement of some kind. These one- to two-page statements are often quite anodyne and formulaic because graduate students and junior faculty have not had an opportunity to reflect on the political and intellectual underpinnings of their pedagogy – and because they are trying to tailor what they’ve written to the (often unknowable) preferences of search committee members. For this course, please produce a longer (at least five-page) reflection on your teaching and the commitments that sustain it. This exercise may well be transformative on its own terms, but will also provide you, at minimum, with a more substantive piece of writing from which to draw job market statements.

**Portfolio:** At the end of the semester, please submit a teaching portfolio containing your self-reflection, notes and lesson plans from your teaching demo, your ethnographic description of your teaching observation, your draft syllabus and your pedagogical statement. You are encouraged to include updated or revised versions of each of these documents in your portfolio so that it represents your current thinking. Taken as a whole, this portfolio will provide a substantial accounting of your teaching as it stands at this stage of your career.

**ASSESSMENT**

In keeping with the principles of antiracist, crip and decolonial pedagogy, this course will be student-graded. That is to say, you will determine your grade for this course based on your particular situation and objectives. While I reserve the right to alter the final grade students assign themselves, I very rarely disagree with their self-assessments. When I do, it is more likely that I will intervene to raise an unnecessarily modest final grade than to lower one I feel is inflated. In order to scaffold this process of reflection, self-critique and self-evaluation, you will submit three process letters to me over the course of the semester. Much more detail about these will be forthcoming when the time comes to write them. The final process letter, which should be submitted with your portfolio at the end of the semester, should contain the grade you feel you have earned overall.
Despite the fact that my courses are ungraded, students often ask me for a rubric. The following is a rough accounting of how the various aspects of this course might be weighed, but you should feel free to depart from this as needed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class Participation:</th>
<th>20%</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Self-Reflection:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Teaching / Learning Demo:</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Teaching Observation:</td>
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<td>Syllabus:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pedagogical Statement:</td>
<td>20%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Rest assured that although I am not grading your work, I am reading it closely and responding to it in depth. You will receive substantive feedback and critique on all argument-driven assignments and a mix of affirmative and interrogative feedback as appropriate on all personal reflections.

**THE VIRTUAL CLASSROOM**

This semester, due to circumstances beyond our control, we will be conducting class online. While a great deal is lost in the shift from in-person to online learning, some things may well be gained. I ask that we all do our best to cultivate and maintain compassion, understanding and a sense of humor as we collaboratively navigate our new environment. While many of my usual course policies remain in effect (see below), the following are particular to working online.

**Zoom Classroom & Office Hours.** Our class sessions will take place on Monday and Wednesday evenings from 6 to 7:30PM Eastern Time, as laid out in the course schedule above. Class will take place in this Zoom room. My office hours will take place on Wednesdays from 2 to 4PM Eastern Time in this Zoom room. (For complete login information for both rooms, please see pg. 10.) Please sign up for office hours here. If you can't make any of the remaining timeslots, email me to schedule an appointment.

**Communication.** Because it will be that much more difficult for you to get in touch with me this semester than it would be if we were meeting in person, I will try to be quite diligent about responding to emails and Latte messages. Please allow me 24 hours to respond to any message you send during the work week and 48 hours to respond to any message you send over the weekend. If it takes me slightly longer than that to get back to you, please be forgiving. Know that this means that you cannot count on my being able to respond to extremely last-minute questions or requests in time – and plan accordingly. Also please note that while I will happily email you or meet with you on Zoom to discuss issues specific to you, I will use Latte to make announcements and send messages to the entire class.

**Time Zones & Asynchronous Teaching.** Because some of you may be joining us from parts of the world that are not on Eastern Time, it may be difficult for you to accommodate our regular class schedule without significant hardship. If that is the case for you, please reach out to me at the beginning of the semester and we will work something out.
Attendance. Given the difficulties of our present moment, I have decided not to institute an attendance policy this semester. Part of your self-reflection for this course should involve thinking about how much time and energy you can devote to this work. That said, if you feel at the outset that you cannot regularly attend class or if you know you will have to be late more often than not, please reach out to me so we can discuss whether it makes sense for you to enroll. Of course, if unforeseen or emergency situations arise mid-semester that affect your ability to remain fully engaged in the work of the seminar, please reach out as soon as possible so that we can arrive at a solution.

Participation. Participation can take many forms in the virtual classroom. Sharing your ideas either verbally on the call or non-verbally in the chat is only the beginning. I am entirely open to other forms of offline participation and am happy to discuss possibilities with you as the semester unfolds. Please continue to reflect on your participation and the forms it can take in your process letters.

Accessible Design. In addition to my commitment to supporting students with specific disability accommodations (see below), I am working to ensure that the course as a whole employs best practices for accessible design. Many of the technologies involved are new to me, so please feel free to make suggestions if something is not working or if there is more that I can do.

Attention & Fatigue. I am sure you are aware by now that spending hours a day on Zoom is quite taxing. I encourage you to do all you can to take care of yourself by standing, moving, stretching, etc. as needed during class time. I would also suggest that you consider taking notes on paper if that is practicable for you. A great deal of research has suggested that taking notes “by hand” improves comprehension and retention – and, importantly, it will routinize taking momentary breaks from your screen. I understand, further, that you will likely have readings and other documents open on your screens during class time. While I have no desire – or ability – to police you on this front, I do ask that you keep your attention on course materials as much as possible and remain a part of the (virtual) room in which you find yourself. That said, I am the first to acknowledge that there many neurodivergent modes of maintaining focus, so please feel free to do whatever you need to do to sustain your attention and ward off fatigue, providing it does not impinge on your fellow students’ ability to do the same.

Privacy. You are not required to have your video camera on during our Zoom sessions. Joining us on an audio-only connection or using a virtual background is entirely acceptable and will not be taken to mean you are not actively participating in the course.

Technology. If you encounter technological difficulties (no or slow or unreliable internet connection, computer malfunction, etc.) that prevent you from joining us, please reach out to me so that I can troubleshoot. There are resources available at Brandeis to help ensure that all have access.
GENERAL COURSE POLICIES

Credit Hours. I have designed this course and its workload with Brandeis policies about credit hours in mind. For your reference: “Success in this four-credit course is based on the expectation that students will spend a minimum of nine hours of study time per week in preparation for class.”

Academic Integrity. Academic integrity is the cornerstone of everything we do in this course. Be generous and conscientious when quoting, paraphrasing, summarizing, referring to or otherwise reproducing the ideas of others. When in doubt, use footnotes to reference any thoughts that were inspired by another source – and come see me if you have questions. Please consult Brandeis University Rights and Responsibilities for all policies and procedures related to academic integrity. It’s highly unlikely that I will do this, but I reserve the right to ask you to submit work to TurnItIn.com software to verify originality. Allegations of alleged academic dishonesty will be forwarded to the director of academic integrity. Sanctions for academic dishonesty can include failing grades and/or suspension from the university. Citation and research assistance can be found on the university library website.

Office Hours. You are not required to meet with me outside of class, but I highly recommend taking the initiative to speak with me one-on-one at least once over the course of the semester. Office hours are of course a great time to talk through any difficulties you are having with the material, the assignments, the classroom dynamic, etc. – but they are also useful if you simply wish to test and refine your ideas, get feedback on your writing or allow me to get to know you a bit better (and vice versa). If you cannot make my regularly scheduled office hours, send me an email and we will find another time. If office hours are in great demand, you may have to wait for a few minutes in my virtual waiting room. If they are in extraordinary demand, I will institute a sign-up system.

Students with Disabilities. Brandeis seeks to welcome and include all students. If you are a student who needs accommodations as outlined in an accommodations letter, please talk with me and present your letter of accommodation as soon as you can. I want to support you. In order to provide accommodations, I need the letter more than 48 hours in advance. I want to provide your accommodations, but cannot do so retroactively. If you have questions about documenting a disability or requesting accommodations, please contact Student Accessibility Support at (781) 736-3470 or access@brandeis.edu.

Course Materials. If you are having difficulty purchasing course materials, please make an appointment with your student financial services or academic services adviser to discuss possible funding options and/or textbook alternatives.
ZOOM LOGIN INFORMATION

Class Zoom Meetings
Join from PC, Mac, Linux, iOS or Android: https://brandeis.zoom.us/j/94315581130

Or iPhone one-tap (US Toll): +16465588656,94315581130# or +13017158592,94315581130#

Or Telephone:
  Dial:
  +1 646 558 8656 (US Toll)
  +1 301 715 8592 (US Toll)
  +1 312 626 6799 (US Toll)
  +1 669 900 6833 (US Toll)
  +1 253 215 8782 (US Toll)
  +1 346 248 7799 (US Toll)
Meeting ID: 943 1558 1130
International numbers available: https://brandeis.zoom.us/u/admacQEGbd

Office Hours Zoom Meetings
Join from PC, Mac, Linux, iOS or Android: https://brandeis.zoom.us/j/93361539094

Or iPhone one-tap (US Toll): +16465588656,93361539094# or +13017158592,93361539094#

Or Telephone:
  Dial:
  +1 646 558 8656 (US Toll)
  +1 301 715 8592 (US Toll)
  +1 312 626 6799 (US Toll)
  +1 669 900 6833 (US Toll)
  +1 253 215 8782 (US Toll)
  +1 346 248 7799 (US Toll)
Meeting ID: 933 6153 9094
International numbers available: https://brandeis.zoom.us/u/ade8JJYt8c