Overview:
NSED 120 serves as an introduction to the field of education in general, and schools in particular. This course continues the process of preparing students to teach mathematics and science in middle and secondary settings by providing opportunities to evaluate challenges they face in instructional settings. We will explore frameworks for thinking about equity issues in the classroom and beyond school settings, learn strategies for teaching students of diverse backgrounds, and reflect on how the interplay among teachers, students, and academic content enable students to develop a deep conceptual understanding of the subject matter. Classroom Interactions is a course that typically is a pre-requisite to an accredited teacher credential program.

Assigned Readings:
A series of articles and chapters from different books can be found in Resources in Cat Courses.

Recommended Reading:
California State Content Area Standards: www.ctc.ca.gov/cstpublication/cstpreport.pdf

Objectives:
Using the guiding question, “What’s it like?” students will read, discuss, and write about the world of schools, teachers, and diverse student populations. Upon successful completion of this class, students will be able to:
• Describe various forms of human diversity found in schools.
• Explain how individual differences impact teaching and learning.
• Describe methods of teaching across cultural and linguistic differences.
• Interpret observed connections between teaching theory and school practices.
• Examine issues of equity in its social, cultural, and pedagogical dimensions
• Explore their individual beliefs about equity in the classroom in an educational equity reflection and other course papers

Course Requirements: All assignments are due on the date indicated by the instructor, and may be formatted according to APA, MLA, or Chicago (Turabian) styles. Assignments are to be typed using 12 font and spaced at 1.5 lines unless otherwise indicated by the instructor. Points will be deducted for incorrect spelling, grammar, syntax, or format. ADA students are requested to make an appointment with the instructor during the first week of class in order to assure that necessary arrangements be made.

Academic Integrity:
Each student in this course is expected to abide by the University of California, Merced’s Academic Honesty Policy. For this course, collaboration is allowed in the following instances: Reading Group assignments and the Contemporary Issues and Solutions Project. All other assignments are to be completed by the student submitting the work. You are encouraged to study together and to discuss information and concepts covered in lecture and the sections with other students. You can give "consulting" help to or receive
"consulting" help from such students. However, this permissible cooperation should never involve one student having possession of a copy of all or part of work done by someone else, in the form of an e-mail, an e-mail attachment file, a diskette, or a hard copy. Should copying occur, both the student who copied work from another student and the student who gave material to be copied will both automatically receive a zero for the assignment. Penalty for violation of this Policy can also be extended to include failure of the course and University disciplinary action.

The information listed above is for individual assignments. There are group assignments in this class which require full cooperation and participation of all group members. If a group member has not completed and/or contributed his/her portion of group work by the due date of the assignment, that group member will neither receive credit for the assignment nor have any opportunity to make up the work at a later date.

**Accommodations for Students with Disabilities:** The University of California Merced is committed to ensuring equal academic opportunities and inclusion for students with disabilities based on the principles of independent living, accessible universal design and diversity. Students with special needs should contact Jesus Jimenez (jjimenez22@ucmerced.edu) in the School of Natural Sciences Office - Student Advising. Requests for academic accommodations are to be made during the first three weeks of the semester, except for unusual circumstances. Students are encouraged to register with Disability Services Center to verify their eligibility for appropriate accommodations.

**Course Elements:**

1. **Attendance and Participation:**

   Classes will consist largely of discussions and presentations by instructors and groups of students. Active participation in discussion is an essential part of learning and, hence, of evaluating your work. Participation means listening as well as talking, monitoring your own contributions to a discussion, helping others develop their ideas, and, of course, expressing your own thoughts in whole and small-group discussions. Participation also includes making every effort to arrive to class promptly and using electronic devices only for course-related purposes. Because the course emphasizes the creation of community in the classroom, participation and attendance are critical. All absences should be communicated to the instructors prior to occurring.

2. **Readings, Journal Entries, and Discussion Facilitation**

   To participate it is essential to complete the required readings before class and be prepared to discuss the readings in class. We encourage you to bring a paper or electronic copy of each reading to class for reference during discussions. You should come with an overall sense of each selection’s content and argument as well as your own questions. It is important to read actively and critically, identifying the elements that inform your understanding of issues raised as well as the implications for effective classroom practice. It is also important to read relationally, identifying the ways in which a reading comments on other readings. Readings will be provided in the Cat Courses.
**Journal Entries**

You are expected to reflect on each week’s set of readings. Please submit your weekly reflections in the course website. All posts should be substantive in nature, length, and content. Please monitor the time and content of your posts, and be mindful of your contributions and personal details.

**Discussion Facilitation**

You will sign up in groups of two to facilitate class discussions. You may structure the discussion in whatever format(s) you see fit (e.g., first have pair share and then whole class discussion). If you have any presentation slides and/or handouts that you would like to use for your discussion, it will be your responsibility to email the file(s) to the instructors at least one day in advance of your discussion date. Additional instructions for this assignment will be provided as we move forward.

3. **Writing Assignments**

**Personal Philosophy of Education**

We will ask you to reflect on your vision for the purpose and goals of mathematics and science education in urban settings and think about your role as a teacher in this setting. You will share your reflection with your small group in class, and the instructors will read all reflections.

For the assignment, you will write a short (2 page) statement about your personal philosophy of science or mathematics education in which you respond to the following questions: What is the purpose of science or mathematics education in an urban setting? What do you value most as a science or mathematics educator? What do you think needs to change in science or mathematics education? Given your interests, strengths, personal background and motivations, how might you work towards changing this? Submit to bCourses and bring a hard copy to class on the due date.

**Educational Equity Reflection**

“Cultural and ethnic self-analysis and self-reflections are important skills for all teachers to develop, as Walsh (1998) suggested, ‘Thinking critically is the antithesis of prejudicial thinking’” (Gay, G. & Howard, T., 2010, p.9). Given the importance of self-reflection in our development as teachers, you will be expected to write a short (2 page) paper reflecting on who you are and your experiences with equity issues within and beyond school settings. Our purpose is to get to know you and for you to get to know each other. You will share your reflection with your small group. You may read it or simply share what you are comfortable sharing. The instructors will read all reflections. The prompt for this reflection paper is as follows: How have your race/ethnicity, socioeconomic status, gender, language capabilities, and other connected factors impacted your educational opportunities, outcomes, and others’ expectations of you? Additional instructions for this assignment will be provided on bCourses. Submit to bCourses and bring a hard copy to class on the due date.
4. **School Board Meeting:** Attend a local school board meeting. (In Merced it may be at the elementary level or high school level.) Write a 1-2 page paper what you saw. What was discussed? How were decisions, if any, made? How were non-board members allowed to participate? Overall, what did you learn about how public schools are governed? Please note: School board meetings are held once or twice a month. You may attend a meeting any time during the semester.

5. **Contemporary Issues and Solutions Project:** In groups of 3-4, students will choose a schooling issue that is of interest to the group. Examine its historical and contemporary manifestations. Research and then prepare a presentation of the issue which will be presented in class. The purpose of the presentation will be to teach the information each group has gathered and then to stimulate a rousing, intelligent discussion of possible solutions to the issue or problem. Each student will respond to the presentations other than his/her own by posing possible solutions. The more creative, the better!

6. **Lesson Plan OR Project**

   **Lesson Plan:** Using the 5E Lesson Plan format, you will design a mathematics, science, or integrated lesson that implements specific classroom applications outlined or suggested in readings, presentations, and discussions. Additional instructions for this assignment will be provided.

   **Project:** You will design a mathematics, science, or integrated activity (e.g., lab, project) that implements specific classroom applications outlined or suggested in readings, presentations, and discussions from the second half of the course. In particular, you will be drawing upon the principles of culturally relevant pedagogy and teaching for social justice. Additional instructions for this assignment will be provided on Cat Courses.

**GRADING**

The use of grades is meant to record your accomplishments, as well as to guide focused feedback and progress. Letter grades are not used to rank or sort students; instead, they are meant to aid in your understanding of completing assigned tasks as outlined. Expectations are set high in this course, and we will do our best to ensure that you are supported in meeting these expectations. Given the focus of this course, we hope that the outlined evaluation process will contribute to and inform our developing sense of teaching and learning.

**Important notes about grading:**

Assignments need to be submitted to Cat Courses by the specified deadlines. Late assignments will only be accepted for full credit if prior arrangements have been made in a timely manner with the instructors. All other late assignments are not guaranteed to receive credit.
Syllabus: continued

Tardiness and absences will be recorded on bCourses. Unexcused absences will affect your grade (i.e., your attendance grade for the day of absence will be 0%).

**Grade Composition**

- Attendance and Participation 20%
- Readings, Journals, Facilitation 20%
- Writing Assignments 20%
- School Board Meetings 10%
- Contemporary Issues and Solution Project 10%
- Lesson Plan or Project 20%

**Please note:**

The reading materials for each class will be provided in the Cat Courses website. This schedule is subject to change due to extenuating circumstances the overall need of the class and students will be informed accordingly.