



## Course Syllabus

**Course Title: It Takes a Family: Using Children’s Books to Raise Social Awareness**

**Instructors:** Miriam Woods, Kaylyn Fisher, and Jordan Mix

**Course Description:**

Educators are continuously being faced with a variety of issues that stem from the new realities of the contemporary family dynamic. Increasing diversity in the makeup of families, such as same gender parents, adoption, interracial and multi-ethnic family members are a newly recognized norm. Additionally, families are also living under conditions such as separation and divorce, transitions in terms of occupations and locations. These circumstances have created challenges of inclusivity when choosing curriculum materials that reflect the diversity of the classroom.

This course will examine the diversity of the family in the current environment. Issues such as immigration, same-gender adoption, divorce and separation, combined families, and multiple-ethnicity families will be discussed. After exploring these issues, participants in this course will be introduced to resources that can be implemented into the elementary curriculum as well as strategies for talking about these challenges with parents, administration and students.

Activities in this course will include discussions on family diversity and how it affects students in the elementary classroom, an exploration of elementary literature and media that can be used in the curriculum to establish a fully inclusive environment for children from all families, and the sharing of effective methods for understanding or discussing these issues with students, families, and administration. Participants who complete this course will gain a deeper understanding of contemporary issues that students and families are facing, find and use various media that includes all varieties of families in their subject matter, and be able to communicate more effectively with students and families from diverse backgrounds or circumstances.

**Credit:** One

**Check the Iowa Teaching Standards that are addressed in this course:**

X	1. Enhance Student Achievement		5. Monitoring Student Learning
x	2. Content Knowledge	X	6. Classroom Management
	3. Planning and Preparation	X	7. Professional Growth
X	4. Instructional Strategies	x	8. Professional Responsibilities

**INTASC Standards that are addressed in this course:**

2. The teacher understands how children learn and develop, and can provide learning opportunities that support their intellectual, social and personal development.
3. The teacher understands how students differ in their approaches to learning and creates instructional opportunities that are adapted to diverse learners.
4. The teacher understands and uses a variety of instructional strategies to encourage students' development of critical thinking, problem solving and performance skills.
5. The teacher uses an understanding of individual and group motivation and behavior to create a learning environment that encourages positive social interaction, active engagement in learning, and self-motivation.
6. The teacher uses knowledge of effective verbal, nonverbal, and media communication techniques to foster active inquiry, collaboration, and supportive interaction in the classroom.
7. The teacher plans instruction based upon knowledge of subject matter, students, the community, and curriculum goals.
9. The teacher is a reflective practitioner who continually evaluates the effects of his/her choices and actions on others (students, parents, and other professional in the learning community) and who actively seeks out opportunities to grow professionally.
10. The teacher fosters relationships with school colleagues, parents, and agencies in the larger community to support students' learning and well-being.

**Goals:** Participants will...

- Gain awareness and understanding of issues contributing to classroom diversity
- Apply knowledge and awareness to create a socially conscious and inclusive curriculum

**Objectives:** As a result of successfully completing this course, participants will:

- Demonstrate a deeper understanding of diverse social issues and contributions within the classroom

- Create a lesson plan or activity to use that focuses on What is a Family?
- Develop and apply plans to integrate materials into the curriculum that reflect the diversity of the classroom

**Outline, including Timeline and Learning Strategies:**

This outline is designed on the suggested pace an online learner would take this course.

Week	Topic/Activity	Time	Summary
<b>1</b>	<b><u>Guess Who's Coming to Dinner?</u></b>		
	<b>Discussion: Introductions</b> – Participants will introduce themselves and share experiences with diversity from their classrooms, as well as why they are taking the course.	30 minutes	
	<b>Hot Topic: Melissa Harris-Perry</b> – Discussion on promo by Melissa Harris-Perry on the community caring about children.	30 minutes	1 hour
	<b>Activity: Rise of Single Parent Households</b> – Assignment researching issues single-parent households face and assignment on.	1 hour	2 hours
	<b>Discussion: Military Families</b> – Online Discussion about issues involving military families	1 hour	3 hours
	<b>Activity: Incarceration</b> – Assignment and videos on when a member of a family is incarcerated	1 hour	4 hours
	<b>Discussion: Adoption</b> – Online discussion on children from adopted/foster care families	1 hour	5 hours
	<b>Checking for Understanding:</b> End of unit quiz to measure understanding. Multiple choice and matching. 10 questions.	15 minutes	5 hours 15 minutes

	<b>Live Chat: End of Week Check in</b> - Participants meet with instructor via chat to answer any outstanding questions over unit content or assignments.	15 minutes	5 hours 30 minutes
<b>2</b>	<b><u>Advancing Social Issues</u></b>		
	<b>Hot Topic – Book Banning</b> – In using childrens books, especially on hot topics nationally, there can be a fear of a book being banned or consequences for using books on the so called Banned Book List. Participants will examine banned books and the requirements in their districts for book banning.	1 hour	6 hours 30 minutes
	<b>Activity: LGBTQ</b> – Participants will discuss issues impacting LGBTQ households including issues those families experience	1 hour	7 hours 30 minutes
	<b>Discussion: Immigration</b> – Participants will examine issues impacting immigrant households	1 hour	8 hours 30 minutes
	<b>Activity: Poverty</b> – Participants will complete a research project on issues impacting low socioeconomic families in schools and what services/support is available	1 hour	9 hours 30 minutes
	<b>Discussion: Peace</b> – Participants will dissect the concept of Peace in childrens literature including Dr. Seuss.	1 hour	10 hours 30 minutes
	<b>Activity: Faith Communities</b> – Participants will research childrens books that focus on other faith communities including Muslim, Jewish, Hindu, and Buddhist households.	1 hour	11 hours 30 minutes
	<b>Checking for Understanding:</b> End of unit quiz to measure understanding. Multiple choice and matching. 10 questions.	15 minutes	11 hours 45 minutes
	<b>Live Chat: End of Week Check in</b> - Participants meet with instructor via chat to answer any	15 minutes	12 hours

	outstanding questions over unit content or assignments.		
<b>3</b>	<b><u>Bringing It Together</u></b>		
	<b>Final Activity:</b> Participants will create a lesson plan or activity they can use in their school that will teach students about the idea of What Makes a Family? Participants will research three to five childrens books, and create an activity around the concept of what makes a family to use.	2 hours 45 minutes	14 hours 45 minutes
	<b>Live Chat: End of Week Check in -</b> Participants meet with instructor via chat to answer any outstanding questions over unit content or assignments.	15 minutes	15 hours

**Evaluation Strategy:** As this is a new course, evaluations will help determine if participants are being engaged and enjoying the experience. Evaluations will be sent via SurveyMonkey to each participant at the conclusion of each Unit.

Participants will also complete a course implementation plan in which they indicate how they will apply this learning in their lives and work. This and the Discussion/Shares will be analyzed by the instructors to determine the learning of the participants.

**Course Requirements:**

- A. Participants check all messages from instructors during the duration of the course.
- B. Participants complete all Activities, Discussions, and Assessments as instructed.
- C. Participants are respectful of each other. While everyone has a right to have an opinion, bullying, mean-spirited language, or divisive attitudes will not be tolerated.
- D. Demonstrates understanding of the material through participation in the online learning experience.

**Coursework**

Participants can earn up to 225 points total for the course. The following table depicts the breakdown of points possible for the required coursework

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Points</b>
Participation	25

8 Discussions/ 5Activities / 2 Quizzes (10 points each)	150
Final Assignment	50
<b>Total</b>	<b>225</b>

**Grading Scale**

100-90% (202-225 points)	A
89-80% (180-201)	B
79%-Below (<179 points)	F

**Student Requirements**

Students are required to:

- Participate in all discussion forums and complete all quizzes
- Participate in all webinars/chats (availability pending)
- Complete a final implementation plan

**Americans with Disabilities Act:**

If you are a student with a disability and require any auxiliary aids, services, or other accommodations for this class, please see the instructor to discuss your accommodation needs.

## Grading Rubrics for Individual Activities

### Discussion Forums

Discussion Forums are asynchronous ways to engage in class discussions. They require you to submit an answer to a question and respond to the posts of other peers. Because they are an integral part of sharing strategies, analyzing research, and sharing ideas, discussion forums in this course comprise a significant percentage of your final grade. It's highly recommended that you read and respond to more than the required two peer postings because greater participation will facilitate a greater depth of understanding. Additionally, it's important to make posts in a timely manner to benefit from peer responses.

<b>Grading Rubric for Discussion Forums</b>		
		<b>Points</b>
<b>Critical Thinking</b>	Makes connections to the other content and real life that are supported by reference(s) and example(s)	1
	Offers new ideas, connections, or applications	1
	Expresses and justifies personal opinion	1
	Discusses Overall Implications	1
<b>Assignment Specific Criteria</b>	Addresses all parts of the assignment, cites sources	2
<b>Mechanics</b>	Writing is clear, well developed, and organized, No or few grammar and spelling errors	1
<b>Participation (Responses to at least 2 peer posts)</b>	Responses state clearly supported opinion(s)	1
	Responses relate to the original post	1
	Responses ask questions or makes comments that further discussion or thought	1
<b>Total Points Possible</b>		10

### Activities

The Activities serve as a method of assessment to demonstrate understanding. This is also a significant way to show participation. Activities vary, and detailed instructions for each assignment will be provided in the course home page. Some activities are passive, such as participating in a webinar or exploring a website, while some will require a reflection or other product to be submitted. Products submitted must be original work and will require some research and deeper analyzing of content material. There are five activities, worth ten points each.

<b>Grading Rubric for Discussion Forums</b>		
		<b>Points</b>
<b>Critical Thinking</b>	Makes connections to the other content and real life that are supported by reference(s) and example(s)	1
	Offers new ideas, connections, or applications	1
	Expresses and justifies personal opinion	1
	Discusses Overall Implications	1
<b>Assignment Specific Criteria</b>	Addresses all parts of the assignment, cites sources	2
<b>Mechanics</b>	Writing is clear, well developed, and organized, No or few grammar and spelling errors	1
<b>Participation (Completes Assignment)</b>	Assignment is submitted on time	1
	Information from webinar/chat/reading is cited and evident	1
<b>Total Points Possible</b>		10

**End of Week Quizzes: Checking for Understanding (20 points possible)**

The quizzes are not individually graded, you simply receive 10 points for each week's quiz on if you completed the quiz and received 100%. Participants are able to retake quizzes, but must receive 100% before advancing to the next Discussion/Activity.



**Participation (25 points possible)**

Participation is key to an online learning experience. Respect is also an important part of the course. While the class does cover some topics some may feel are “controversial” – respect is always key in online discussions. Rude and disrespectful language are not tolerated and most points are given in this area of Participation are based around that. This is to ensure any mean spirited individuals are kept in line. The rubric below is used for participation points.

<b>Participation</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Points</b>
<b>Webinars/Chat</b>	Participant completes each Activity and Participates in the Webinars and Chats. Since this is an online course, accommodations can be made due to scheduling so that every participant has an equal opportunity to engage in activities.	15 points
<b>Respect</b>	Participant respond to each other in a respectful manner. Participants use “I” statements, positive language, and handle themselves in a professional manner.	10 points
<b>Total Points Available</b>		25

## Final Assignment (50 points possible)

The final assignment is a critical part of this course. Participants must complete an in-depth lesson plan/activity to use that addresses the question of What Makes a Family? Participants must use childrens books they have researched and an interactive activity they can use with students. The rubric below will be used to grade the Final Assignment.

<b>Grading Rubric for Final Assignment</b>		
		<b>Points</b>
<b>Activity</b>	The activity developed is interactive, informative, and addresses the overall question of What Makes a Family?	25
<b>Organization</b>	The lesson plan/activity is organized in a clear and concise manner.	5
<b>Mechanics</b>	Writing is well-development. No or few grammar and spelling errors	5
<b>Books</b>	Three to five childrens books were selected. Each book addresses a different concept of family.	5
	Citation page of the books is clear and includes a link to a webpage about each book (can use Amazon, Barnes/Noble)	5
	There is creativity in the use of books – no copying/pasting of every book addressed in the course	5
<b>Total Points Possible</b>		50

