

## **SSCI 415: Social Studies Methods at the Secondary Level**

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### **CONTACT INFORMATION:**

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### **Introduction:**

This course is designed to introduce students to the theory, methods, and strategies of teaching social studies in middle and high schools. By the end of the course, through a series of assigned readings, lesson plans, short papers, classroom discussions, case studies, teaching field experience, and practical preparations, successful students will have a sound basis to begin student teaching.

There are a great many topics and themes that social studies teachers must be familiar with to be successful. Among them are a deep understanding of the many disciplines and methods of inquiry you may be required to teach, the nature of historical inquiry, how students view and learn history, the wider public debates about the role of history and social studies in our culture, the impact of the Internet and other media in shaping historical debates, the teaching of effective writing, lesson and unit plans, the appropriate use of technology, creating an active learning environment, classroom culture, and assignment design.

We will explore all of these topics during the term. Most classes will include a general introduction, a discussion of the readings, specific examples, presentations, and case studies. The overriding goal will be for you to develop the knowledge, background, and skills that will allow you to create a dynamic and effective social studies classroom.

I understand that many students are nervous about student teaching and are eager to focus on only the nitty-gritty details of running a classroom. In all of my experiences working with teachers, however, I have found that the truly exceptional teachers, the ones that make a lasting and positive impact on students' learning, all share one characteristic: they have a deep understanding of the nature of historical teaching and learning. We will spend considerable time with this issue, as it will be the guide for all of the daily decisions you will have to make in your classroom. While the details of running your classroom are of immense importance, you should look to your other Professional Program classes for intense preparation in those areas.

In many ways, therefore, this class will reflect the type of preparation law school students get during their academic preparation. Law school is designed to have students learn to "think like a lawyer." Lawyers learn most of the details of judicial procedure when they

start their practice. We will not have such a rigid division between theory and practice, but my goal is to prepare you to be outstanding teachers, not merely competent teachers. Outstanding teachers understand the deeper issues of historical understanding and use this knowledge when developing the day-to-day structure of their classrooms.

**Objectives:**

There are several specific objectives:

1. To explore the broad trends, developments, and debates about history and social studies and the teaching of them in our society.
2. To explore the challenges high school social studies teachers face on a day-to-day basis and to provide the tools needed to meet them.
3. To give students the opportunity to hear the insights, observations, questions, and ideas of others and to share their own.
4. To have students prepare a series of assignments, lesson plans, tests, grading rubrics, and other classroom materials and to learn to evaluate them.
5. To allow students to improve their own communication skills through writing and presentation assignments.
6. To help students explore more fully their desire and competency for becoming a social studies teacher.

The Objectives of this course are aligned with the CCSU School of Education and Professional Studies Conceptual Framework.

<http://www.ccsu.edu/ncate/conceptualFramework.htm>

1. – Framework IA, IB, IIIA, IIIC
2. – Framework IC
3. – Framework ID, IIB, IID
4. – Framework ID, IIA, IIC, IID, IIIA, IIIB
5. – Framework IB
6. – Framework IIIA

**Reading List:**

Martorella, *Teaching Social Studies in Middle and Secondary Schools*, 4<sup>th</sup> edition

NCSS, *Expectations of Excellence: Curriculum Standards for Social Studies*

*Quick Flip Questions for Critical Thinking*

Wiggins & McTighe, *Understanding by Design*, Expanded 2<sup>nd</sup> edition

Wineburg, *Historical Thinking and Other Unnatural Acts*

There will also be a series of articles available via the class web site and announced during semester. All books are required.

Everyone must also have access to at least two secondary social studies textbooks throughout the semester. Be sure to check the library's Curriculum Lab.

**Field Experience Requirement:**

You must complete at least 30 hours of field experience in a school setting over a period of at least 10 weeks. You must complete all 30 hours and receive a grade of “C” or better on your field experience to pass the class. There are NO EXCEPTIONS to these requirements.

**Academic Misconduct:**

As with all my students, but especially with aspiring teachers, I will not tolerate academic misconduct of any form. Be sure you read and understand the “Policy on Academic Misconduct” section of the Student Handbook, available through the Office of Student Affairs and online at

[http://www.ccsu.edu/studentaffairs/Student%20Code%20of%20Conduct\\_Approved\\_.pdf](http://www.ccsu.edu/studentaffairs/Student%20Code%20of%20Conduct_Approved_.pdf).

**Important Information:**

- Please see me as soon as possible if you need to notify me of any potential emergency medical situations or if you may need assistance in the event of an emergency.
- Any student who feels s/he may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact me privately to discuss your specific needs. I will need a copy of the accommodation letter from Student Disability Services in order to arrange your class accommodations. Contact Student Disability Services, room 241, Copernicus Hall, if you are not already registered with them. Student Disability Services maintains the confidential documentation of your disability and assists you in coordinating reasonable accommodations with your instructors.
- Please let me know immediately if you are experiencing any problems with the class or if you are in need of assistance in completing any class requirements.
- Students are responsible for any changes to the schedule or assignments that are announced in class.

**Overall Grading Guidelines**

For this class, as I do in my history classes, I grade holistically. Your overall grade for the class and your grade on particular assignments will be based on the following guidelines, but I reject unbending numerical values for individual components of grades or for the final grade.

If you receive a grade of “C” or worse on any assignment you need to make an appointment and see me **before** the next class.

I will be happy to review any grade you receive, but there is a 24-hour quarantine on any grade dispute. After that time, please submit a typed paragraph explaining what you are contesting and why the grade should be changed.

### **Late Work**

All assignments are due at the start of class on the date assigned unless otherwise specified. Assignments handed in late will receive a full-letter grade (10 point) penalty for each day late, with day one starting from the time of class meeting. For example, an assignment submitted after class on a due date would receive a one-letter grade penalty. In exceptional and documented situations, and with prior approval, I may choose to waive the late work penalty.

### **Grading:**

Participation and discussion	20%
Field Experience	15%
Reading and Class Journal	10%
Final Exam	10%
Lesson Plans	10%
Unit Plan Outline Draft	10%
Unit Plan Lesson Plans Draft	10%
Unit Plan Revisions	10%
Group Unit Plan Reviews	5%

### **Participation and Discussion:**

If you do not attend every class session and come prepared you will not do well in the course. This is not a lecture course. Its success and your success depend on your participation. You have an obligation to your classmates and future peers to come to class prepared and ready to engage the discussion. Take notes on the readings and bring the notes and the books to class each day.

I have a small child, so I know that sometimes family and other crises might prevent you from making it to class or from being prepared. It is your responsibility to let me know in advance (if at all possible) or at the start of class. If you don't approach me I will assume you are prepared and ready to participate. Coming to class more than two minutes late or leaving more than five minutes early will count as half an absence.

### **Field Experience (Repeated for emphasis):**

You must complete at least 30 hours of field experience in a school setting over a period of at least 10 weeks. You must complete all 30 hours and receive a grade of "C" or better on your field experience to pass the class. There are NO EXCEPTIONS to these requirements.

### **Reading and Class Journal:**

Your journal will include your weekly reflections on the readings, class discussions, group projects, and other outside reading you may do with respect to history or social studies. You should go through previous and current issues of *History Teacher* and *The Social Studies*. You should write at least 200 words of reflections each week. Keep all of

the journal entries in one small (1" or smaller) three-ring binder and submit the whole binder for each review.

Your journal is meant to focus your own thoughts and observations as you prepare yourself to be a teacher. As such, I will not grade the quality of the content as much as the extent to which you communicate your seriousness of purpose.

**Final Exam:**

We will have a final exam on the day and time specified by the University. There will be only two questions on the final exam:

Complete these statements:

1. History is \_\_\_\_\_. 2. My goals as a Social Studies teacher will be \_\_\_\_\_.

**Lesson Plan Assignments**

You will have to write eight lesson plans over the course of the semester, *in addition* to the ten you will write as part of your Unit Plan assignment.

- Two group “practice” lesson plans that will only count toward your participation grade
- Three lesson plans from your content specialty (completely original)
- Three lesson plans from outside your content specialty (adapted from other sources)

At least one plan must include local history or family history, and at least one plan must include the “built environment.”

Follow the Lesson Plan Template for each lesson plan. You will also need to turn in a one-paragraph introduction to each lesson plan, explaining in brief the decisions you made in formulating the lesson. For the lessons that you adapt from other sources, the introduction must clearly indicate the sources, what you changed, and why you think your version will work.

**Unit Plan Outline Draft:**

The Unit Plan is the major assignment of the semester. A Unit Plan typically encompasses all the lesson plans and materials for a major unit of study, typically in a two-week span. Your Unit Plan will also include additional material that is designed to exhibit your wider knowledge of the subject and to explain your choice of topic and method.

The Unit Plan Outline draft will include the title page, rationale, unit objectives, annotated bibliography, and the titles to the ten lessons. This assignment is designed to give you feedback about the overall direction of your Unit Plan before you are too heavily invested in the creation of the lesson plans.

**Unit Plan Lesson Plans Draft:**

The Unit Plan lesson plans draft is designed for you to get feedback about the quality of your lesson plans.

**Unit Plan Revisions:**

After you receive feedback from the instructor and your peers about your Unit Plan, you will be graded on the extent to which you incorporate that feedback and how much your overall Unit Plan improved as a result. This final Unit Plan submission will also include all the materials needed to teach the Unit.

**Group Unit Plan Reviews:**

Each group will receive a set of Unit Plans to review. Each student will be responsible to make individual corrections and suggestions on each Unit Plan and the group will have to submit a review that reaches a consensus about areas of excellence and areas in need of improvement. The reviewed student and the instructor will receive a copy of the review.

## Tentative Schedule

### Notes:

- This schedule will probably change several times during the course of the semester as we work around our visitors' schedules and/or linger on certain topics we find interesting and/or important. All changes will be announced in class.
- Unless otherwise noted, all assignments to be handed in will be due at the start of class each Thursday.
- Reading assignments must be completed **BEFORE** that week begins. In other words, be ready on Tuesday to discuss all the required readings for that week.

### I. WHY ARE WE HERE?

What is History? What are the Social Studies? Why should I teach them?  
How do students learn them?

#### Week One – 7 Sep

##### Topics:

Introductions – Expectations

#### Week Two – 12 & 14 Sep

##### Topics:

What is History? What are Social Studies?

Historians and Teachers – How do we learn? How do we teach?

##### Required Readings:

Wineburg, introduction, chapters 1-2.

Martorella, chapters 1-2.

“Everyman His Own Historian”

[http://www.historians.org/info/AHA\\_History/clbecker.htm](http://www.historians.org/info/AHA_History/clbecker.htm)

##### Notes:

Each group will choose one NCSS standard to present (with a teaching example) next week. Be prepared to compare the standard to a Connecticut standard and discuss the Common Core of Teaching and the Common Core of Learning. Your presentation should be more than simply reading from notes.

### **Week Three – 19 & 21 Sep**

#### **Topics:**

Nature of Social Studies  
National and Connecticut Standards

#### **Required Readings:**

NCSS Curriculum Standards, p. v-30.

“NCSS History Indicators”

“Connecticut Social Studies Standards”

<http://www.state.ct.us/sde/dtl/curriculum/frsocst.pdf>

Connecticut’s Common Core of Teaching

<http://www.state.ct.us/sde/dtl/curriculum/currkey4.htm>

Connecticut’s Common Core of Learning

<http://www.state.ct.us/sde/dtl/curriculum/currkey2.htm>

#### **Recommended Readings:**

NCSS Curriculum Standards, 77-141.

Martorella, chapter 4.

#### **Assignments Due:**

Your group’s presentation.

### **Week Four - 26 & 28 Sep**

#### **Topics:**

How students view and learn History and Social Studies

Approaches to History and Social Studies

Primary Sources

#### **Required Readings:**

Wineburg, chapters 3-5.

Martorella, p. 36-51.

#### **Assignments Due:**

Reading and class journal for Weeks 1-3.

Topic choice for your Unit Plan.

**Week Five – 3 Oct (No class on 5 Oct – may have meetings)**

**Topics:**

Teaching the Social Studies Disciplines

**Required Readings:**

NCSS Disciplinary Standards for Geography, Civics, Economics, and Psychology  
<http://www.socialstudies.org/standards/teachers/vol1/disciplinary/>

Presenters may assign other readings.

**Notes:** There may be several guest presenters this week.

**II. HOW DO I CONSTRUCT MY HISTORY/SOCIAL STUDIES COURSE?**

How do I turn these reflections into reality in my classroom?

**Week Six – 10 & 12 Oct**

**Topics:**

Planning, Planning, Planning

**Required Readings:**

Martorella, chapters 5-6.  
Wiggins, introduction, chapters 1 & 13.  
Handout: “Writing Objectives”  
Lesson Plan Template  
Critical Thinking Question Booklet

**Assignments Due:**

Two group “practice” lesson plans (completely original).

### **Week Seven – 17 & 19 Oct**

**Topics:**

Teaching for Understanding

Classroom methods

Engaging students

**Required Readings:**

Wiggins, chapters 2-5.

Martorella, chapters 5-6.

**Assignments Due:**

Three content specialty lesson plans (completely original). At least one needs to have a local or family history component.

Reading and class journal for Weeks 4-6.

### **Week Eight – 24 & 26 Oct**

**Topics:**

The Reflective, Competent, Concerned Student

**Required Readings:**

Martorella, chapters 7-9; Teaching with Architecture.pdf

**Recommended Readings:**

Wiggins, chapters 6-9.

**Assignments Due:**

Unit Plan Outline draft.

### **Week Nine - 31 Oct & 2 Nov**

**Topics:**

Practical, Nitty-Gritty Week

Job Searches; Praxis II; NCLB; Mid-Point, Catch-up

**Required Readings:**

To be announced.

**Assignments Due:**

Three content weakness lesson plans. At least one needs to use the “built environment.”

Reading and class journal for Weeks 7-9.

## **Week Ten – 7 & 9 Nov**

### **Topics:**

Assessments  
Rubrics  
Using Hollywood

### **Required Readings:**

Martorella, chapters 12, 14.  
Wiggins, chapter 10.  
Wineburg, chapter 10.  
Handout: “Rubric Examples”

### **Assignments Due:**

Presentations on field experience.  
Unit Plan Lesson Plans (submit multiple copies and include revised Unit Plan Outline)

### **Notes:**

Each group will get Unit Plans to review.

## **Week Eleven – 14 & 16 Nov**

### **Topics:**

Becoming a GREAT Teacher – Taking Risks  
Multimedia

### **Readings Due:**

Wineburg, chapters 7, 9.  
Martorella, chapter 12.

### **Assignments Due:**

– Mid-Point Assessment (More info in class)

Field Experience presentations.  
Groups will return comments on Unit Plans.

### **III. HOW IS THIS?**

How well have I done? What has everyone else learned?

How is my performance?

#### **Week Twelve – 21 Nov (Thanksgiving week)**

**Topics:**

Unit Plan presentations and Micro-Teaching

**Assignments Due:**

Reading and class journal, Weeks 10-12.

#### **Week Thirteen – 28 & 30 Nov**

**Topics:**

Unit Plan presentations and Micro-Teaching

**Assignments Due:**

Field Experience Report

#### **Week Fourteen – 5 & 7 Dec**

**Topics:**

Unit Plan presentations and Micro-Teaching

Optional (yet *HIGHLY* recommended) visit to Student Teaching Seminar

**Assignments Due:**

One-page individual assessment of group work.

**Assignments Due:**

Final Unit Plan with Revisions.

Final copy of reading and class journal with summary comments.

#### **Week Fifteen – 12 & 14 Dec**

**Topics:**

Evaluations (of instructor and field experience)

Unit Plan presentations and micro-teaching

#### **FINAL EXAM:**

**Tuesday, 19 December, 8:00 am**