

FIRST-YEAR SEMINAR COURSE PROPOSAL
UNIVERSITY OF MARY WASHINGTON

Use this form to submit **FSEM 100 topics** courses for review **or** any **other existing course** that you wish to have designated to meet the first-year seminar requirement.

COURSE NUMBER:	FSEM 100		
COURSE TITLE:	SUPERMAN ON THE WIRE: PERSPECTIVES ON AMERICAN URBAN SCHOOLS		
SUBMITTED BY:	Victoria Russell	DATE:	9-26-14
<i>This course proposal has the department's approval. (Put a check in the box to the right.)</i>			X

COURSE DESCRIPTION. In the space below, provide a one- to two-sentence description of this class. The description will be entered in Banner and will also be used in other publications about the first-year seminar program (such as the “Eagle Essentials” booklet).

This seminar explores historical and contemporary issues around urban education as it intersects with society, culture, politics, and economics in urban frameworks and the role of cultural and news media’s influence on our perspectives.

RATIONALE. Include short statement addressing how this course meets the FSEM’s basic components and new student learning outcomes (see FSEM call above), and why this course should be approved to meet the FSEM General Education requirement.

The rationale for this course is based on the premise that schools are a central part of American society and that students need to critically engage in richer and deeper understandings of the complex relationships between schools and society as a whole. Specifically, urban schools have an effect on nationwide trends in public policy, the business sector and economy, and political decisions. We all have a stake in the future of urban schooling. Therefore, all students, in and outside the field of education, need to participate in these discussions as they will influence students’ perceptions of social issues including but not limited to race, social class, culture, and gender; and how American beliefs, policies, and assumptions about urban schools also shape our outlook on ourselves as a democratic nation. Students will engage with a variety of sources, including popular and social media, to investigate real and socially constructed issues central to urban education. Seminars will debate weekly ‘big questions’ using evidence from assigned and researched materials. Text Say/I Say papers will help students develop their thinking for class discussions. The Culture Critique paper requires careful analysis of popular TV shows and their alignment to cultural myths about urban schools. The final paper is a large-scale analysis paper and design presentation supporting the development of an American urban school system.

SYLLABUS. *Attach a course syllabus.*

SUBMIT this form and attached syllabus **electronically as one document** to **Dave Stahlman** (wdstahlm@umw.edu). All submissions **must** be in electronic form.

Superman on the Wire: Perspectives on American Urban Schools
FSEM 100
University of Mary Washington
Spring 2015
TR 9:00-10:45, Room TBA

Course Instructor: Dr. Victoria Russell

Contact Information: vrussel3@umw.edu
504-286-8014

Office Location: Trinkle Hall, Room 213

Office Hours: TR, 11:30-1:30 and by appointment

Course Description

This course incorporates both an historical and contemporary outlook on urban schools. The central question is: What are the function and effects of urban schooling in American society? Students critically explore the history of the philosophical, educational, cultural, political, and economic decisions that shaped the historical trajectory of urban schools. Through popular media and current events, the contemporary focus explores multiple perspectives in order to develop informed positions about contemporary issues in urban education. Contemporary issues include: high-stakes testing, teacher evaluation, curriculum standards, educational opportunities for diverse learners, multicultural education, school finance and equity, and rights and responsibilities of teachers and students. Towards the end of the course, students will debate the nature of 'crisis' in urban education and envision viable models of urban schooling for the future.

Course Goals

This course satisfies the general education curriculum's Freshman Seminar requirement. This course fulfills the FSEM pedagogical goals of participatory and exploratory learning through group investigation of the real and socially constructed issues facing urban education. Readings and media viewings expose students to multiple viewpoints regarding issues in urban schools, while presentations and papers expose students to the requirements of professional speaking and writing.

Upon successful completion of an FSEM, students will:

- utilize a variety of research techniques to retrieve information efficiently, evaluate retrieved information, and synthesize information effectively to support their messages or arguments;
- improve development and organization of written arguments;
- demonstrate the ability to edit and revise in the writing process;
- apply the basic theories and principles of oral communication; and
- communicate effectively in a variety of settings, including public speaking and group discussion.

Course Requirements

Attendance is a critical component of this course and you are expected to attend all sessions in order to fully engage in discussion and experiences. Missing more than two class sessions or excessive tardiness to class will result in a deduction of the final course grade by a minimum full letter grade.

Preparation prior to class is key to a successful course experience. All readings and media viewings must be completed prior to the assigned class session. Students are expected to bring notes to class supporting their

evaluation of big ideas, questions, and connections to both course content and current events. While different note-taking formats will be shared in class, each student must find the method that works best for her/his needs. Remember—the best notes help you to engage with classmates and bring depth to our discussions (NOT to answer comprehension questions from the professor!). Students are highly encouraged to bring relevant current event materials to class for sharing and discussion.

Students are encouraged to follow urban education issues through social media. The course will utilize both Twitter and Instagram for information and conversations central to urban education; other platforms may be introduced and discussed as they evolve. More traditional information sources may also be used and students not engaged with specific social media platforms will be expected to take advantage of access to major metropolitan news sources, such as the free paper copies of *The New York Times* and *Washington Post* available on campus.

Course Readings and Media

Readings and media will be drawn from, but not limited to, the following list and be responsive to current urban education issues and events:

Books

Ayers, W., & Ford, P. (Eds.). (2011). *City kids, city schools: Reports from the front row*. New York, NY: New Press.

Spring, J. (2011). *American school*. New York, NY: McGraw Hill.

Articles

Ang, K. (2014). Understanding Vergara v California: What's behind the case that is sparking a national education debate? *California Common Sense*. Retrieved from cacs.org/research/vergara-v-california-case-context/

Aronowitz, N.W. (April 17, 2014). Shared space at heart of New York's heated charter school debates. *NBC News.com*. Retrieved from www.abcnews.com/shared-space-heart-new-yorks-charter-school-debate

Baker, A. (February 16, 2014) Common Core Curriculum Now has critics on the left. *New York Times*. Retrieved from www.nytimes.com/2014/02/17/nyregion

Bullman, R. (2002). Teachers in the 'hood: Hollywood's middle class fantasy. *The Urban Review*, 34 (3), pp. 251-276.

Chang, B., & Au, W. (2008). You're Asian. How could you fail math?: Unmasking the myth of the model minority. *Rethinking Schools*, 22 (2). Retrieved from www.rethinkingschools.org/archive/22_02/math222.shtml.

Council of the Great City Schools. (June 1, 2010). Nation's urban school leaders endorse common core standards. Retrieved from corestandards.org

Kahne, J., & Westheimer, J. (2003). Teaching democracy: What schools need to do. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 85, pp. 34-66. Retrieved from pdk.sagepub.com

LA School Report. (2014). Vergara v California. Retrieved at laschoolreport.com/wp/06/SM_Vergara-v.-California-COMPLAINT.pdf

New York Charter School Center. (2013). Co-Location: How public schools share space in New York City. Retrieved from nyccharterschools.org

Orfield, J. (2000). The growth of segregation: African Americans, Latinos, and unequal education. In R. Arum & I. Beattie (Eds.), *The structure of schooling* (pp. 194-205). Washington, DC: Sage Publications.

Phi Delta Kappa & Gallup. (2014). *46th annual poll of the public's attitude towards public schools*. Retrieved from pdkintl.org/programs-resources/poll/

Stepick, A., & Stepick, C.D. (2002). Becoming American, constructing ethnicity: Immigrant youth and civic engagement. *Applied Developmental Science*, 6 (4), pp. 246-257.

Wells, A.S., Holme, J.J., Revilla, A.T., & Atanda, A.K. (2004). How desegregation changed us: The effects of racially mixed schools on students and society.

Media (TV shows)

Boston Public

Degrassi High

Head of the Class

Room 222

Welcome Back, Kotter

The Wire [season 4]

Media (Films)

Dangerous Minds

Freedom Writers

Lean on Me

The Lottery [documentary]

Mad Hot Ballroom [documentary]

Stand and Deliver

Teached [documentary]

Waiting for Superman [documentary]

We will consult metropolitan news sources from across American urban areas, but will use these news outlets weekly (via paper and online editions):

The New York Times

Los Angeles Times

Washington Post

Chicago Tribune

Atlanta Journal-Constitution

Philadelphia Inquirer

Newark Star-Ledger

Boston Globe

Seattle Times

Houston Chronicle

Grading System

Participation 20%

Midterm 10%

Text Say/I Say responses 10%

Culture Critique paper 20%

Urban Education Crisis? paper & presentation 40%

Grading Scale

95-100 = A

84-86 = B

74-76 = C

63-66 = D

90-94 = A-

80-83 = B-

70-73 = C-

0-63 = F

87-89 = B+

77-79 = C+

67-69 = D+

Participation

Participation is evaluated in two parts: (1) attendance and (2) making meaningful contributions to class discussions and activities. Participation expectations will be reviewed during the first class and regularly highlighted during the semester.

Midterm

The midterm will consist of short response and essay questions focused on the history of urban schools. The midterm will assess students' understandings of historical, cultural, political, and economic factors shaping the development of urban school systems across the United States and their influences on current events. These understandings are crucial to analyzing current trends and events in urban schools.

Text Say/I Say responses

Text Say/I Say responses require students to analyze a class session reading or media presentation and analyze its relevance to that week's 'big question.' These responses are not summaries of the reading or media, but evidence of students' critical thinking about course concepts. In addition, responses will be used to assist students in leading class discussions for that session. Each student will complete two Text Say/I Say responses over the semester (dates on Course Calendar). Each Text Say/I Say response is approximately 3 double-spaced pages.

Culture Critique paper

Students will watch a popular film or TV show (3 episodes) about urban schools (see list in Course Readings and Media) and write a short analysis paper (6-8 pages) exploring how the cultural mythology about urban schools is perpetuated or challenged. The papers will consider the presentation of teachers, students, families, and community and the impact of these images in shaping public understandings of urban education.

Urban Education Crisis? paper and presentation

Students will select an American urban school system and develop an analysis of the nature of 'crisis and reform' in the education system. This assignment contains three parts:

- (1) a written historical and social overview of the school system within the context of the overall urban area's development within the past decade;
- (2) a written analysis of reform efforts within the school system and their impact on the surrounding communities;
- (3) an oral presentation offering ideas for developing and enhancing the education system to support 21st century learners.

The paper (parts 1 and 2 above) will be approximately 10-12 pages and require synthesis of multiple resources both historical and contemporary. The paper will be divided into sections with drafts due throughout the semester. Papers will be individual efforts, but peer and instructor feedback will be offered throughout the writing process.

The oral presentations (part 3) will occur during Finals Week and last approximately 10-12 minutes per team. Teams are expected to provide visually engaging and interactive presentations.

Class Policies

Make-Up and Late Work

Assignments are due at the start of class and must be submitted via Canvas unless otherwise noted by the instructor. Late assignments will NOT be accepted except under extreme circumstances and/or only with prior, written consent from the instructor. Anticipate technological issues and plan accordingly.

Students missing a class session must consult with a classmate to determine what was missed. Make-up work will not be substituted for participation points---you need to be in class to earn those points!

Any changes to assignment due dates and requirements will be announced in class and posted on Canvas via an announcement. It is the student's responsibility to remain aware of syllabus and assignment changes.

Laptops, Cell Phones, and Other Technology

Students are encouraged to bring laptops, tablets, and cell phones to class as a resource for class discussion and activities. Students are expected to turn off and store all devices that are not being used for class purposes. Failure to follow technology expectations may result in loss of technology use in class, loss of participation points, or removal from class.

Honor Code

In order to reaffirm commitment to the Honor System, the student shall write out in full and sign the following pledge on all quizzes, examinations, papers, and other assignments, as appropriate:

"I hereby declare upon my word of honor that I have neither given nor received unauthorized help on this work."

Students are expected to comply with the Honor Code. All work is to be pledged and completed by the student without assistance unless otherwise indicated by the instructor. Any violations of the code in or outside of class will be brought to the attention of the Honor Council for appropriate action. All members of the UMW community abide by the Honor Code.

A student's pledge on an exam or written assignment in this course will be a statement of academic honor. Pledging an exam or written assignment will be an indication that he/she has not received or given inappropriate assistance in completing it and that the assigned report, activity, experience or requirement has been completed by the student.

In addition, full credit with citations must be given to material copied or quoted from sources when completing assignments. APA formatting is required for all assignments unless noted by the instructor. Failure to give an author credit will be treated as plagiarism. Evidence of plagiarism will result in a zero on the assignment and be referred to the Honor Council as a violation. When in doubt, cite your source!

Office of Disability Services

Depending on the student's needs, the Office of Disability Services coordinates accommodations for students with disabilities, advises and assists in arranging accommodations and acts as a liaison between students and faculty / administration / staff on issues relating to accommodations. Each student may require a different approach in order to achieve equal access to programs and services.

<http://academics.umw.edu/disability/>

Statement from the Office of Disability:

"The Office of Disability Services has been designated by the University as the primary office to guide, counsel, and assist students with disabilities. If you receive services through the Office of Disability Services and require accommodations for this class, make an appointment with me as soon as possible to discuss your approved accommodation needs. Bring your accommodation letter with you to the appointment. I will hold any information you share with me in strictest confidence unless you give me permission to do otherwise. If you have not made contact with the Office of Disability Services and need accommodations, (note taking assistance, extended time for tests, etc.), I will be happy to refer you. The office will require appropriate documentation of disability. Their phone number is 540-654-1266."

Course Outline and Calendar

****The instructor may revise the course calendar to meet class needs and respond to current events in the field. Changes will be announced in class and posted on Canvas.**

Week 1: What does it mean to be 'urban?'

Date	Class Topics & Activities	Readings & Materials Due	Assignments Due
1/13 (T)	Course Introduction Writing and Speaking Resources		
1/15 (R)	Urban definitions Critical social media use to follow urban school leaders and systems		

Week 2: Why do we need public schools?

Date	Class Topics & Activities	Readings & Materials Due	Assignments Due
1/20 (T)	History and Goals of Public Schools	Spring, "The History and Political Goals of Public Schooling"	
1/22 (R)	History and Goals of Public Schools	PDK/Gallup 46 th Annual Poll of the Public's Attitudes Toward Public Schools (link on Canvas)	Text Say/I Say #1

Week 3: Can urban public schools educate 'all'?

Date	Class Topics & Activities	Readings & Materials Due	Assignments Due
1/27 (T)	Pre-Industrialization Introduction of Common Schools	Spring, "Nationalism, Multiculturalism, and Moral Reform in the New Republic"	
1/29 (R)	Common Schools	Spring, "The Ideology and Politics of the Common Schools"	

Week 4: Are urban public schools obligated to 'make' American citizens?

Date	Class Topics & Activities	Readings & Materials Due	Assignments Due
2/3 (T)	Immigration and Assimilation	Spring, "Growth of the Welfare Function of Schools: School Showers, Kindergarten, Playgrounds, Home Economics, Social Centers, and Cultural Conflict"	
2/5 (R)	Citizenship	Stepick & Stepick, "Becoming American, Constructing Ethnicity: Immigrant Youth and Civic Engagement" Kahne & Westheimer, "Teaching Democracy: What Schools Need to Do"	Text Say/I Say #2

Week 5: Was desegregation a success in urban public schools?

Date	Class Topics & Activities	Readings & Materials Due	Assignments Due
2/10 (T)	Urbanization and Segregation	Orfield, "The Growth of Segregation: African Americans, Latinos, and Unequal Education" PBS: <i>The Rise and Fall of Jim</i>	Submit first and second choice for Culture Critique paper

		<i>Crow</i>	
2/12 (R)	Desegregation	Wells et al., "How Desegregation Changed Us: The Effects of Racially Mixed Schools on Students and Society"	Text Say/I Say #3

Week 6: Who rules school?

Date	Class Topics & Activities	Readings & Materials Due	Assignments Due
2/17 (T)	School Governance	Spring, "Local Control, Choice, Charter Schools, and Home Schooling"	Text Say/I Say #4
2/19 (R)	School Finance	Spring, "Power and Control at State and National Levels"	

Week 7: Are urban schools in crisis?

Date	Class Topics & Activities	Readings & Materials Due	Assignments Due
2/24 (T)	Midterm		Midterm
2/26 (R)	Defining crisis in urban education	Assigned current event article (links on Canvas)	

Week 8: Can only superheroes save urban public education?

Date	Class Topics & Activities	Readings & Materials Due	Assignments Due
3/10 (T)	Cultural mythology of urban schools	Bullman, "Teachers in the 'Hood: Hollywood's Middle Class Fantasy" Ayers & Ford, "A Teacher Ain't Nothin' but a Hero: Teachers and Teaching in Film"	Text Say/I Say #5
3/12 (R)	Myths fighting back	<i>Waiting for Superman</i> <i>OR</i> <i>The Lottery</i>	

Week 9: Are urban students different?

Date	Class Topics & Activities	Readings & Materials Due	Assignments Due
3/17 (T)	'At risk'... for what?	Ayers & Ford, "Me, A Name I Call Myself"	Draft-Part 1 of final paper
3/19 (R)	Diversity in the classroom	Chang & Au, "You're Asian. How Could You Fail Math?: Unmasking the Myth of the Model Minority" Miner & Peterson, "Diversity vs. White Privilege: An Interview with Christine Sleeter"	Text Say/I Say #7

Week 10: What works in urban public schools (curriculum)?

Date	Class Topics & Activities	Readings & Materials Due	Assignments Due
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3/24 (T)	Teaching Like a Champion and the rise of charter school pedagogy	Assigned video clip (KIPP, TFA, Harlem Children’s Zone, etc.) – don’t forget to compare notes with group members before class! Ayers & Ford, “Inside the Classroom: Social Vision and Critical Pedagogy”	Culture Critique Paper
3/26 (R)	Common Core	“Nation’s Urban School Leaders Endorse Common Core Standards” (letter linked on Canvas) “Common Core Now Has Critics on the Left” (NY Times article— contact me if trouble accessing via Canvas link)	Text Say/I Say #8

Week 11: What works in urban public schools (teachers)?

Date	Class Topics & Activities	Readings & Materials Due	Assignments Due
3/31 (T)	Teacher pay & tenure	LA School Report, “Vergara v California” (use case reading guide) Ang, “Vergara v. California: What is Behind the Case that is Sparking an National Debate?”	Text Say/I Say #9
4/2 (R)	Teacher evaluations	Urban Teacher Center, “Rethinking the Teacher Lottery” Assigned current event article	

Week 12: What works in urban public schools (community and family)?

Date	Class Topics & Activities	Readings & Materials Due	Assignments Due
4/7 (T)	Neighborhoods and Revitalization	Ayers & Ford, “Laving our Cities from the Experts”	Text Say/I Say #10
4/9 (R)	Community Schooling	Ayers & Ford, “Transforming Schools into Powerful Communities”	Draft—Part 2 of final paper

Week 13: What works in urban public schools (environment and design)?

Date	Class Topics & Activities	Readings & Materials Due	Assignments Due
4/14 (T)	Co-location	Aronowitz, “Shared Space at Heart of New York’s Heated Charter School Debate” NYC Charter Schools, “Co-Location”	
4/16 (R)	Innovative urban school design	Review at least 2 school sites under Projects at The Third	

		Teacher+ site (link in Canvas)	
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Week 14: What is the future of urban public schools?

Date	Class Topics & Activities	Readings & Materials Due	Assignments Due
4/21 (T)	What will urban schools be in the future?		
4/23 (R)	Peer writing groups		Draft—Parts 1 and 2 of final paper

Week 15: What is the future of urban public schools?

Date	Class Topics & Activities	Readings & Materials Due	Assignments Due
4/28 (T)	Presentation work groups		
4/30 (R)	Course Wrap Up: What is the link between urban schools and you?		Urban Education Crisis? paper Presentations on scheduled final exam day