

**Vanderbilt University**  
**PEABODY COLLEGE**  
**Syllabus HOD 2665/3960-03 SPED 2080/3080 - 3 semester hours**  
**High Poverty Youth: Improving Outcomes**  
**Tu/Th 9:35-10:50 Wyatt 50-1 Spring 2007**

**Instructor:** Carolyn Hughes, Ph.D.

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**Office:** 303C MRL

**Office Hours:** MW 11:00-1:00 or after class, other times call or e-mail for appointment

**Course Description:**

Youth from high poverty backgrounds may be at-risk for outcomes that include academic failure, school dropout, drug abuse, unemployment, or incarceration. In this class, we will be working with schools and community agencies in Nashville to improve outcomes for youth living in high poverty neighborhoods. We will have class meetings as well as ongoing service-learning field experiences. Field work will include mentoring, tutoring, assisting in the college application process, and interacting with youth in neighborhood community centers or in students' high schools.

**Course Objectives – Students will:**

1. Discuss issues related to diversity and equality in secondary education, including the civil rights movement and current legislation.
2. Describe the effects of poverty on families and students.
3. Discuss issues related to unfavorable post-school outcomes that may be experienced by students who are at-risk or from high poverty backgrounds.
4. Discuss the concept of “resilience” and the “protective” factors of the individual, family, school, and community that are related to favorable outcomes for youth.
5. Compare and contrast dropout prevention and community-based models designed to improve outcomes for youth from high poverty backgrounds, including those with disabilities.
6. Discuss strategies, such as mentoring, that are effective in improving outcomes for youth and apply these strategies directly with youth in field-based settings.
7. Mentor a youth or young adult and provide tutoring or support, as needed.
8. Keep a journal of experiences that occur at the field site and relate these experiences to readings and your professional growth.

**Class Schedule:**

DATE	TOPIC	ASSIGNMENT
Jan 11	Introduction to Course	
Jan 16, 18	Why and “How to” Mentor: Being a Caring Adult for Youth	Attend MLK Jr. Event
Jan 23, 25	Mentoring in High School: Increasing College Access	
Jan 30, Feb 1	Race, Class, and White Privilege	
Feb 6, 8	Equality in America’s Schools?: Segregation, Integration, and Resegregation	
Feb 13, 15	The Reality: Inequality in America’s Schools	Assn 1 due 2/13
Feb 20, 22	The Reality: Growing Up Poor – Working at Wal-Mart	Journals/logs due 2/20
Feb 27, Mar 1	Midterm Exam & Mentoring Focus Groups	Midterm Exam 2/27
Mar 6, 8	NO CLASS – SPRING BREAK	
Mar 13, 15	The Reality: Growing Up Poor – Sick and Hungry	
Mar 20, 22	The Teen Scene: Out of Work and Homeless	
Mar 27, 29	The Teen Scene: Male and Idle	Journals/logs due 3/27
Apr 3, 5	Dropout Prevention/School Completion	
Apr 10, 12	Contemporary High School Restructuring Efforts	
Apr 17, 19	How Did it Go?: Student Presentations	Assn 2 due 4/17 or 4/19
Apr 24	Course Wrap-up	Journals/logs due 4/24
Apr 27		Take-home final due 4/27

**Service-Learning Experience:**

**This is a service-learning class requiring approximately 22 hours in the community.** You should visit the field site (community center or school) a minimum of 2 hours per week (1-2 visits per week—2 is better!) throughout the entire semester beginning as soon as mentoring assignments are made for approximately 22 hours total. **You will be asked to sign a contract indicating your intent to complete your hours.** You will be interacting with and mentoring a youth or young adult at the site and completing assignments as indicated in the syllabus. **If you must miss a session at your site, be sure to notify the person in charge ahead of time. We will also have a “Vandy Day” where mentees come to campus as a group and you are expected to attend (may be during a regular class time).**

**NOTE: Metro Schools (and most after-school programs) will be closed Jan 15, Feb 19, Mar 19-23, and Apr 6. Vanderbilt is out Mar 3-11. You likely will not be able to get in your hours during those times. It is important not to get behind in your hours and to plan ahead for the times you can’t get together with your mentee. Studies show that the amount of time and frequency you spend with your mentee are important to the success of your relationship.**

**Journals/Logs:**

You will be expected to keep a log of hours/visits to your site and write a reflective journal entry for each visit. Journal entries will include: (a) what you saw and did, (b) your personal reaction, (c) how your experience relates to what we’re learning in class, and (d) your plans for your next visit. A format will be provided in class. **Journal and logs will be handed in and graded 3 times during the semester.**

**Attendance and Class Participation:**

Class meetings will be run as a seminar in which the instructor and students lead class discussion of the readings, selected videos, and your mentoring experiences. **Attendance and participation in class and community experiences are critical.** You are expected to read the required readings for each class ahead of time and come to class prepared to participate in discussions and small group activities. Lectures

typically will be short, giving opportunity to discuss readings and tie them to field experiences. **Excessive absences or lack of participation will result in a lowered grade in the course.**

Assignment/Test	Due Date	Points
Assn 1: MLK Jr. & Diversity in Education	2/13	25
Journals/Logs	2/20, 3/27, 4/24	3 @25 each
Midterm Exam	2/27	25
Assn 2: Mentoring Project Presentation	4/17 or 4/19	25
Take-Home Final	4/27	25
<b>Total possible points</b>		<b>175</b>

**Note: Late assignments will be lowered by one letter grade unless prior permission from instructor.**

**Assn 1: MLK Jr. & Diversity in Education:** Write a short paper in response to the MLK Jr. event you attended and the readings for Jan 17-Feb 9, using citations. Instructions will be provided in class.

**Midterm Exam:** The midterm will be given in class and will be cumulative based on your readings, service learning experience, and class discussion. The exam will last approximately 45 minutes.

**Assn 2: Mentoring Project Presentation:** Summarize and write-up your mentoring experiences this semester and present them in class. Presentations will be done as groups, based on mentoring sites. Requirements for write-ups and handouts, etc. will be provided in class.

**Take-Home Final:** The take-home final will be comprehensive and will allow you to apply information from your readings, service learning experiences, and class discussion throughout the semester to realistic problems.

#### **Grading:**

A = 93-100%

B = 85-92%

C = 77-84%

D = 69-76%

F = < 69%

(+ and – will be given based on class performance and attendance)

#### **Honor Code**

Vanderbilt's Honor Code governs all work in this course.

#### **Accommodations**

Please see me and/or the Opportunity Development Center if you need accommodations in the class.

#### **Required Readings:**

The classpak is available at Campus Copy or on-line on Blackboard and at the Peabody Library. The classpak contains the following readings. **Be sure to read ALL the readings assigned for each week BEFORE the first class of the week and bring them to class.**

#### **Jan 11 - Introduction to Course**

1. "Looking for the Holes" by Ani DiFranco – retrieved from [www.azlyrics.com](http://www.azlyrics.com)

#### **Jan 16, 18 - Why and "How to" Mentor: Being a Caring Adult for Youth**

1. Rhodes, J. E., (2002). Inventing a promising future. In J. E. Rhodes, *Stand by me: The risks and rewards of mentoring today's youth* (pp. 8-16). Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

2. MENTOR/National Mentoring Partnership. (2005). *How to build a successful mentoring program*. [www.mentoring.org/eptoolkit](http://www.mentoring.org/eptoolkit).
3. *Vanderbilt University Mentoring Manual* (to be distributed in class).

### **Jan 23, 25 – Mentoring in High School: Increasing College Access**

1. Oasis/Community IMPACT. (2006). *College Access: From the inside out*. Available at [www.teenedge.com](http://www.teenedge.com).

### **Jan 30, Feb 1 – Race, Class, and White Privilege**

1. Rothstein, R. (2004, Sept-Oct). Even the best schools can't close the race achievement gap. *Poverty and Race*. [www.prrac.org](http://www.prrac.org).
2. Jensen, R. (1998). *White privilege shapes the U. S.*
3. McIntosh, P. (1988). *White privilege: Unpacking the invisible knapsack*.

### **Feb 6, 8 - Equality in America's Schools?: Segregation, Integration, and Resegregation**

1. *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954). Excerpt. (Entire text available at <http://supct.law.cornell.edu:8080/supct/>)
2. Hamburg, J. (2003, July 13). Racial imbalance returns to schools. *The Tennessean*.
3. Biskupic, J. (2006, November 14, 2006). *Justices to weigh school diversity*. [www.USATODAY.com](http://www.USATODAY.com).

### **Feb 13, 15 - The Reality: Inequality in America's Schools**

1. Peterson, K. (2005, July 7). *NCLB goals and penalties*. [www.stateline.org](http://www.stateline.org).
2. Basken, P. (2006, March 29). *States have more schools falling behind*. [www.washingtonpost.com](http://www.washingtonpost.com).
3. Kozol, J. (1992). The savage inequalities of public education in New York. In J. Kozol, *Savage inequalities: Children in America's schools* (pp. 83-132). New York: Harper Perennial.

### **Feb 20, 22 – The Reality: Growing Up Poor – Working at Wal-Mart**

1. Ehrenreich, B. (2001). Selling in Minnesota. In B. Ehrenreich, *Nickel and dimed: On (not) getting by in America* (pp. 143-191). New York: Owl Books.
2. Greenhouse, S. (2005, February 12). Wal-Mart agrees to pay fine in child labor cases. *The New York Times*

### **Feb 27, Mar 1 – Midterm Exam & Mentoring Focus Groups**

### **Mar 6, 8 – No Class – Spring Break**

### **Mar 13, 15 – The Reality: Growing Up Poor – Sick and Hungry**

1. Epstein, H. (2003, October 12). Enough to make you sick? *The New York Times Magazine*.
2. Brooks-Gunn, J., & Duncan, G. J. (1997). The effects of poverty on children. *The Future of Children*, 7, (Table 1, pp. 58-59 only).

### **Mar 20, 22 - The Teen Scene: Out of Work and Homeless**

1. Phelan, C. (2003, February 3). Teens shut out by labor market. *News from Northeastern*.
2. Bernstein, N. (2004, March 8). For a promising but poor girl, a struggle over sex and goals. *The New York Times*.

### **Mar 27, 29 - The Teen Scene: Male and Idle**

1. Herbert, B. (2004, July 19). An emerging catastrophe. *The New York Times*.
2. Ohlemacher, S. (2006, November 16). Racial gap is wider here than nationally. Census: Blacks 3 times likelier than whites to live in poverty. *The Tennessean*.

### **Apr 3, 5 – Dropout Prevention/School Completion**

1. Schouten, F. (2003, December 23). Study: Graduation rates overstated. *The Tennessean*.
2. Klausnitzer, D. (2004, March 16). Reading difficult for half of adults. *The Tennessean*.
3. Loos, R. (2006, November 11). Metro district has graduation increase (Table only). *The Tennessean*.
4. Schargel, F. P., & Smink, J. (2004, June, 2) *Strategies to help solve our school dropout problem*.  
[www.kasa.org](http://www.kasa.org)

**Apr 10, 12 – Contemporary High School Restructuring Efforts**

1. Schaps, E. (2003). Creating a school community. *Educational Leadership*, 31-33.
2. Coffee, J. N., & Pestrige, S. OJJDP Fact Sheet: The Career Academy Concept. *U. S. Department of Justice*.
3. Gustin, G. (2006, December, 12). Vocational education is shifting focus. *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*.

**Apr 17, 19 – Student Presentations**

**Apr 24 – Course Wrap-up**