

Course Syllabus

Course:	EDZU 9951 Social Concerns for Educators
Credit Hours:	3.0 credits / 45 hours
Instructor:	Richard Acritelli

Course Description

Educators face the daily challenges of not only creating quality instruction, but also the massive concerns that are present in our classes every day. Teachers have assumed a greater role in society that does not end with the sound of the bell. We have seen a technological age that in ways has made our society softer. The very students that are able to perform countless tasks on computers are the same pupils that have a work ethic that has diminished over the years. What are the necessary improvements that society must make to foster a better relationship between education and students/young adults? What are the social concerns of the American educator? How have times negatively changed and which direction is vital for the development of our most precious commodity – our students? Is respect a foreign term that has lost its meaning? We will look at the most pressing issues that are plaguing our schools and the potential remedies that could help our students in this new century of learning (technology, drugs, obesity, occupations, racism, morals, motivation, etc.). All students will be involved in a variety of activities that will highlight important information in the handling of twenty first century educational issues. A necessary class for all educators, school psychologists, guidance counselors and support staff that will help identify the most pressing problems of today.

Course Goals

To Know

1. the important concerns that are facing our youth in schools today.
2. what the warning signs in dealing with the problems of our students.
3. the pitfalls and positive features of technology for our youngest students.
4. the premium of education in this ever changing world and how our students must be able to compete and excel against foreign nations.

To Understand

1. how violence on television, schools and society has impacted our youth.
2. the national concerns over obesity with our students, society and even military.
3. the allure of gangs to our students.
4. the ever changing climate of drugs, their use, types and impact that it has on our students.
5. the importance of fostering an environment of motivation, hard work and goal orientated students.

and To Be Able To

1. determine how to check the warning signs of child abuse.
2. explain the different types of peer pressure that are facing students.
3. rationalize how times have changed with dealing with the technologically savvy younger generations.
4. present how different generations reacted to times of crisis, war and national emergency and to determine how our future will take care of our nation.
5. look at the most pressing issues that continue to impact the growth and development of our students through the challenges that they face inside and outside of school.

Course Outline

I. Unit 1– Introduction, health concerns, respect, immigration and today, and the playing the game in the right manner

- a. The students will answer several questions about changing times within society. They will “**Remember When**” the changes of yesterday to today. Most of these differences will relate to the world of education and the interaction with students. All participants will answer questions about their past and relate to the concerns that are facing them today.
- b. The issues of obesity in America, our schools, and the military. Today this is seen as one of the largest problems that is facing our students and even their parents.
- c. All participants will read about Tom Brokaw and the Greatest Generation. This assignment focuses on the issues of respect, hard work, courage, and service from a part of American society that is leaving us on a daily basis. The students will have a reading and World War II videos from Steven Spielberg and Tom Hanks.
- d. All students will look at the most recent news footage of today that deals with the most pressing issues that our children/young adults face on a daily basis. Some of these issues are:
 - i. Obesity and the impact of this growing problem within our schools and society
 - ii. Obesity and how it has hurt the national defense strength of our military. All students will learn about the magnitude of this problem that has actually seen recruits fail basic military requirements.
 - iii. Each student will learn about the impact of the most recent issues of immigration, the ban on Muslims from several nations, and the response of the Trump Administration.
 1. What are the growing tensions against immigration that we currently see before, during, and after this election? (2016)
 2. How do we as educators handle resentment against immigrants inside and outside of our classes?
 3. Identify the ways that teachers could better address the difficulties of how our students could better communicate with different ethnic, religious, and racial groups.
- e. The students will also read Hall of Fame baseball player Cal Ripken and his induction ceremony. Ripken recognized the accomplishment of teachers and police officers as those people that were the real role models. This player addresses his strong talents, to his ability to go to work every day and he did not view himself as being any different than any other figure.
- f. The class will analyze these major stories and address the impact on their students in class – These stories can and will change due to the most recent news coverage on social concerns that is relevant to this course.

II. Second Assignment Block – Gangs in American schools, concerns of students and older generations of Americans, the state of the economy and education, and entitlement.

- a. The students will analyze serious social concerns that impact them inside and outside of our classrooms
 - i. Gangs in schools and society
 - ii. The issues of shootings in towns/schools like that of Columbine and Newton
 - iii. Watching films that deal with the human side of students and citizens and how they deal with their surroundings (Stand By Me and Gran Torino - 1 film/questions) that are tied directly to the course
 - iv. The participants will learn about the impact of bullying within American society and determine:
 1. The true extent of this problem
 2. Different forms
 3. Best ways of handling problems that arise in class
 4. Speaking to parents and students
 5. Statistics on growth of bullying
 - v. The teachers will identify the concerns that we see with students and self esteem issues. This assignment will focus on the best ways to foster positive self esteem and the issues of our students that do not feel good about themselves (obesity, depression, anxiety, school phobia, suicide, etc.).
 - vi. An assignment will be created on the students and the decline within the economy. Since 2008, school districts and cities, were forced to get more creative in how they spend money on needed educational programs. The teachers will look at the impact of this problem on a local, state, and federal level and see how there might have been negative and positive changes.
 - vii. Entitlement and the need for a stronger work ethic as seen through the teacher graduation speech of “You’re not special speech.” This teacher’s speech hit a tone amongst educators and parents around this nation. All students will watch the video of this teachers words that focused his concerns that our students were merely given necessary tools and trophies and did not earn them the old fashion way through work.

III. Third Assignment Block – Gangs and American History X, CPS and making a report, Lillo Brancoto and the loss of talent, child abuse, and the rationale behind a major cheating scandal.

- a. All students will analyze the foundations and growth of gangs within schools and society. This assignment will focus on gangs and the film American History X:
 - i. The foundations of a gang
 - ii. Its mentality
 - iii. Why students/young adults join
 - iv. The consequences of joining gangs
- b. The class will read a study on the make-up of gangs and answer questions
 - i. After the reading and questions, the class will watch American History X. This is a violent movie that is very well known within our schools. This movie shows all of the aspects of gangs in society and how young talented student-athlete was lured into the horrors of a white supremacist group. The movie targets the tragic way that racism and hatred changed a family and a promising young student to that of major figure within a white supremacy group in southern California. All students will learn how this young man changed his views in jail and how he tried to help his younger brother stay away from this organization and not make the same fatal mistakes that he made. By the end of the film, this young man is trying to save his brother from making the same mistakes of

being associated with this group and he realized that he had become a dangerous member of society.

- c. The issues of child abuse, CPS reporting, strength of government and school response and the responsibilities and role of a teacher, guidance counselor, support staff, social worker, etc. Information will be presented on the best practices of creating a report against a negative social situation for students at home with their parents or guardians.
- d. The students will look at the important aspects of ability and talent. Just recently, Lillo Brancato was a young and well known actor that was just sentenced to jail. Brancato was the young star on the Bronx Tale by Robert De Niro, Renaissance Man with Danny Devito, Crimson Tide with Denzel Washington and on the Sopranos. He was convicted of being an accomplice with the death of a New York City Police Officer. Since he was a young boy, Brancato was addicted to drugs and his dependency led to this crime. The students will read and watch news clips about the ability of this young man, the thoughts of other actors and his demise into jail. De Niro was concerned about this highly talented, but troubled actor who was high on drugs during a pivotal scene in the Bronx Tale.
- e. All students will answer questions and look at the main components of this well known film and identify the most important/relevant aspects that pertain to society – Good Will Hunting or Antwone Fisher – both of these films address physical and mental abuse from parents and guardians.
- f. The students will learn about the impact of child abuse and abduction of a Long Island girl Katie Beers. Information will be presented on the neglect, child abuse, abduction, and imprisonment of this little girl and the trial that followed against John Esposito.
- g. We will look at the growth of divorce within society and its role on the development of our students and the distractions and educational downturn that may be seen by our teachers. Divorce is a difficult subject that faces every educator with more than 50% of our students having parents that are no longer living together. The teachers will learn about the best ways to handle this difficult social and psychological problem.
- h. The students will learn about the impact of cheating by our students through the Great Neck SAT scandal. Information and videos will be provided on this case, the rationale of the student, and the impact of this crime. Each teacher will identify the role of cheating in their own schools, how administrations handle this problem, and evaluate the role that this young man played in manipulating this major national exam.

IV. Fourth Assignment Block

- a. We will look at the relationship of students with each other through peer pressure, hazing, loners, athletics, education and other groups of children. The teachers will learn about the different components of students that may be in a classroom and how to best handle various likes, dislikes, groups, social issues, and the growing issues of suicide through bullying.
- b. We will look at the interaction of these different groups with each other and how the dynamics impact their behavior, respect, trust and feelings. The students will watch the film of the Breakfast Club and answer questions from the film and a reading that is based on the topics that were addressed in this movie.
- c. The students will analyze the impact of drugs and society, they will look at different types/kinds, addictions, and respond to this problem within their own communities and schools. We will look at the growth of heroine and its use, ease of purchase, and addiction.
- d. The students will also address parental drug use and its role with the expanded use of drugs within our schools and societies. Today the drug problem has grown into a serious heroin addiction that is gripping our nation. We will look at the ways that educators and parents can better work together at home and at school.

- e. We will look at the growth of pregnancy within our youngest adults in school. The students will have readings that focus on the challenges that many younger parents face as they are now raising children even before they graduate. All participants will have statistics and strong foundation of information on this subject. They will look at the childhood star Jamie Lynn Spears and how she found out that she was pregnant and what it was like to have a child at an early age.
- f. The teachers will look at the growth of steroids in baseball, the demise of our National Pastime, the players that are involved, the poor example that has been set by professionals for our children, and music that showcases this once proud sport. They will learn about the connection of baseball players as role models, listen to music about the positive aspects of this game, and look at the decline in baseball inductees to the Hall of Fame.
- g. The students will read about Paul Walker and the risks of street racing. This problem is actively seen on Long Island and in and around the major cities. Walker was a caring actor that had given back to his community and his death was a tragic loss. The loss of this star has provided a greater light on the risks that are taken by youths who engage in high speed driving.

There will constantly be assignments and information that is added during the length of this course, as events unfold, and better research is able to be utilized for the strength of this always evolving class.

Methods of Instruction

The students will have assignments that are based on readings, forums, statistics, movies, current events news stories, and think tank studies on the impact of social issues within our schools and society. They are expected to connect these resources and materials into their own daily teaching schedule, experiences, and concerns that deal with this pressing issue. Each participant is expected to fully analyze these resources and establish their own thoughts on these serious and important concerns that impact teachers, students, parents, and society. During the length of the class, additional current events articles that are tied to this course will be sent to this site for the students to read and follow.

Methods of Assessment:

All participants will complete assignments on a daily basis that will be graded on a nightly basis. They are expected to fully complete questions, essays/papers, forums, and films that are based on this subject. If a student is taking this course for graduate credit, they will have to complete all of the required assignments, additional work that is marked graduate, and either a paper for the grade of an A, or a lesson plan with materials, for a grad of an B.

Time Validation

Assignment	Time (in hours)
Do you Remember? The teachers will respond to a series of questions that will be presented to them about respect, hard work, determination, morals, and skills. They are expected to fully write about their lives and how times may have changed from years ago. All teachers will connect this work towards the impact of education.	2.00

Obesity in America - The teachers will read a surgeon general/government report on the issues of obesity within the United States. They will analyze this study that demonstrates the growth of this national problem that has impacted the health of our students.	1.50
Obesity in the Military - The teachers will watch a news story and read information on obesity within the Armed Forces. They will learn about the problems that the military is facing with basic training candidates who are physically unable to graduate. This information will present the difficulties of gaining enough men and women that are in good enough physical condition to make it through the rigors of the military.	2.00
The Greatest Generation and Society - Tom Brokaw wrote one of the finest books on the military service of our veterans that defeated the Japanese and Germans during World War II. The teachers will read excerpts from the Greatest Generation through a CNN news story that depicts the immense amount of sacrifice by these Americans. They will answer questions on the importance of this reading and its veterans that were only a little older than many of our high school students.	1.50
Gangs and Schools in America - The teachers will identify information from the National Gang Center on the rise of these groups that have increased within our schools and communities. They will answer questions and fully elaborate on the information that has been presented to them on violent gang related issues that they might see within their own schools.	2.00
Forum - Columbine and the Healing Process - The teachers will watch a video on the students who survived the terrible shootings that occurred at this school. They will respond to this video and comment on another student from this course.	1.00
Stand By Me/Grand Torino - The teachers who choose to watch one of these films will answer questions that are based on this movie and the connections towards their own schools and communities.	3.50
The Study of Bullying (Students will answer questions on the growth of bullying) - The teachers will examine a study that identifies the strains of bullying against children within our schools and society. All teachers will analyze the impact of bullying, how it hurts our students, and the ways of preventing these negative actions against children and young adults.	2.00
Children and Self Esteem - The teachers will read a study on children and self esteem and answer questions that are based on the concerns that specialists hold about this condition. After looking at this research, the teachers will identify the major components of this work and the issues that they see with students that might suffer from anxiety, depression, and school phobia.	1.50
Children and the State of the Economy - The teachers will read information on the connection of a diminished economy and the difficulties that schools have faced to properly fund educational programs. All teachers will respond to this story and identify the challenges that their schools have faced since the great recession of 2008.	2.00
Teacher Graduation "You're Not So Special Speech," A well known video on the thoughts of a teacher about the impact of easy grading, too many accolades, and social promotion within our school system. The students will responds to this educator who is son of a well known historian and after his words hit the Internet, many teachers and parents took strong notice of his beliefs that society has gone in a different direction.	2.00
Newton School Violence - The teachers will watch news coverage and read stories about the tragic shooting within this school and community. They will identify the actions of the teachers, how this attack hurt the students, and need for more security for our schools.	2.00

Child Abuse and Our Students - The teachers will identify the major concerns that are attributed to child abuse through a major government study. They will read through research and examine the major statistics of abuse that are waged against children in the United States.	2.00
Lilo Brancoto drugs, fame, Hollywood talent, crime and A Bronx Tale - The teachers will identify the major drug problems and issues that were seen from the star of the Bronx Tale. This talented young man who was opposite Robert DeNiro was highly influenced by drugs during a scene. He was involved within a violent crime and sent to jail. The teachers will watch news footage about his arrest and read a story and answer questions about this talented, but troubled young man.	2.00
Katie Beers, Child Abuse/Abduction, and the Court System - The teachers will examine abuse, neglect, and abduction of a young Long Island girl from Suffolk County. They will learn about the life of this girl that lived under difficult conditions and supervision. Information will be presented about the court case against the man that imprisoned her in his home. They will write a reaction and answer questions about the crimes that were carried out against this girl some years ago.	1.50
Good Will Hunting and Antwone Fisher (the class is to watch one film out of the choices that are provided that are based on the content of this course) - These two films focus on physical and sexual abuse from the main characters that are shown in both of these movies. The teachers will answer questions and write a strong reaction towards the contents of this film and how it relates towards their own students.	3.50
Children and Divorce - The teachers will analyze a study on the terrible increases of divorce that is seen within our schools. With the belief that divorce is over 50% of all families, the participants will look at the findings and how they relate to development of our students at home and at school. They will answer questions and write a strong reaction towards this growing social problem.	2.00
Baseball, Steroids, Students and Sports (Students will answer questions on a video/reading) - The teachers will learn about the magnitude of drug use to enhance the baseball skills of major league players. They will watch a video and answer questions from a reading on this scandal that has prevented retired ball players from being inducted into the Hall of Fame. This research will also focus on the poor example that has been set to younger athletes about the need of these players to cheat in order to gain better statistics.	2.00
Penn State Sexual Assault Case and Statistics (Reading and Video) - The teachers will learn about the impact of the Penn State Sexual Assault case that was under former football coach Joe Paterno. They will examine the extent of the abuse, how the university responded towards these allegations, and the toll that was taken against the players who were assaulted by the former assistant coach. All teachers will strongly respond to the information from this troubling assignment.	1.50
Drugs, Society, and Teaching (National Study on drugs and its impact on our students) - The teachers will research the impact of one drug that has been used by our students. They will examine the popularity, cost, and physical and mental result of this drug. The teachers will also watch an older commercial of a parent wanting to know why his child is using drugs, and the response that was provided, was that his son learned how to use drugs from watching his father.	2.50
President Donald Trump and Immigration - The teachers will research information and write a strong reaction towards the recent actions of President Trump to place a ban on immigration to the United States. All teachers will look at the rise of resentment towards immigrants and the direction that our government has gone to support this ban. As educators, how do we speak about this ban and its implications to our own students, some of whom may be immigrants.	2.00

Teen Pregnancy Assignment - The participants will read information from a national study on the rise of teen pregnancy with our young women. They will examine the increase of this social problem through statistics that have been compiled by the CDC. All teachers will learn about the experiences of Jamie Lynn Spears, a childhood star, in how she has dealt with an early pregnancy, and her views on this health matter that has impacted many young ladies.	2.00
Teachers and the State of the Economy - The teachers will read through a study that shows how the state of the economy impacts the development of our students. Since the economic collapse of 2008, Federal, State, and Local spending has faced challenges to meet the growing educational demands of our students. All teachers will learn about the connection that our economy has with the state of national education.	2.00
Paul Walker, Kindness, and Street Racing - Young and talented actor Paul Walker was killed through a street racing incident. The teachers will learn about the increased fatalities of our students that are hitting our students in record numbers through high speed driving. They will identify how law enforcement officials have handled the growth of drag racing and the laws that have been created to limit this type of reckless driving. Walker was considered to be an actor that was extremely generous, had a young daughter, and was tragically killed driving his car too fast. His story has brought this problem to a greater light within our nation.	2.00
Friday Night Lights - The teachers will have the chance to watch the film Friday Night Lights about a small Texas town and how they view football within their high school. While this film is based on a sport, it shows the pressure, parental abuse, priorities, lack of parenting, risks, and the unlikely chance that many athletes will ever play Division I. They will answer questions on this film that will relate to the scholar-athlete issues that we see in our own schools. The teachers will be expected to research a story that focuses on the major themes that were observed in this movie.	4.00
Final Graduate Paper or Lesson Plan - All papers should be within 4-5 pages in length, properly cited/footnoted, 12 font, double spaced, and strongly tied to the content of this course. All Lesson Plans will focus on course, rationale/direction of this lesson and the resources that a teacher will create in order to present it to their students.	4.00
Total Time	56.00¹

¹ All students are expected to complete 45 hours of course work. If they are taking the class for graduate credit, they will submit an additional assignment, and a paper or lesson plan. Since the participants range from K-12, a variety of different teaching assignments (Art, Gym, Music, Physics, Social Studies, English, Guidance Counselor, Social Worker, etc.), there are many different assignments that have been created to meet their educational needs and responsibilities. They will watch one movie assignment and fully answer the questions that are based on this film that relate to the Respectful Student. Some of these assignments will be marked mandatory and the students will pick some assignments that are the most relevant to their schools, needs, interests, experiences, etc. The instructor will constantly post new information on current events and subjects that are related to the Social Concerns for Educators as they occur.