



EDTE 295: Comparative Education across Cultures with Attention to Sustainability and Mindfulness through Travel to Bhutan and Nepal

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College Mission

The College of Education and Social Services (CESS) educates and prepares outstanding professionals in education, social work, and human services; engages in scholarship of high quality; and provides exemplary professional service to Vermont, nationally, and globally. We do this to create a more humane and just society, free from oppression, that maximizes human potential and the quality of life for all individuals, families, and communities.

Course Description and Goals

This course will examine the role of humility, mindfulness, and place when designing learning experiences to advance the UN Sustainable Development Goals. Particular focus will be given to the way culture informs learning. The course will offer a range of engaged learning experiences, including conversations with school leaders, researchers, educators, learners, and community partners to amplify understanding about the importance of place and culture when designing curriculum and learning that supports the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

The course will also deepen understanding of both the American context and the Bhutanese/Nepalese context through learning and experiencing ourselves and others. The course will also enrich our understanding of Bhutan and Nepal, including attention to curriculum and pedagogy. Through reflection and peer-to-peer learning, the course will also look to build independence and confidence while exploring new places and customs. Finally, the intention is for the experience to inform future practice and surface the importance of culture in disciplinary learning.

Accommodations

The University of Vermont provides upon request appropriate academic accommodations for qualified students with disabilities. For more information, contact the ACCESS office at 802-656-7753. Your instructor considers providing accommodations to be more than a legal responsibility; meeting students' needs is the heart of good teaching. As a program (secondary education), we adhere to the official university policy for excused absences for religious holidays which states: "Students have the right to practice the religion of their choice. Each semester students should submit in writing to their instructors by the end of the second full week of classes their documented religious holiday schedule for the semester. Faculty must permit students who miss work for the purpose of religious observance to make up the work."

Academic Integrity

The principles of academic integrity are vital ones to maintain, both as students and as future teachers. In order to be ethical educators, we must consider ourselves first as ethical people and ethical learners. The University of Vermont's Code of Academic Integrity is one that I take very seriously. Violations include, but are not limited to plagiarism, submitting someone else's work as your own, and submitting the same work for multiple courses. The code can be found in the Student Handbook or online at <http://www.uvm.edu/policies/student/acadintegrity.pdf>.

Learning Outcomes and Proficiency-Based Assessment

This course will use learning activities to produce artifacts to demonstrate learning across course learning goals. As part of the activities, reflection activities will offer an opportunity to demonstrate how work meets the proficiencies. For this class, we are going to model proficiency-based learning and assessment. To do this, we will spend some time becoming familiar with proficiency-based assessment and developing rubrics to score work. This work aligns with Vermont trends in education, see Act 77.

For the course, work will be assessed, using the following four domains:

- **Emerging:** The artifacts demonstrate emerging knowledge and understanding even though they do not indicate proficiency.
- **Approaching:** Some proficiency has been observed (through an evaluation of the artifacts), but additional indicators are needed to illustrate that the proficiencies are consistently demonstrated.
- **Proficient:** An evaluation of the artifacts show that proficiency is well developed and consistently demonstrated with dexterity across artifacts.
- **Exemplary:** An evaluation of the artifacts demonstrates consistent and exemplary knowledge and understanding.

We will, in class, discuss the process for determining your final grade, but it will involve a conversation around a matrix that frames your work across the standards. If you demonstrate proficiency across the standards, you will earn an A for the class.

Assignments

For the course, there will be a number of learning activities. The particulars for the assignments will be provided with a sketch provided below.

Autobiography

The autobiography is intended to expand how you think about sustainability and self, particularly in relationship to identity. To do this, we will examine various aspects of sustainability, using the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals as a frame of reference. We will also manage readings that relate to the culture of Nepal and Bhutan, including readings that shape mindfulness.

Sustainability Impact Plan

During the complete a sustainability impact plan that will incorporate your learning into an artifact that relates to pedagogy and education. The particulars of the plan will vary depending on your role in the community, but each plan should look to advance sustainability understanding with attentiveness to cross-cultural learning.

Learning Community Activities, including reflection

During the experience, you will participate in collaborative learning opportunities as well as keep a journal. The journal will record your work through the course activities, including the peer learning community work.

Advocacy Project

In line with the UN Sustainable Development Goals, you will work individually or collaboratively on an advocacy project. Part of the advocacy project will incorporate your learning across cultures with attentiveness to community-based needs.

Calendar

The current sketch is to have two meetings prior to departure with two meetings following our return. During the pre-departure meetings, attention to cross-cultural readiness will be stressed. The pre-departure meetings will also include community building events. Upon return, the community building events will continue with the second meeting dedicated to reporting out learning.

For the travel portion of the course, the tentative calendar is as follows (subject to change based on availability of partners:

Date	Description
7.11.2019	Depart Burlington, Vermont
7.12.2019	Arrive Kathmandu, Nepal
7.13.2019	Fly from Kathmandu to Paro, Bhutan
7.14.2019 through 7.17.2019	Visit Bhutanese cultural and historical sites, including a nature excursion Visit with schools Visit with Department of Adult and Higher Education
7.18.2019	Fly from Bhutan to Kathmandu, Nepal
7.19.2019 through 7.22.2019	Visit Kathmandu University College of Education, including time with teacher education students Visit with Himalayan Climate Initiative Visit with Clean City Cooperative Visit cultural sites

	Spend time exploring
7.23.2019	Depart Kathmandu, Nepal
7.24.2019	Arrive Burlington, Vermont