

## EDU 299: Los Angeles is our Classroom: Teaching as a Tool for Social Change

“As a classroom community, our capacity to generate excitement is deeply affected by our interest in one another, in hearing one another’s voices, in recognizing one another’s presence.”

- bell hooks

*Teaching To Transgress: Education as the Practice of Freedom*

Mount St. Mary’s University Summer 2020

Sundays: May 31, June 14, June 28, July 19, August 2, and August 16, 8:00a-4:30p

Instructor: Tisha Marie Reichle-Aguilera  
Ed Dept Phone: 213-477-2620 to leave msg.

Email: treichleaguilera@msmu.edu  
Office hours: by appt online

### BEFORE the first class

1) READ the linked poem and article(s) below:

- “Love Poem to Los Angeles” by Luis J. Rodriguez, Los Angeles Poet Laureate 2014-2016 <https://www.rattle.com/love-poem-to-los-angeles-by-luis-j-rodriguez/>
- **OPTIONAL:** a 5-minute video of Rodriguez reciting the above poem with music by Quetzal Flores, shot, produced, and edited by John Cantú <https://video.search.yahoo.com/search/video?fr=mcafee&p=Love+poem+for+los+angeles+by+luis+j+rodriguez#id=1&vid=b7f6270161bbe039746819c98f883244&action=click>
- “Safe at home in Los Angeles” by Lynell George - March 27, 2020 <https://www.hcn.org/issues/52.5/cities-safe-at-home-in-los-angeles/>
- **OPTIONAL:** “Troubling Calm” by Lynell George - April 21, 2020 <https://magazine.lmu.edu/articles/who-we-want-to-be/>

2) WRITE a 350-500-word reflection on your Los Angeles. Photos/video optional. Submit **May 30 by 9am**. Be prepared to share one paragraph/stanza during May 31 check in.

3) THINK ABOUT your students and how their Los Angeles might be similar to and/or different from yours, mine, Rodriguez’s and George’s. How does Los Angeles impact their identity and interaction with others? How is it or can it become part of their learning experience? Be prepared to discuss after check in May 31.

4) Complete survey about your teaching experience and your students **by May 30 @ 9am**.

### Education Department Philosophy

MSMU Education Department courses are meant to be laboratories of learning. Our hope is that the activities and materials included will serve your learning goals as you explore the various course topics. Our intent is that students from all diverse backgrounds and perspectives be well-served, that students’ learning needs be addressed both in and out of class, and that the diversity that students bring to each course be viewed as a resource, strength and benefit. Throughout the summer, please feel free to let me know how I can improve the effectiveness of the course for you personally, or for other students or student groups, if you have any suggestions.

## **Course Description**

Inspired by Paolo Freire's critical pedagogy, bell hooks challenges us to create "a pedagogy of hope" and advocates that educators "learn new ways of thinking and teaching so that the work we do does not reinforce systems of domination, of imperialism, racism, sexism or class elitism" (*Teaching Community: A Pedagogy of Hope*). It is essential that teaching and learning be a process of empowering those who have been marginalized. With a focus on literature and literacy and experiences in and around Los Angeles, this course will help teachers develop their classrooms as crucial sites where caring and inclusivity can be created and maintained. Teachers will learn from each other's perspectives, participate in experiential learning exercises, read and discuss materials related to course content, and explore their own and other groups' experiences in various social, cultural, and institutional contexts. This course offers teachers opportunities to appreciate difference, discover commonalities, and interact with students and colleagues around issues pertaining to various forms of privilege and oppression. Teachers will deepen their teaching practice through research and apply new techniques to help them inspire powerful learning outcomes for students that affirm identity and work to create social change.

## **General MSMU Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes**

Student learning is at the core of the MSMU mission. MSMU faculty developed a plan to assess the student-learning outcomes that represent the knowledge, skills and attitudes expected of a university student. In this class one or more student learning outcomes will be assessed. Some of our class assignments may be used to evaluate overall student learning and to improve teaching and learning in this class, this department, and throughout the University.

## **Course Objectives and Student Learning Outcomes**

- Explore story telling as an empowerment tool and community building strategy.
- Learn how critical thinking can be an interactive process that leads to "radical openness" (10).
- Develop "engaged pedagogy" (19) that will help us take students on adventures.
- Apply our imaginations to facilitate student learning in alternative environments.
- Analyze education as a tool of domination and ways we can "restore integrity" (32).
- Demonstrate love and "passionate pursuit of knowledge" (160).
- Create a plan for Learning Los Angeles with your students.

## **Required texts**

*Teaching Critical Thinking: Practical Wisdom* by bell hooks, Routledge, 2010

Select one grade level appropriate book from the Los Angeles Literature list (or on your own)

Essays, chapters, and links to virtual experiences will be made available on Canvas

## **Recommended Reading**

*Teaching Community: A Pedagogy of Hope* by bell hooks

*Teaching To Transgress: Education as the Practice of Freedom* by bell hooks

*LAtitudes: an Angeleno's Atlas* edited by Patricia Wakida, Heydey Books, Berkeley, CA 2015

*After/Image: Los Angeles Outside the Frame* by Lynell George, Angel City Press, 2018

*Parable of the Sower* by Octavia Butler (DISCLAIMER: dystopian/post-apocalyptic fiction)

## Course Requirements

Assignments	% of Grade	Due Date
Reading responses and discussions – 5 points each	30	weeks 1-6
Group Plan and share – 5 points each	20	weeks 2-5
Experiences – 5 points each	20	weeks 2-5
Final Project – Learning Los Angeles – 30 points	30	week 6

## Grading Scale

94-100 = A	87-89 = B+	80-83 = B-	74-76 = C	65-69 = D
90-93 = A-	84-86 = B	77-79 = C+	70-73 = C-	<65 = F

## Tentative Course Schedule

Date	Topic/Activity	Readings
May 31	<b>Story</b> sharing strategies  Los Angeles History maps and architecture	hooks 9 (49-53) & 10 (55-58)  Foreword in <i>LAtitudes</i> (vii-viii) by Luis Alfaro Watch trailer for <i>I Build the Tower</i> – Watts Tower documentary
June 14	<b>Critical Thinking</b>  Visit Los Angeles virtually	hooks 1 (7-11) & 32 (185-188)  “How Xican@s Are the Makeweight of Los Angeles’s Past, Present, and Future” in <i>LAtitudes</i> (129-137) by Luis J. Rodriguez <b>or</b> “Erased from utopia: the hidden history of LA’s black and brown resistance” by Mike Davis & John Wiener April 15, 2020 <a href="#">The Guardian</a>
June 28	<b>Engaged Pedagogy and Conversation</b>  Los Angeles soundtrack	hooks 3 (19-22) & 8 (43-47) optional: “ <a href="#">Learning Through Mistakes</a> ”  “The View from the Air” in <i>LAtitudes</i> (169-179) by Lynell George <b>or</b> “Los Angeles is Singing” in <i>LAtitudes</i> (181-191) by Josh Kun
July 19	<b>Imagination</b>  Nature Exploration in Los Angeles	hooks 11 (59-62)  “Orphans, Dwarfs, Strangers, and Monsters” in <i>LAtitudes</i> (139-147) by Charles Hood <b>or</b> TBD
August 2	<b>Decolonization, Integrity, Self-Esteem</b>  Food and Theater in Los Angeles	hooks 4 (23-28) & 5 (29-32) and optional 21 (121-126)  “Speakeasy Tacos” in <i>LAtitudes</i> (193-201) by Michael Jaime-Becerra <b>or</b> TBD
August 16	<b>Love</b>  Presentation of Projects	hooks 27 (159) & 15 (85-89)

## MSMU University and Education Department Policies

**Absences:** Regular attendance is especially important in the Education Department's compacted evening and weekend classes. Students are allowed to miss: one session of a 1 or 2 unit course or two sessions of a 3 or 4 unit course. Should you miss one additional session beyond the allowable, you will be required to submit a 5 page (minimum) additional assignment to the instructor. This additional assignment must be completed or you will be administratively dropped from the course. Students who miss more than two class sessions of a 1 or 2 unit course or more than three class sessions of a 3 or 4 unit course may be administratively dropped from the class. This represents 20% of the instructional time and is in accordance with university policy as stated in the MSMU catalog. *Please note that missing one weekend of a 3 unit course is equivalent to missing 3 sessions.*

**Incompletes:** Applying for an incomplete grade is not a solution to poor attendance and must be filed no later than 1 week prior to finals. Incompletes are meant to provide support for students who have experienced an emergency in their lives and need special consideration on a case-by-case basis. An application for an Incomplete may be granted **only** if the student:

- has completed the majority of assignments
- on the basis of the work completed, has a passing grade in the class (C or better). This is not necessarily the same as the default grade. In other words, although the student may have a B grade for the completed work, if they fail the missing assignment or do not complete it, their final grade might be a D.
- is prevented from completing the final assignment for serious medical/personal reasons
- can complete the work within one semester

**Academic Integrity:** Students are expected to adhere to the MSMU statements on Academic Integrity in the MSMU catalog and Student Handbook. This includes avoiding plagiarism and constructing your best work on each assignment. Papers and other work including images, should not be copied from the Internet. Infractions may be addressed by the MSMU administration and possibly include an AI Board review

**Academic Freedom:** Students' and faculty's freedom of speech is constitutionally protected, so they are free to take reasoned exception to the data or views offered in any course of study and to reserve judgment about matters of opinion—and allow the same freedom for others. See MSMU's Student Handbook for further discussion.

**Candidate Dispositions:** The Education Department has adopted a Dispositions Statement that outlines expectations of all credential and graduate students. (See the Education Department Student Handbook.) Students who do not meet expectations will receive a Notice of Concern as part of the Department's formative feedback assessment process.

**Technology Policy:** Candidates are expected to adhere to the MSMU technology policy as stated in the MSMU Student Handbook.

**Accommodation Policy:** Students with disabilities should consult the MSMU policies regarding commitment to equal educational opportunities for disabled students in the MSMU catalog.

**Students with Disabilities:** Mount Saint Mary's University Los Angeles, in compliance with state and federal laws and regulations, does not discriminate on the basis of disability in administration of its education related programs and activities. We have an institutional commitment to provide equal educational opportunities for disabled students who are otherwise qualified. Students with documented disabilities must see Brandon Roberson, Director of the Doheny Student Resource Center (213) 477-2692, broberson@msmu.edu, to make arrangements for classroom accommodations. It is the responsibility of the student to obtain accommodation letters from the director and to make arrangements for the implementation of accommodations with faculty and/or staff in advance. Students who believe they have been subjected to discrimination on the basis of disability, or have been denied access to services or accommodations required by law, should contact the campus Disability Services Coordinator at his/her campus for resolution. For more information regarding disability grievance procedures, go to: <https://welcome.msmu.edu/academics/learning-assistance-ISAE/Documents/DisabilityGrievanceProcedures.pdf>

**Student Support Statement:** Any student who has difficulty affording groceries or accessing sufficient food to eat every day, or who lacks a safe and stable place to live, and believes this may affect their performance in the course, is urged to contact the Dean of Student Life on their respective campus for support. Also, please notify the instructor if you are comfortable in doing so. Doheny Campus/WEC & Online/Sunset Gower/Graduate: Jessica Cuevas, Dean of Student Life 213-477-2570 and [jcuevas@msmu.edu](mailto:jcuevas@msmu.edu)

**Student credit hour policy:** A credit hour is an amount of work represented in intended learning outcomes and verified by evidence of student achievement that reasonably approximates not less than:

1. One hour of classroom or direct faculty instruction and a minimum of two hours of out- of-class student work each week for approximately fifteen weeks for one semester, or the equivalent amount of work over a different amount of time; or
2. At least an equivalent amount of work as required in paragraph (1) for other academic activities, including laboratory work, internships, practica, studio work, and other academic work leading to the award of credit hours.

**MSMU Office Information:**

Please call or email Catalina Hurtado ([churtado@msmu.edu](mailto:churtado@msmu.edu)), the Education Department Administrative Assistant, to make an advisement appointment: (213) 477-2620.

The fax number for the Education Department is (213) 477-2629.

**This is a working syllabus, subject to change, and should not be construed as a contract.**