Professor – Mark V. Smith, Ed.D.  
Halliburton Tower, Room 408  
Telephone 901.843.3898; Fax 901.843.3394  
E-mail smithm@rhodes.edu  
Office Hours – Posted or by appointment  

Class – Tuesday & Thursday  
Section 01 11:00 – 12:15 p.m.  
Section 02 12:30 – 1:45 p.m.  

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CATALOGUE & COURSE DESCRIPTION

Foundations of Education provides an overview of the system of American education and the development and application of current educational practices. Specific course topics include: history and philosophy, legal and political aspects, school finance, professional expectations, best practices, and specific challenges relating to teaching and learning in today’s society. *(four credits)*

PURPOSES

The *content of the course* will be used to provide a comprehensive overview of the American system of education by using a current issues approach to address the topics noted in the catalogue description. Special emphasis will be placed upon:

- governance, policy, and social influences
- students and student learning
- educators and teaching
- models and approaches for school improvement

For a *student’s program of study*, the course will:

- serve as a social science requirement under the current curricular requirements
- introduce the fundamental knowledge and skills necessary for the Minor in Education
- assist the student with a decision as to a possible career in education (with or without licensure)

*Notes regarding licensure in education:*

1) While a person does not necessarily need professional licensure to begin teaching, it is generally an expectation for teaching in public schools. Traditional paths to licensure involve completing a program of study at either the undergraduate or graduate level through a college or university with a state approved education program. Alternative paths to licensure are available (i.e., TFA, MTC, LANCE, etc...) and vary in both process and quality.

2) In order to assist Rhodes students to earn licensure, Educ 201 and other courses in the Minor in Education may be used to lessen graduate program requirements but this is very much program dependent. Rhodes College has created partnerships with Belmont University, Christian Brothers University, and Peabody College of Vanderbilt University to assist with the admission and entrance of Rhodes graduates into graduate education programs.

*Engagement + Reflection + Trust = Transformation*
OBJECTIVES – OUTCOMES

Upon completion of this course, the student should have sufficient knowledge, skills, and dispositions to satisfy the purposes of the course.

- **Knowledge** – The student should have a reasonable knowledge of:
  - The evolution of American education (purposes and practice)
  - Social, political, and legal factors affecting education
  - The factors affecting teacher/student/school success
  - The expectations and requirements of the profession of teaching
  - The process that PK-12 schools and systems as well as higher education use to examine their effectiveness and seek to improve
  - (IDEA) Learning fundamental principles, generalizations, and theories

- **Skills** – The student should be able to:
  - Identify steps in the process and participate (at a pre-service level) in school improvement planning
  - Identify basic elements of instructional planning and decision making as well as factors affecting each
  - Locate and use resource information in the field of education

- **Dispositions** – The student should understand that:
  - There are many factors affecting the success of teaching & learning and that responsibility lies with the triad of students, school, and family/community.
  - Successful schools usually have a strong and continuous focus on improvement.
  - School improvement is a shared responsibility among all members of the school community and participation in the planning and decision making process is essential for members of the school’s professional community
  - The successful teacher must possess and apply a myriad of approaches to teach and reach the student
  - The successful teacher assumes many roles and makes many significant decisions on a daily basis
  - The responsibility and influence of a teacher often extends beyond the cognitive domain
  - (IDEA) Develop a clearer understanding of and commitment to personal values (in regard to the importance of education and the role it plays in society)

**Notes regarding course content:**

1) With this course being a foundations course and with education being such an expansive and ever changing discipline, a diverse set of content will be addressed. While this necessitates a survey approach, it is expected that there will opportunities for both deep and surface learning.

2) While I have altered (and hopefully improved) the course syllabus each semester since arriving at Rhodes (July 2001), this syllabus reflects a major shift in course content and course requirements; simply stated, an increased emphasis will be placed on the examination of educational systems, policies, and reform methodology and responsibilities.
TEXTS

- Foundations of Education (9th Edition), Ornstein and Levine, Houghton and Mifflin, 2006. As noted by the authors, this text is written for “students who are preparing for a teaching career as well as for those who simply wish to learn more about the key educational issues and policies affecting American education.”

- The Courage to Teach, Parker Palmer, Josey-Bass, 1998. Palmer’s book is both easy and difficult to read. While the book takes a very sincere examination of the mind-set of teachers it is somewhat abstract but full of common-sense insights into the mind-sets of teachers. To successfully use this book, you must engage yourself and reflect upon your classroom experiences and begin putting yourself in the place of a teacher (the person responsible for the success of the classroom experience).

SETTING FOR THE COURSE

Rhodes College Vision and Strategic Imperatives
Rhodes College aspires to graduate students with a life-long passion for learning, a compassion for others, and the ability to translate academic study and personal concern into effective leadership and action in their communities and the world.

We will achieve our aspirations through four strategic imperatives:

1) To attract and retain a talented, diverse study body and engage these students in a challenging, inclusive and culturally-broadening college experience.

2) To ensure our faculty and staff have the talent, the time and the resources to inspire and involve our students in meaningful study, research, and service.

3) To enhance student opportunities for learning in Memphis.

4) To promote a residential place of learning that inspires integrity and high achievement through its beauty, its emphasis on values, its Presbyterian history, and its heritage as a leader in the liberal arts and sciences.

Approved, Rhodes College Board of Trustees – 17 January 2002
Program Purpose

The purpose of the Education Program is to enable students who complete the program and become educators to apply the Vision of Rhodes College through being caring, professional educators. Thus, students who earn the Minor in Education should possess the following attributes:

Professionalism – realizing that as a professional educator they must:
- stay current in their content field
- utilize pedagogy appropriate to their content field in an effective and creative manner
- understand how people learn and live in schools and society
- continue to be active participants, learners, and leaders in their profession

Student Advocacy – realizing that as an educator, they have a significant opportunity to impact the lives of their students through active engagement and therefore must:
- serve as role models with a high degree of integrity
- serve all students entrusted to their care
- advocate for the advancement of their students and their schools
- work as a team member with peers, parents, and other members of the community

Approved, Education Program Faculty - 10 January 2004
Modified – 18 July 2005

Major Component

In addition to the incorporation of the Vision of Rhodes College and the focus on the program purpose, the Education Program seeks to integrate the Core Standards adopted by the Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (INTASC), [www.ccsso.org/INTASC](http://www.ccsso.org/INTASC). INTASC is a consortium of state education agencies, higher education institutions, and national educational associations dedicated to the reform of education, licensing, and ongoing professional development of teachers. Created in 1987, INTASC is guided by one basic premise:

An effective teacher must be able to integrate content knowledge with pedagogical understanding to assure that all students learn and perform at high levels.

The members of the Rhodes College Education Program subscribe to the basic premise and core principles of INTASC and in that regard, expect that all students minoring in education will have a pre-professional understanding of the ten INTASC Core Principles. These principles will be introduced in this course and applied during the subsequent course: Educ 355. Principles of Curriculum and Instruction (4 credits).

In addition to supporting the Vision of Rhodes College, the Education Program fully subscribes to the college’s Commitment to Diversity and to the goals of the 2007 Rhodes College Curriculum. Students desiring to receive academic accommodations must provide documentation from the Office of Student Disability Services. As with all courses at Rhodes College, the Honor Code of the College is observed. Full observation of the Honor Code pays proper respect to one’s self, peers, the faculty, the college, and to the profession of teaching.
EXPECTATIONS FOR STUDENTS

Successful completion of the purposes of this course involves mutual investment by the student and the professor in the course content and in the course requirements. Given the tradition and Vision of Rhodes College as well as the purposes of the Rhodes College Education Program, high expectations are the norm.

I firmly believe that communication (clear-direct-honest) is a critical aspect of any successful endeavor. Thus:

- The syllabus is considered as more than just a document to be viewed on the first day of class but as a guide for the entire semester. Consult it (first) whenever questions arise.
- Ask and answer questions in class.
- Share your experiences (Palmer’s stories)
- Finally, I am here for you and it is my hope that both you and I will benefit from each of our encounters.

Students are expected to attend class, arrive on time, submit all work on time, and take all tests at the assigned period. Failure to do so will result in a lower class participation grade. Per the class attendance policy recently adopted by the faculty, non-attendance for the first class period may result in the student being removed from the course. As always, communication with the professor is expected with any situation which affects the student’s ability to meet these expectations. This communication is the responsibility of the student.

The nature of the class should invite students to do more than simply attend class. Students are expected to contribute to the success of the class through active and relevant participation.

Assessment of Performance - All written assignments (done outside of class) will be word-processed and will be submitted at the beginning of the class for which the assignment was due. Assignments submitted one class period late will receive a letter grade reduction and assignments late by two or more class periods will not be accepted and will receive a zero. Written assignments will use standard margins, either 1½ or 2 line spacing, 10-12 font, and contain a signature signifying the Honor Code Pledge.

Written assignments will be graded as to:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>10 points</th>
<th>50 points</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Content of assignment</td>
<td>0-2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of references/sources</td>
<td>0-2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Usage of proper grammar, word processing skill, and referencing</td>
<td>0-2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality, depth, and clarity of reflective thought</td>
<td>0-2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Submitted on time - zero or...</td>
<td>1 or 2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Summary of Student Performance Assessment (500 point scale)

- Attendance and Engagement 50 points 10%
- ASR Papers 50 points 10%
- Philosophy Project 50 points 10%
- Observation Project 50 points 10%
- Examinations (3 @ 100 pts each) 300 points 60%
The following summarizes and describes the specific expectations for student performance. Grading of student performance, by nature of the course, will require some subjectivity on the part of the Professor.

1. **Attendance & Engagement** (50 points) – All of us have had a myriad of experiences with our system of education and (whether we know it or not) we have developed beliefs about what works or does not work. Thus, all of us have opinions (whether valid or invalid) about the educational process. Students are expected to attend class and contribute to the class in a relevant manner.

   Unexplained absences and lack of engagement will result in the lowering of the student’s class participation grade. When an absence occurs, the student is responsible for acquiring course material, notes, handouts, etc... Relevant engagement requires proper preparation. Students are expected at all times to be current with assigned reading assignments. It is possible that unannounced quizzes will be given.

   A basic outline of the class schedule and most class discussion notes are found on the academic department fileserver, education department. The content of the outline will be updated as the class develops. In addition, it is hoped that each student will develop a habit of reviewing current news (local to national), especially in regard to education.

2. **Article Summary and Reflection (ASR's) Papers** (50 points) – There are very few easy answers or fool-proof solutions to the “right-way” in education. The professional literature in education contains much research, opinions, and real-life stories of participants in the educational process – but – there is usually disagreement as to the “right way”.

   A logical part of a Foundations of Education class is student engagement with current literature in the field. This assignment will allow the student to explore a range of topics or a single topic. As the class evolves, opportunity to inject the results of the ASR into the class will emerge, and students are expected to share the results of their ASR research with the class.

   Each student will submit five ASR papers due during the earlier part of the semester. Each ASR paper (maximum length 2 pages) must include at least two references, with one of the references providing scholarly research. The ASR paper should clearly present a short description of the issue and the student’s personal reflection.

   **OR**

   Complete a short research project on a subject directly related to the purposes of the course. The written report is to include information gleaned from at least ten references/sources, the personal reflection, and be a minimum of eight pages. The subject of the project is to be approved by the Professor. **Due September 28th.**
3. **Philosophy of Education** (50 points) – It is generally assumed that successful teachers know and understand their strengths and weaknesses as well as possess specific goals and objectives for their work. Each student is to develop a written personal philosophy of education. The personal philosophy is due November 21st and should:
   - Reference information being studied in the class and incorporate material based on the student’s experiences, the content of the course, Part Two of Ornstein & Levine and Parker Palmer’s text.
   - Present the parameters of how the student would approach the teaching profession and the teaching/learning process.
   - Contain an assessment of the student’s strengths and weaknesses as they relate to a career in education.
   - As appropriate, project a possible career path in education and list particular goals and objectives which would potentially affect/guide future actions as an educator.
   - The written report may be combined with assignment four.

4. **School Observation and Interview Experience** – Observe in school setting (6.5 hour minimum), conduct an interview with a professional educator, and meet all expectations as prescribed in the Guidelines (separate handout). A written report on the experience is due November 21st and should provide:
   - Details and a general description of the experience (observation and interview).
   - A profile of the school and its community.
   - Appropriate references to Ornstein & Levine (especially Ch. 14), Parker Palmer, and course material.

5. **Three Examinations** (300 total points) - Each examination will be mostly short essay questions, which by nature are graded on a somewhat subjective basis. Tests will include:
   - All text material, whether covered in class or not
   - All lectures, assigned readings - including handouts, videos, etc...
   - Special presentations, current affairs/events in education

The following will be used as a guide in the scoring of the answers to the essay questions:
   - **Maximum Points** – Answer provides a thorough understanding of the question and contains specifics which provide necessary substance. In addition, the response gives evidence of proper personal reflection.
   - **Mid-Range Points** – Answer conveys only basic or partial understanding of the question and/or lacks enough specifics to support the answer. It might also fail to be written in such a way as to be clearly understood.
   - **Few or No Points** – Obvious.

**Numeric Scale for Grades**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>95-100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>90-94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>87-89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>83-86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>80-82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>77-79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>73-76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>70-72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D+</td>
<td>67-69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
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<tr>
<td>D-</td>
<td>60-62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>0-59</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Note:** As with all aspects of this class, I am open to your critiques and suggestions.
OUTLINE OF SIGNIFICANT TOPICS OF STUDY & ACTIVITIES

I. Introduction and Identification of Topics of Study
   A. Syllabus
   B. Topics of Study (current issues)
   C. Purposes of Education in the United States (overview)

II. Education in the United States
   A. Transition of Purposes – Historical Development
      1. Six Periods of Transition (Colonial Period –-> Era of Accountability)
   B. By the People, For the People...
      1. Constitutional Applications
      2. State Responsibility
      3. Local Administration
      4. Federal Oversight, Information, Leadership, and Accountability
   C. Rights and Responsibilities
      1. Students
      2. Teachers (contracts, tenure, etc...)
      3. Schools

III. Pathways to Success: Mission, Goals, Objectives, Etc...
   A. Student Learning: Can all students learn?
      1. Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs
      2. Learning Styles and Learning Theory
      3. Environmental Challenges and Influences
      4. Achievement Gaps
   B. Effective Teaching: Art, science, craft, or ....?
      1. America’s Teaching Force
      2. Parker Palmer – The Courage to Teach
      3. Bloom’s Taxonomy of Educational Objectives
      4. INTASC Core Principles and NCATE’s KSD’s
      5. Tennessee Framework for Evaluation and Professional Growth
   C. The Result: And the report card grades are ...?
      1. Perceptions
      2. NCLB State, and Local Report Cards
      3. School Leadership (public and private schools)

IV. School Improvement and Reform: Is the nation truly at risk?
   A. PK-12 School and School Systems
      1. Improvement/Accreditation Model (SACS-CASI)
      2. Alternative Approaches
   B. Colleges and Universities
      1. Public and Private
      2. Improvement/Accreditation Model (SACS-COC)

V. Reflections and Closure RE Education: How can I participate and support ?
   A. Expectations of Schools
   B. Expectations for the Profession
   C. Responsibilities of Participants

Note - It is possible that the content and sequence of the course will change somewhat from that given on this syllabus. Variances will be related to updating of material, student interest, and the ability to schedule guest speakers at appropriate times. Fair and reasonable notice of possible changes in the syllabus and topic outline will be given.
RESOURCES

- See http://rhodes.edu/education for list of library resources for education.

- Recommended reading
  - Jonathan Kozol.

- Relevant information from:
  - High school website
  - Home state education report card information
  - School improvement plans
  - Curricular information for desired area of instruction

- Daily news items relating to education from hometown newspapers or *The Commercial Appeal:* http://www.commercialappeal.com

- Weekly issues of *Education Week:* http://www.eduweek.org

- National Education Association: http://www.nea.org


- State of Tennessee Department of Education: http://www.state.tn.us/education
  Note: Blueprint for Learning and 2005 Report Card

- Southern Association of Colleges and Schools
  - PK-12: http://www.sacscasi.org
  - College/University: http://www.sacsco.org

- Local school systems
  - Catholic Diocese of Memphis: http://www.cdom.org/schools
  - Memphis Association of Independent Schools
  - Memphis City Schools: http://memphis-schools.k12/tn.us
  - Shelby County Schools: http://www.scs.k12.tn.us

- Alternative programs (for jobs and/or licensure)
  - Teach for America: http://www.teachforamerica.org
  - Mississippi Teacher Corps: http://www.mtc.net
  - Memphis City Schools: http://www.teachmemphis.org