

# Pedagogical Practices in Contemporary Contexts

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**Grad 5114 /CRN 84519**

<http://amynelson.net/gedis18/>

Wednesday 6-8:50

The Learning Studio / Torgerson 1100

Twitter: @gedivt / #gedivt

## Teaching Team:

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**Dr. Amy Nelson**

Associate Professor of History

Thurs. 1-3 & by appt.

**Ms. AH**

Ph. D. Candidate, Engineering  
Education  
GEDI Graduate Fellow

Office hours by appt.

**Ms. JS**

Ph. D. Candidate, Counselor  
Education  
GEDI Graduate Fellow

Office hours by appt.

**Dr. GP**

Research Assistant Professor  
Industrial and Systems Engineering

**Dr. HM**

*Associate Professor of Practice*  
Dept. of Engineering Education

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Education is the most powerful weapon you can use to change the world  
-- Nelson Mandela (1993)

“In problem-posing education, people develop their power to perceive critically the way they exist in the world with which and in which they find themselves: they come to see the world not as a static reality, but as a reality in process, in transformation.”

-- Paulo Freire (1970)

**Pedagogy** – the theory and practice of teaching.

**Praxis** – the intersection of theory and practice /

“action and reflection upon the world in order to change it”

## Course Context and Expectations

Welcome to the Graduate Education Development Institute (GEDI).

This is your invitation to join the learning community for **Pedagogical Practices in Contemporary Contexts**, an interdisciplinary exploration of the theory and practice of teaching for today’s students in higher education.

We are an intentional community committed to developing a pedagogical praxis using inclusive pedagogy and problem-based learning to support active learning across a broad range of contemporary teaching sites.

We come from diverse disciplines, backgrounds, and orientations to consider how we might leverage the passion that drew us to our academic fields of inquiry to ignite the curiosity of our students.

As 21<sup>st</sup>-century educators we use a broad array of teaching technologies, and are especially attentive to the power of networked learning environments to amplify our work.

We are committed to the transformative potential of education and to using our compassion and expertise to make the world a better place.

### Priorities for this semester:

- 1) Contribute to our learning community by actively engaging with the course materials and by collaborative, dialogic interaction with others.
- 2) Develop a critically-engaged, self-reflective teaching praxis that goes beyond content delivery.
- 3) Explore and evaluate tools, approaches and learning environments that support active co-learning in our own and other disciplines.
- 4) Develop a teaching philosophy, syllabus and problem-based learning project informed by one’s critically-engaged, self-reflective teaching praxis using the tools and environments best suited to amplify learning.

### Special Needs

If you need accommodations because of a dis/ability (learning disability, attention deficit disorder, psychological, physical, etc.), if you have emergency medical information to share with me, or if you need special arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, please make an appointment to see me as soon as possible. You should also contact the Services for Students with

Disabilities with requests for specific information regarding available services: 310 Lavery Hall, 231-3788 / [ssd@vt.edu](mailto:ssd@vt.edu)

### **Principles of Community:**

Our class will be guided by Virginia Tech's [Principles of Community](#). We are inspired by a spirit of inclusion and mutual respect, and committed to creating a community that nurtures learning and growth for all of its members.

### **Safe Zone**

My office is a certified Safe Zone, and I am committed to creating a more inclusive and accepting environment for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and questioning communities and their allies. For more information on LGBTQ services and opportunities, please visit

[https://ccc.vt.edu/advocacy/Cultural\\_Community\\_Centers/lgbtq--center](https://ccc.vt.edu/advocacy/Cultural_Community_Centers/lgbtq--center)

### **Academic Integrity**

Do not cheat. Do not plagiarize. All assignments shall be subject to the stipulations of the Graduate Honor System. More information is available here:

<http://graduateschool.vt.edu/academics/expectations/graduate-honor-system.html>

## **Nuts and Bolts**

### **1. General:**

I see teaching as a calling and am committed to helping you discover and develop your talents in this area. Please let me know how I can help you learn! Your seminar facilitators come from a range of disciplinary backgrounds and share a passion for pedagogy. By accepting the invitation to join our learning community you agree to meet our expectations for addressing the priorities outlined above. We are committed to supporting your work in this course, and to igniting the curiosity and passion that informs genuine learning. If all goes as planned, there will even be some fun along the way.

### **2. Course Creation / Using the Network**

While this syllabus provides a road map to the course, much of our work together will be constructed, elaborated and refined on the public course website:

<http://amynelson.net/gedis18/>. I am interested in deepening and expanding our in-class discussions and creative endeavors and hope that this networked learning environment will help us create the course together in an immediately accessible, professional, and enduring medium.

You are required to blog at least six times during the semester, and you are required to comment on another person's blog at least three times per week. *There is no assigned length or format for your blogging.* I just ask that you engage the course materials thoughtfully and substantively, and that you explore and play with the many nuances of the blogging modality. Use your blog to help you map out (and remember) both the broad brushstrokes and the nuances of the assigned texts. Use it to make connections between this course and other conversations in your field. There is no one "right way" to do this. You might reflect on the main insights of the readings or comment on the theoretical/methodological frameworks of the texts. You should think about how the assigned texts relate to each other and to other readings for the course. You might also draw on other perspectives you have encountered elsewhere, and the thoughts, questions, and responses of your classmates on their blogs.

Individual blog posts are not graded, but will be considered holistically as evidence of your general commitment to the course and its content.

Indeed, one of the goals of the blogging project is to foster collaboration, communication and innovation within the class, across the discipline(s), and among various audiences in and beyond the academy. Leveraging the collective power of social networking makes us stronger, more diverse, and more interesting as teachers, scholars and twenty-first century faculty.

There is also a Twitter feed on the main course website. Tweets with the **hashtag #gedivt** will appear here. When I come across things I think will be of interest to our work I will Tweet them to that hashtag and encourage you to do the same. Setting up a Twitter account is easy. If you use Instagram, Facebook or SnapChat, you can definitely Tweet!

**Your blog posts are due by midnight on Sunday.** This gives us two days to read and comment on each other's posts before class on Wednesday.

**Comments on your classmates' blog posts are due before class on Wednesday.**

### 3. Course materials and locations

This is a hybrid course, and as such has both an online/public component and a face-to-face component that is more private. These two modalities are both essential. They work dialogically with each other to support our learning community. Whenever possible, course materials will be posted on the website (<http://amynelson.net/gedis18/>). When necessary, we will also use Canvas.

**4. F2F Class Sessions:**

Everyone will complete all of the readings, attend every class session and participate in every discussion.

**5. Tangibles (aka “Deliverables” but more valuable)**

Blogposts 6 or more – posted by midnight Sunday	30
Comments – 3 /week (24) or more – posted by 6 pm Wednesday	10
Participation in F2F class sessions	10
Syllabus	8
Teaching Philosophy	8
Diversity Statement	8
Problem-Based-Learning Case Study	8
Syllabus, Teaching Philosophy and PBL peer reviews	8
Dear Dr. Nelson self-assessment	10
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>

**6. Roadmap / Schedule**

This is a preliminary and somewhat conditional schedule.

Topics, assignments and materials may be modified or amplified as the semester progresses.

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week 1	Learning Community Welcome
1/17	
<b>Fri. 1/19</b>	<b>Due: Set-up Blog and Post URL by 5 pm</b>
week 2	Networked Learning ( <b>post — everyone</b> )
1/24	
week 3	Engaging the Imaginations of Digital Learners ( <b>post — everyone</b> )
1/31	
week 4	Anti-Teaching / Mindful Learning ( <b>post</b> )
2/7	
week 5	Assessment ( <b>post</b> )
2/14	
week 6	Discovering your Authentic Teaching Self ( <b>post</b> )
2/21	
week 7	Designing a Learner-Centered Syllabus
2/28	<b>Due: Syllabus Draft</b>

➔ **SPRING BREAK** ➔

week 8	Inclusive Pedagogy ( <b>post</b> )
3/14	
week 9	Critical Pedagogy ( <b>group post</b> )
3/21	
week 10	Formulating Your Teaching Philosophy
3/28	<b>Due: Teaching Philosophy Draft</b>
week 11	Diversity Statements
4/4	<b>Due: Diversity Statement</b>
week 12	Attention and Multi-Tasking
4/11	
week 13	Problem-Based Learning
4/18	<b>Due: PBL Case Study Draft</b>
week 14	Teaching for the 21 <sup>st</sup> Century – Connecting the Dots ( <b>post</b> )
4/25	
week 15	Final Meeting
5/2	<b>Due: Dear Dr. Nelson Letter and Finished Portfolio</b>

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