# INTE 5360: Critical Digital Pedagogy

**Instructor Contact Information**

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*Education, in the words of Paulo Freire, is an “inescapable concern.”*

**Welcome!**

In his seminal work, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Paulo Freire identified critical pedagogy as an approach to teaching and social change that fosters in students an ability to read their world in order to develop a sense of their own agency and ability to intervene in history. Critical pedagogy asserts that learning is a matter of engaging in a process of becoming conscious. But above all else, critical pedagogy is a humanizing approach to teaching and learning.

As described below, this course will explore the growing field which sits at the intersection of critical pedagogy and digital learning and technology. I’m very excited to begin this course with you as I’ve been working in this field for nearly two decades now, and I find that every time I get to start a new conversation, I learn more and more about the field itself.

Today, and for most of the last twenty years, my work has been with and for teachers. Teachers of all kinds. Writing teachers, math teachers, teachers in K-12, teachers of teachers—but also instructional designers, technologists, administrators, and anyone whose work touches on or influences teaching. What it looks like I do is help teachers come to grips with how digital culture and its tools have changed, shifted, made more or less sparkly the work of learning. But the truth is that the digital side of my job is just coincidence. It has to do with timing. Right now, the digital is relevant, present, and is that thing that seems to provide the most interesting possibilities and the most contentious challenges in the scholarship and practice of teaching and learning. But it would be a mistake to think that what I do is digital, because what I really do is human.

It would, in fact, be a mistake to think that what any of us do is digital. The endeavor of education—even outside Humanities fields—is human. Immediately upon recognizing this, we have to ask: what approach to the digital (environments, tools, learning, networks, etc.) allows us to reach through the jargon and the hype and the code to find the human?

The seat of critical digital pedagogy is one of inquiry and observation. It begins with questions about what happens when learning goes digital, when it goes online. And these are questions we are here to ask.

**Course Overview**

An exploration of teaching and learning within a digital context, with special focus on intersections with the approach of critical pedagogy. In this course, we will explore the tenets of the growing field of critical digital pedagogy and uncover, invent, innovate, and collaborate to create methods of application with regards to: course design, technology critique, connected learning, digital media and culture in the classroom, the emergence and impact of new media, and more. Topics include learner (and teacher) agency, ungrading and rubrics, social justice and equity, culturally sustaining teaching practices in digital spaces, and critical instructional design.

**Course Goals & Learning Objectives**

We will *talk* about learning objectives. But for now, consider the following a kind of roadmap of expectations. Keep in mind that these are as much my objectives as they are yours, and we will work at them together. It’s my goal to support your success in this course, so if you see anything below that just doesn’t fit, or if you see something missing, please let me know.

* **Critical Digital Literacy.**Develop the ability to discern between necessary and unnecessary digital tools and technologies, and the ability to select technologies appropriate to one’s practice. And develop the acumen to recognize equitable and inequitable technologies and uses associated with those technologies.
* **Instructional Design.** Demonstrate the ability to collaborate with others on projects and research.
* **Vision and Change.** Engage in authentic inquiry designed to improve learning, performance, equity, and practice and share the findings with colleagues and professional audiences. And develop a critical awareness of, and transformational approach to, antiracism and equity in one’s field.
* **Leadership**. Reflect on the qualities of leadership and actively seek to infuse those qualities in one's work. Especially, to advocate for equitable access to educational technology, digital content and learning opportunities to meet the diverse needs of all learners.
* **Equity and Antiracism**. Recognize how dominant narratives perpetuate marginalization, and encourage dialogues among students and educators that expose the hidden and visible ways racism manifests in individuals and societies. And curate and provide current and culturally diverse materials (as required readings, as part of curricula, in collections, etc.).

**Course Prerequisites**

Learners should come prepared to explore new pedagogies and design practices with an open, imaginative, inquiring mind. No experience in critical pedagogy is required; some online or hybrid design experience will be helpful.

**Course Credits**

Three (3) credits

**Research and Participation**

I consider all learning an act of scholarship. I also consider pedagogical research scholarly and vital work. In this course, I'm asking you to think about yourself as a scholar of teaching and learning, and this semester as an opportunity to do research. In that vein, all your work this semester will build toward a final project, the result of your research.

**Research Project**

Your final project should rise out of your research and writing during the semester. Toward the mid-point of the term, you'll propose a research topic in order to get some direction; however, that direction can (and probably will) change course at any time. Research is a process of discovery, so your proposal will, in part, take the form of a set of questions you hope to answer. Then, throughout the remaining weeks, you'll work on answering those questions, asking new questions, and continuing to zero in on what you want to produce at the end of the term.

The final project can take any form appropriate to your scholarship, sensibilities, creativity, etc. It can be a formal paper, a narrative essay, a series of poems, a movie, a keynote speech, a textile project, music, etc. Along with the project, you'll complete a short reflection on the work which will examine your choices along the way.

**Reading**

Rather than approach texts conventionally, we’ll be working from a course [Bibliography](https://cdp.cu.studio/bibliography/). While I will provide readings, videos to watch, and more throughout the term (most of them free and open access), you will work from the bibliography to do your own research. The bibliography will include some texts which are only available through purchase, but you should only purchase them if they fit your goals for the class.

Additionally, you will look for and share materials that you find along the way. On a regular basis, I'll ask you to share these resources with everyone in the class... Thus building the Bibliography even more.

**Participation**

Critical digital pedagogy is always a collaborative effort. We build upon each other’s work, we write together, we brainstorm, we find solutions for each other, we draft off of the innovations of our community, and we rely on others to do some of the heavy lifting when we are unable. So, participation in this course is really important. When we show up for others, they are better able to do their work, and vice versa. That said, this course is your learning experience, and you should participate here as best suits your goals for that experience.

This course does not use Canvas. Instead, participation in this course will take place primarily on Slack. You will receive an invitation to join our class Slack team; you should join as early as possible. We will use Slack for in-class discussions, group work, one-on-one conversations, and more. Some of your work in this class will be uploaded to Slack, and any synchronous conversations will take place there. Note: The Slack mobile app is particularly handy.

Participation will not be graded, per se (see Basis for Final Grade below); rather, I’ll ask you to include your participation (and your ideas for what "participation" looks like online) as part of regular self-evaluations throughout the term. What is important here is the quality of reflection on your learning, and how that inflects your support of the conversations of the course.

**Basis for Final Grade**

This course will focus on qualitative not quantitative assessment, something we’ll discuss during the class, both with reference to your own work and the works we’re studying. While you will get a final grade at the end of the term, I will not be grading individual assignments; I will be asking questions and making comments that engage your work rather than simply evaluating it. You will also be reflecting carefully on your own work and the work of your peers. The intention here is to help you focus on working in a more organic way, as opposed to working as you think you’re expected to. If this process causes more anxiety than it alleviates, talk to me at any point to confer about your progress in the course to date.

Much of what you do this semester will be up to you. As a scholar of teaching and learning, I hope that you will be adventurous enough to push against the expectations of any assignment here in the best interests of your research. F**or this and for every reason, you should consider this course a “busy-work-free zone.” If an assignment does not feel productive, we can find ways to modify, remix, or repurpose the instructions.**

**Self Evaluations**

Incredibly important to your grade in this class  will be two self-evaluations. At the mid-term and as part of your final project, I'll ask you to reflect on your participation, learning, successes, challenges, and goals. Self-evaluations are private between you and me, and you can submit these by direct message in Slack.

**Grade Dissemination**

Feedback on all assignments will be provided in Slack, by email, or during Zoom or in-person visits. Final grades in this course will *not*be returned via the Canvas course shell, but will be posted to your transcript.

**A Note on Plagiarism**

Authorship is a hotly contested topic in the academy. At what point do we own the words we say and write or the images we create? In digital media especially, creative influence, collaboration, and borrowing are usually acceptable (even encouraged). So, what sort of statement or warning about plagiarism would be appropriate in this class? Let me go out on a limb and say: in this class, I encourage you to borrow ideas (from me, from the authors we read, from your classmates). But, even more, I encourage you to truly make them your own—by playing with, manipulating, applying, and otherwise turning them on their head. In the end, it’s just downright boring to rest on the laurels of others. It’s altogether more daring (and, frankly, more fun) to invent something new yourself—a new idea, a new way of thinking, a new claim, a new image. This doesn’t give you license to copy something in its entirety and slap your name on it. That’s just stealing. Instead, think very consciously about how you’re influenced by your sources—by the way knowledge and creativity depend on a sort of inheritance. And think also about the real responsibility you have to those sources.

**Student Resources**

**SEHD Academic Services**

Academic Services provides support for all SEHD students. The office serves as the approval for add/drops admission to candidacy, degree conferral, CDE licensure and other processes. You can learn more at [their web site](http://www.ucdenver.edu/academics/colleges/SchoolOfEducation/CurrentStudents/Pages/StudentServicesCenter.aspx),  or by calling 303-315-6300.

**Academic Calendar**

In case you need it, [here's a link to the university’s current Academic Calendar](http://www.ucdenver.edu/student-services/resources/Registrar-dev/CourseListings/Pages/AcademicCalendar.aspx).

**Basic Needs Security**

Any student who faces challenges securing their food or housing and believes this may affect their learning in this course is urged to contact the Dean of Students for support. And also let me know if you are comfortable doing so, because there may be ways I can help.

**Student and Community Counseling Center**

Given that we are all experiencing an inordinate amount of stress—between pandemics, the environment, political unrest—please keep in mind that there are people ready to help. The Student and Community Counseling Center is located in Tivoli 454 and provides cost-free and confidential mental health services to help you manage personal challenges that impact emotional or academic wellbeing. You can learn more about the center at [their web site](http://www.ucdenver.edu/life/services/counseling-center/Pages/default.aspx%27), or by calling 303-315-7270.

**Campus Assessment, Response & Evaluation (CARE)**

The Evaluation (CARE) Team was created at the University of Colorado Denver|Anschutz Medical Campus to address the health and safety needs of students as well as the campus community. If you have immediate concern about your own or another's the behavior or safety, you can seek help or make a referral to the campus Assessment, Response & Evaluation (CARE) Team. The CARE team’s purpose is to promote a safe productive learning, living and working environment by addressing the needs of students, faculty, and staff. If you or a classmate are in need of help, please [submit a concern to the CARE team](http://www.ucdenver.edu/life/services/CARE/Pages/default.aspx), or call 303-315-7306.

**Writing Center**

CU Denver has a fabulous [Writing Center](http://www.ucdenver.edu/academics/colleges/CLAS/Centers/writing/Pages/TheWritingCenter.aspx) for your use. Getting support from the Writing Center can help you hone your scholarly voice, your research skills, and more.

**Course Policies and Procedures**

**Grades**

**SEHD Incomplete Policy**

Incomplete grades (I) are not given to replace low grades. To be eligible for an incomplete grade, students must (1) successfully completed at least 60% of the course requirements, (2) have special circumstances (verification required) that preclude the student from attending classes and/or completing graded assignments, and (3) make arrangements to complete missing assignments with the original instructor before more than one year has elapsed since the end of the semester in which the course was taken.

SEHD Incomplete Process: Students must be in close communication with the instructor PRIOR to the end of the semester regarding special circumstances precluding them from successfully completing the remainder of the course. Faculty may assign students an incomplete grade of “I” to signify that special circumstances beyond the student’s control prevented the student from completing a small portion of the course (no more than 25%) and that a final grade cannot yet be assigned.

It is the student’s responsibility to collaborate with the instructor to complete an incomplete agreement form (found at www.ucdenver.edu/education under Current Students/Current Student Resources) prior to the end of the semester for which the incomplete is given. A copy of the form, signed by both the student and the instructor should be submitted to the SEHD Student Services Center (LSC 701). Both the student and instructor should also keep a copy. The instructor sets the conditions under which the course work can be completed and the time limit for completion. The student is expected to complete the requirements within the established deadline. If the missing assignments are not completed within the allotted time, the “I” converts to an F on the student’s transcript. Students making up an incomplete should not re-register for the course.

Upon completion of the missing course work, a Change of Record Form is completed by the original instructor to change the “I” to a letter grade. Faculty should work with the Faculty Services Center to complete the Change of Record Form.

**Religious Observances**

If a due date or assignment or other class activity is scheduled on a day which is a religious holiday for you, please let me know and I will honor your observance.

**Late Work Policy**

I do not believe in late work, unless it arrives sometime after the end of the semester. Due dates are set entirely for your benefit and to keep the course moving at a certain pace. However, if you are having trouble meeting a due date for any reason, please let me know and we’ll work out a plan so you can meet your goals.

**Extra Credit Policy**

I don’t provide extra credit because I don’t believe you’ll need it. That said, if you ever find yourself going above and beyond for the work of this class, please do call my attention to it. Seeing all your labor and creativity is difficult from a distance, so don’t hesitate to let me know when you are doing more than asked.

**Teacher Education Student Support Plan Protocol**

The CU Denver teacher education program has embedded multiple proactive measures within the program to create a supportive environment for Teacher Candidates (TCs) to develop the knowledge, skills and dispositions necessary to be an effective urban teacher including high admission standards, closely aligned course and internship experiences, numerous opportunities for coaching and gaining feedback from instructors, site professors, site coordinators, and clinical teachers, as well as problem-solving protocols for individuals to try and address early concerns. If a TC is struggling to further develop the professional knowledge, skills, and dispositions necessary for effective urban teaching despite the proactive embedded support provided, university and PDS faculty working with the TC collaborate to try and better understand the TC’s performance. This model is reflective of similar processes in K-12 schools (e.g., Student Study Team; Child Support Team, etc.) as they work together to problem-solve and meet the needs of students.

Often this inquiry results in the collaborative development of a Professional Action Plan with the TC and the appropriate university and/or PDS individuals that clearly identifies key areas for improvement of performance by the TC as well as a timeline for improvement. Most often this provides the needed scaffolding and targeted direction for a teacher candidate to improve towards meeting the expected performance standards outlined by the program and the State of Colorado for teacher licensure. In other cases, it doesn’t, objectively indicating to the teacher candidate and the faculty working with the teacher candidate that this program and/or teaching may not be suitable for the teacher candidate. In this case, the teacher candidate is counseled out of the program. Specific details regarding the Student Support Plan Protocol can be found on the SEHD website, www.ucdenver.edu/education under Current Students/Current Student Forms along with the electronic form for the Professional Action Plan.

**Health of the Course Community**

**Inclusive**

As your instructor, I am firmly committed to equity, diversity, and inclusion in all areas of campus and social life. In this class I will work to promote an anti-discriminatory environment where everyone is welcome and where each individual’s dignity is affirmed. I recognize that discrimination can be direct or indirect and take place at both institutional and personal levels, and it is shaped by histories and structures of power imbalances. Discrimination and oppression are unacceptable, and consistent with the mission of the school, I am committed to facilitating conversations that advance the disruption of oppression of any form. Thus, we will work together to affirm each other’s dignity, being careful and intentional with our use of language and other communicative modes. We will do our best to find truth in what we oppose and error in what we espouse before declaring truth in what we espouse and error in what we oppose. Our interactions will be brave and kind, as we collectively move together toward a more just and compassionate society.

**Civility**

I think it goes without saying that we should be civil with one another. That said, your political and ethical opinions matter in this class, and you should not be afraid to express them. What I ask is that we engage with one another truthfully, compassionately, and with open minds.

**Communication & Technology Use**

**Email**

Email is both the bane and the boon of modern digital life. For many, it represents a never-ending obligation, a dream of “inbox zero”, or a repository for spam. However, I am very responsive to email, and you would do best to reach out to me there if you have more than a simple question, need to engage me in discussion, or just prefer a longer form for communication. I answer email Monday through Friday during the day. My email address is at the top of the syllabus.

See the [University’s Email Policy](http://www.ucdenver.edu/student-services/resources/Registrar-dev/StudentServices/Policies/Pages/default.aspx) for more information.

**Slack**

You will receive an invitation to join our class Slack team; you should join as early as possible. We will use Slack for in-class discussions, group work, one-on-one conversations, and more. Some of your work in this class will be uploaded to Slack, and any synchronous conversations will take place there. Note: The Slack mobile app is particularly handy.

**SEHD & University Policies**

**Student Privacy & the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)**

Students’ records are protected under the [Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)](http://www.ucdenver.edu/student-services/resources/Registrar-dev/StudentServices/Policies/Pages/default.aspx). FERPA deals specifically with the education records of students, affording them certain rights with respect to those records. For purposes of definition, education records are those records which are:

* Directly related to a student and
* Maintained by an institution or a party acting for the institution.

FERPA gives students who reach the age of 18 or who attend a post secondary institution the right to inspect and review their own education records. Furthermore, the right to request amendment of records and to have some control over the disclosure of personally identifiable information from these records, shift from the parent to the students at this time.

FERPA applies to the education records of persons who are or have been in attendance in post secondary institutions, including students in cooperative and correspondence study programs, video conference, satellite, internet or other electronic forms. FERPA does not apply to records of applicants for admission who are denied acceptance or, if accepted, do not attend an institution.

**Academic Freedom**

Academic freedom and diverse viewpoints are highly valued at the University of Colorado Denver. [The laws of the Board of Regents of the University of Colorado specify that](http://www.ucdenver.edu/student-services/resources/Registrar-dev/StudentServices/Policies/Pages/default.aspx):

*The University of Colorado was created and is maintained to afford men and women a liberal education in the several branches of literature, arts, sciences, and the professions. These aims can be achieved only in that atmosphere of free inquiry and discussion, which has become a tradition of universities and is called "academic freedom.... Within the bounds of this definition, academic freedom requires that members of the faculty must have complete freedom to study, to learn, to do research, and to communicate the results of these pursuits to others. The students likewise must have freedom of study and discussion. The fullest exposure to conflicting opinions is the best insurance against error.... All members of the academic community have a responsibility to protect the university as a forum for the free expression of ideas. (Laws of the Regents 5.D)*

*By enrolling as a student in the university, a person shall assume obligations of performance and behavior established by the university relevant to its lawful missions, processes, and functions. As members of the academic community, students have responsibility, equivalent to that of the faculty, for study, learning, academic integrity, and protecting the university as a forum for the free expression of ideas. (Laws of the Regents 7B)*

*All students shall have the same fundamental rights to equal respect, due process, and judgment of them based solely on factors demonstrably related to performance and expectations as students. All students share equally the obligations to perform their duties and exercise judgments of others in accordance with the basic standards of fairness, equity, and inquiry that should always guide education. (Laws of the Regents 10)*

**Disability Access**

The University of Colorado Denver is committed to providing reasonable accommodation and access to programs and services to persons with disabilities. Students with disabilities who want academic accommodations must register with [Disability Resources and Services](http://www.ucdenver.edu/student-services/resources/disability-resources-services/Pages/disability-resources-services.aspx) (DRS) in Student Commons Building, Suite 2116, Phone:  303-315-3510, Fax:  303-315-3515. I will be happy to provide approved accommodations, once you provide me with a copy of DRS’s letter. Note: DRS requires students to provide current and adequate documentation of their disabilities. Once a student has registered with DRS, DRS will review the documentation and assess the student’s request for academic accommodations in light of the documentation. DRS will then provide the student with a letter indicating which academic accommodations have been approved.

**Student Code of Conduct**

All CU Denver students are bound by the [Student Code of Conduct](http://www.ucdenver.edu/life/services/standards/Documents/CUDenver-CodeofConduct.pdf), which serves to outline student rights and responsibilities as well as behavioral expectations. If a potential violation of the Student Code of Conduct is brought to our attention, you may be asked to meet with a conduct officer to address the situation.

**Academic Integrity & Academic Honor Code**

A university's reputation is built on a standing tradition of excellence and scholastic integrity. As members of the CU Denver academic community, faculty and students accept the responsibility to maintain the highest standards of intellectual honesty and ethical conduct in completing all forms of academic work at the University. To this end, students are expected to know, understand, and comply with the ethical standards of the university, including rules against plagiarism, cheating, fabrication and falsification, multiple submissions, misuse of academic materials, and complicity in academic dishonesty. See the [University's Academic Honesty policy](http://www.ucdenver.edu/academics/CUOnline/FacultySupport/Academic%20Honesty/Documents/student/introduction/index.htm) for more information.

**Grade Appeal**

Student must follow the grade appeal process or student grievance process described below:

1. Discuss concerns with the faculty member.

2. If the issue is not resolved after a conversation with the faculty member, the student may appeal to the SEHD Student Committee (SC).

3. If the issue is not resolved after a SC review, discuss concerns with the SEHD’s Dean.

For more information, check the the [SEHD Student Academic Appeal Process](http://www.ucdenver.edu/academics/colleges/SchoolOfEducation/CurrentStudents/Resources/all_docs/Student%20Academic%20Appeal%20Process.pdf).

**Nondiscrimination and Sexual Misconduct**

CU Denver is committed to maintaining a positive learning, working and living environment.  University policy and Title IX prohibit discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, disability, pregnancy, creed, religion, sexual orientation, veteran status, gender identity, gender expression, political philosophy or political affiliation in admission and access to, and treatment and employment in, its educational programs and activities.

University policy prohibits sexual misconduct, including harassment, domestic and dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, or related retaliation. If you have experienced some sort of sexual misconduct or discrimination please visit the Office of Equity to learn more about the resources available or contact the Director of Equity/Title IX Coordinator at 303-315-2567. See <http://equity.ucdenver.edu/> for additional information.