

COURSE SYLLABUS

Course: Understanding Culture and Race

Presenters: Venita Kelley

Hours: 45

Course Overview

Interactions in classrooms and schools that recognize and respond to the cultures that shape the student and teacher are crucial to student learning and teaching success. In *Understanding Culture and Race*, participants study the building blocks of culture and why cultural differences can obstruct effective interactions between students and teachers. They learn how acknowledging cultural behavior and expectations should inform curriculum development, instructional and assessment strategies, and classroom management.

Participants learn how culture shapes both the student and the educator. They learn to interpret, understand, and incorporate culture into the education setting and study how culture shock can affect a teacher's interpretations of behavior, discipline decisions, and assessment of a student's ability to learn. The course provides a framework that participants can use to pursue their learning about culture, behaviors, and expectations in their classrooms and school environments. Participants will also increase their capacity to develop their students' awareness of these issues and their skills at negotiating them.

Presenters' Bios

Venita Kelley is former representative to the Governor for Closing the Achievement Gap (CTAG) in Ohio. Dr. Kelley's expertise is interdisciplinary and includes intercultural communication, media, organizational design/diagnosis, and leadership development. She has worked in the education and communication fields for several years and served as urban scholar for the cultural competency professional development training segment of the Governor's Initiative. Her experience includes: associate deanship of leadership and student development; noted professor in teaching and learning; curriculum and program development; professorate positions in communication and ethnic studies with affiliated status in film and women's studies; secondary education as a 9-12 English teacher, career counselor, and life skills; and consultant and/or trainer in intercultural communication in state and federal government, K-12 and university systems, medical schools, and foundations. She is noted as a master teacher. Her publications span book chapters, performance pieces, news columns, articles, and peer reviewed journals.

Dr. Kelley holds a Bachelor of Arts in Social Science from the University of California at Berkeley; a Master of Arts in Mass Communication and Public Policy from Howard University; a doctorate in Intercultural and Public Communication from the University of Kansas. She has also completed post-doctoral fellowships at Cornell University and Harvard University. She is founder of a consulting firm focused on leadership development, media, cultural literacy, and proficiency and holds ASPIRE certifications in administration, budgets and supervision.

Objectives

After completing this course, educators will know:



- Culture and its effects in the classroom
- Racism and its effects in the classroom
- Critical cross-cultural communication skills
- Tools and skills necessary to be an effective educator in intercultural contexts

Student Learning Outcomes

After completing this course, educators will apply the following skills:

- Employ cultural competence in their teaching practice
- Meet students' needs as determined by their worldviews
- Recognize and counter racism and its impact in the classroom
- Communicate effectively with all their students

Unit 1: Introduction to Cultural Competency and the Heart of Culture

In this unit, Dr. Kelley argues that educators need a theoretical understanding of culture, which leads to cultural competence, engaged students, and higher student achievement. Participants learn such key terms as worldview, epistemology, ontology, and cosmology and how each can affect a classroom's culture.

Unit 2: Eight Sectors of Culture, Part 1

In this unit, participants explore how different aspects of worldview and culture can affect a teacher's practice and the critical relationships between the teacher and his or her students. She begins by focusing on beliefs values, and attitudes; schema; temporality; and space.

Unit 3: Eight Sectors of Culture, Part 2

In this unit, participants continue to explore how different aspects of worldview and culture can affect a teacher's practice and the critical relationships between the teacher and his or her students. The four sectors of culture Dr. Kelley focuses on in this unit are myths, religion, and expressive forms; social and communication networks; interpolation patterns, and language.

Unit 4: Article: "Studying Students Studying Calculus: A Look at the Lives of Minority Mathematics Students in College"

In this unit, participants read the article "Studying Students Studying Calculus: A Look at the Lives of Minority Mathematics Students in College," in which author Uri Treisman describes the evolution of a project he developed at the University of California, Berkeley, to address the high rate of failure of black and Hispanic students in calculus. After reading the article, they respond to reflection questions that follow.



Unit 5: Dimensions of Worldview

In this unit, participants study the relationship between worldviews and their own and their students' classroom behavior. Dr. Kelley explores individualism and collectivism, masculine and feminine cultural patterns, power distance, uncertainty avoidance, fatalism, and face in this context.

Unit 6: The Impact of Culture Shock on Teaching Practice

In this unit, participants explore what culture shock is, how it can manifest in the classroom, and how to manage those manifestations. Dr. Kelley takes participants through the stages of culture shock, positioning adaptation or acculturation as the ultimate target.

Unit 7: Insights into Race and Racism

In this unit, participants explore race and racism, how they can manifest in the classroom, and how to effectively limit the impact of those manifestations. They watch the film *Ethnic Notions* in order to generate discussion and comprehension of a range of issues involving the representation of race in culture media.

Unit 8: Article: “What Are Your Expectations? The Challenge of Teaching Across Race”

In this unit, participants read an article from Scholastic.com, “What Are Your Expectations? The Challenge of Teaching Across Race,” in which the authors argue that “black students are getting a raw deal in American schools when it comes to discipline,” which in turn affects their academic achievement. After reading the article, they respond to the reflection questions that follow.

Unit 9: Addressing Our Societal Inheritance in Educational Settings

In this unit, participants explore class and gender, how they can emerge and affect dynamics in the classroom, and how to navigate these phenomena to lessen or improve their impact on student learning.

Unit 10: Cultivating and Achieving Cultural Competency in Educational Settings

In this unit, participants prepare to incorporate course concepts into their teaching practice in order to affect both their own and their students' cultural competence. In this context, Dr. Kelley explores cultural intelligence, emotional intelligence, and cognitive intelligence.



Unit 11: Article: “Cultural Identity and Teaching”

In this unit, participants read “Cultural Identity and Teaching,” by Kim Kennedy White, Shelley Zion, and Elizabeth Kozleski, which offers educators some tactics to increase their own and their students’ cultural awareness. After reading the article, they address the reflection questions that follow.

Unit 12: Article: “Exploring Cultural Variation”

In this unit, participants read “Exploring Cultural Variation,” by Joseph Jones, Mary Margaret Overbey, Alan Goodman, Carol Mukhopadhyay, Yoland Moses, and Amy Beckrich, which details lesson plans designed to “address some of the major themes or conceptual points students need to ‘get’ if they are to understand that race is both a cultural invention and profoundly real.”

Unit 13: Communication Practices to Encourage Cultural Awareness and Competence

In this unit, participants scrutinize how modifying their communication with students can affect student learning, engagement, and achievement.

Unit 14: Article: “Active Listening Skills”

In this unit, participants read the article “Active Listening Skills,” which describes ways to improve communication. Participants are tasked with designing a brief lesson plan or activity that invites students to engage in the acts of attending, paraphrasing, clarifying, perception-checking, summarizing, and expressing empathy.

Methods of Instruction

- Videos with PowerPoint presentations (teacher workshops and additional resources)
- Text (units based on required reading)
- Reflection questions (open-ended questions at intervals throughout the videos where educators are asked to reflect on the course content, their own practice, and their intentions for their practice)
- Quizzes (selected-response quizzes to assess understanding of the video presentations)

Plagiarism Policy

KDS recognizes plagiarism as a serious academic offense. Plagiarism is the passing off of someone else’s work as one’s own and includes failing to cite sources for others’ ideas, copying material from books or the Internet (including lesson plans and rubrics), and handing in work written by someone other than the participant. Plagiarism will result in a failing grade and may have additional consequences. For more information about plagiarism and guidelines for appropriate citation, consult plagiarism.org.



Passing Requirements:

In order to complete the requirements of the course, the participant must complete all course work. We do not award partial credit.

- Quizzes 40% of total grade
- Reflection Questions 60% of total grade

KDS Self-Assessment Rubric:

	Distinguished	Proficient	Basic	Unsatisfactory
Quizzes	100% Correct	80% Correct	60% Correct	0-40% Correct

	Distinguished	Proficient	Basic	Unsatisfactory
Reflection Questions	Participant provides rich detail from the content of the course in his or her responses Participant makes his or her responses to the questions personally meaningful	Participant includes appropriate content from the course in his or her responses Participant makes thoughtful comments in direct response to the questions	Participant includes some content from the course, usually appropriate, in his or her responses Participant answers the questions directly, not always fully	Participant includes no content from the course in his or her responses Participant does not address the questions posed