

Fresno Pacific University  
Center for Professional Development

Course Syllabus

## **INT 936 Building Character and Citizenship: Skills and Methods**

Instructor: Carol Gossett

Number of Units: 3 semester units

### **Contact Information**

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### **Course Description**

Character and good citizenship are integrated into a series of units of instruction for K-12 classrooms. A close look at guiding documents, articles from experts in the field, and Best Practices leads into a comprehensive unit of study to teach students and teachers about the important components of character and civic education, including; community service, parent involvement, career awareness, conflict resolution, and positive prevention. At the time of enrollment, students will select course materials suited for their grade level among the following grade spans: K-2, 3-5, 6-8, or 9-12.

NOTE: You will need access to the use of the following applications: PowerPoint or Keynote and Microsoft Word. Access to a free PowerPoint viewer is included on the website. This is a fully online course hosted by the Fresno Pacific University Moodle website.

### **Course Materials**

One of the following WiseSkills binders of materials specific to the student's grade level focus:

- WiseWords (K-2)
- WiseQuotes (3-5)
- WiseLives (6-8)
- Wisdom for Life (9-12)

Course Website which will include online access information, university basic information, course documents, course links, online course materials, etc.

### **Course Requirements**

• Listed below and itemized in detail in the Schedule of Assignments, are the types of assignments, activities, and experiences that are required to be completed and presented via the course website in order to earn either a letter grade or a grade of credit for the course. Embedded within these assignments, students are asked to make specific connections to National and State Character and Civic Education standards for their grade level which are addressed in the course. Application of Best Practices and Thinking Skills is required throughout the course assignments. As described in the course Rubric, quality of assignments will be determined and based on the *Fresno Pacific University's Desired Student Learning Outcomes (for additional information see University Information below)* A variety of formats are required for the submission of the assignments on the course website and are described in detail in the Schedule of Assignments.

- Personal contacts with FPU instructor
- Participation in focused class discussions via a Forum link on website
- Written Reflective Assignments
- Classroom Application Assignments

- Classroom Project Based Assignments
- Multi-media project based assignment

### **National, State, District Standards and Guiding Documents**

The following guiding documents will be closely studied and applied throughout the course assignments.

- *Eleven Principles of Effective Character Education* The principles described at this site are not officially adopted standards, however, this document provides an excellent guide on which to base a quality Character Education program. The Eleven Principles of Effective Character Education are the cornerstone of the Character Education Partnership (CEP) philosophy on effective character education. Each principle outlines vital aspects of character education initiatives that should not be overlooked in program implementation. The Eleven Principles of Effective Character Education offer fundamental guidance for educators and community leaders to maximize their character education outcomes.
- *National Standards for Civics and Government K-12* Directed by the Center for Civic Education and funded by the U.S. Department of Education and the Pew Charitable Trusts Copyright 1994-2007 Center for Civic Education. This document focuses mainly on Civic Education, however, embedded in this document are multiple standards which specifically address Character Education.
- *National Board for Professional Teaching Standards* NBPTS was created in 1987 after the Carnegie Forum on Education and the Economy's Task Force on Teaching as a Profession released *A Nation Prepared: Teachers for the 21st Century*. Shortly after its release, NBPTS issued its first policy statement: *What Teachers Should Know and Be Able to Do* This policy set forth a vision for accomplished teaching. The Five Core Propositions form the foundation and frame the rich amalgam of knowledge, skills, dispositions and beliefs that characterize National Board Certified Teachers (NBCTs).
- Students will access their own State and District Content standards applicable to the state in which the student resides. Student will be directed to the following links for access to state standards:
  - [www.mcrel.org/standards-benchmarks](http://www.mcrel.org/standards-benchmarks)
  - [www.education-world.com/standards](http://www.education-world.com/standards)
  - <http://www.academicbenchmarks.com/search>

### **Learning Objectives / Outcomes**

#### **Students will:**

- explore and experience a focused unit of study on character and civic education. Standards connections: *National Standards for Civics and Government* "Civics should be seen as a central concern from kindergarten through twelfth grade, whether it is taught as a part of other curricula or in separate units or courses." (see Section B of the link provided from the *National Standards for Civics and Government*)
- evaluate, analyze, and project possible changes for their school/class character education curriculum. Standards connections: *Eleven Principles of Effective Character Education Self-Assessment Tool for Schools and Districts* (see Introduction section of the link provided from the *2006 Character Education Quality Standards*) and *Professional Teaching Standards: Social Studies-History Standards Overview: Advanced Student Learning VI. Developing Civic Competence* p. 37
- make connections within their classroom curriculum to guiding documents, research, and best practices in character education appropriate for their grade level focus. Standards connections: *Professional Teaching Standards: Social Studies-History Standards Overview: Standard III Preparing for Student Learning Knowledge of Subject Matter* (p. 15) and *Standard IV: Advancing Disciplinary Knowledge and Understanding* (p. 27) and *Standard VI: Supporting Student Learning Instructional Resources* (p. 41)
- reflect on their school policies and implications for an approach to a quality Character Education program.

*Standards connections: Eleven Principles of Effective Character Education SELF-ASSESSMENT TOOL FOR SCHOOLS AND DISTRICTS*

- apply Best Practices methods, teaching strategies, and Thinking Skills to classroom assignments and curriculum.

*Standards connections: Eleven Principles of Effective Character Education Principles 3 and 6.*

- explore and apply Character Themes for teaching Character Education which reflect elements of a quality program for Character Education curriculum based on the History/Social Studies Content Standards (National, State, or District) for their grade level assignment.

*Standards connections: National Standards for Civics and Government K-12 or student's State or District content standards.*

***National Standards for Civics and Government*** (for detailed information on each standard, please activate each link provided - you must be connected to the Internet)

#### **K-4 Content Standards**

What are the Basic Values and Principles of American Democracy?

How Does the Government, Established by the Constitution Embody the Purposes, Values, and Principles of American Democracy?

What are the Roles of the Citizen in American Democracy?

#### **5-8 Content Standards**

What are Civic Life, Politics, and Government?

How Does the Government Established by the Constitution Embody the Purposes, Values, and Principles of American Democracy?

What are the Roles of the Citizen in American Democracy?

#### **9-12 Content Standards**

What are Civic Life, Politics, and Government?

How Does the Government Established by the Constitution Embody the Purposes, Values, and Principles of American Democracy?

What is the Relationship of the United States to Other Nations and to World Affairs?

What are the Roles of the Citizen in American Democracy?

#### **Schedule of Topics and Assignments**

The following course assignments are explained in detail in the Course Guideline. Assignments include but are not limited to:

- Personal instructor/student contacts where students will respond to directed questions based on previous readings and assignments. Instructor will respond back to the students based on their answers.
- Class discussions where students will reflect on previous readings and assignments.
- Written reflective forum and assignment postings where the instructor will interact with students based on their writing.
- The Pedagogy of Teaching Character and Civic Education will be explored through the review of readings assigned by the instructor and will be further reviewed through a reading selected by the student. After comparing the documents, common threads, pros and cons of offering character and civic education in the schools will be discussed via student postings and responses on the course website. Students will reflect on their own philosophy of teaching character and civic education.
- National standards will be thoroughly reviewed and specific standards will be identified that directly address each student's classroom curriculum.

- After reviewing the content standards in civic education the students will reflect on their own understanding of government and the role of character education within the civic education standards through a class discussion.
- After reviewing quotations from famous American citizens, students will apply this experience through a classroom project that involves their own students.
- After participating in a self-school/assessment of the quality of character education in their school, students will be asked to reflect on their own programs and how they might improve them.
- Students will reflect on the diversity of their community through a look at culture and practices. They will make connections to how good character might influence people to people interactions in a diverse community.
- Students will explore the Pillars of Character and how their own practices are addressing standards which relate to each identified Pillar of Character.
- Students will explore Service Learning and how these experiences connect to Character and Civic education.
- Students will apply previous readings, discussions, experiences to classroom activities and lessons using a grade-level specific binder of course materials.
- Students will explore and then apply discussion questions for their classroom based on Thinking Skills to the character units selected from the course binder materials.
- Best Practices will be reviewed and then applied to classroom lessons and activities selected from the course binder materials.
- Parent/Home connections will be made through a project based assignment such as the design of a newsletter, brochure, or similar document that can be reproduced and sent home to the families of the classroom students. The focus is on activities families can participate in to help further Character Education in the home and community.
- A final project based assignment asks students to prepare a multi-media presentation; PowerPoint, drama, song, or other similar presentation, to use as a sharing of the experiences the student and their class had through this study of Character and Civic Education.

### **Evidence of Learning**

- Course instructor observed evidence of understanding of course objectives as demonstrated through students' reflective writing assignments, class discussions with instructor and other students via the Class Forums and Course Check-Ups on the course website.
- Course instructor observed evidence of understanding of course objectives as demonstrated through students' written analysis of the application of Best Practices and Thinking Skills questions via the lesson experiences planned and implemented.
- Student made connections to national and their state content and professional teaching standards through various assignments including reflective writing, class discussions, and project based classroom activities.

### **Grading Policies and Rubrics**

Students successfully completing the course assignments following guidelines set forth in both the Schedule of Assignments and further described within the course rubric will earn a grade of **Credit** or where a letter grade is requested in writing, a letter grade of **B** or **A**, (**depending on the quality of work**).

Coursework falling short of a quality equaling a B will not receive credit.

Coursework is to be presented online via attachments or posted to the course website. Keep a file copy of your coursework in the event something gets lost.

### **Grade Point Scale**

1211 – 1345 = A  
1076 - 1210 = B  
Below 1076 = no credit

**See Grading Rubric for point values for each assignment.**

Students falling short of B quality work will be contacted by the instructor and will be given the opportunity to improve their submitted assignments (provided the student has returned their coursework in time to accomplish this prior to the course final due date).

Students have an entire year to complete their work, however, the assignments should not take more than 45 hours per unit to complete. This is a 3 semester credit course which requires a combined minimum of 135 hours of research, writing, project, and class discussion time.

**Instructor/Student Contact**

Another requirement from many districts across the nation is instructor/student contact. Five contacts between the instructor and student are required as part of the course assignments. These contacts are designed to offer an opportunity for the student and instructor to discuss aspects of the course content by providing prompts for students to respond to. Contact is to be posted on the Instructor Contact section on the course website. See Schedule of Course Assignments for details on these contacts.

**References**

- Best Practices <http://www.centralischool.ca/~bestpractice/index.html>
- Center for Civic Education – *National Standards for Civics and Government K-12* <http://www.civiced.org/index.php?page=home>
- Character Counts <http://charactercounts.org>
- Character Education: Free Resources, Materials, Lesson Plans <http://www.goodcharacter.com>
- Josephson Institute Center for Youth Ethics <http://charactercounts.org/index.html>
- National Board for Professional Teaching Standards <http://www.nbpts.org>
- National Commission on Service-Learning, *Learning In Deed: The Power of Service-Learning for American Schools* [Full Report]
- Rebecca Skinner and Chris Chapman. *Service-Learning and Community Service in K-12 Public Schools*. US Department of Education National Center for Education Statistics: Washington DC, 1999. [Full Report]
- Roper Starch Worldwide. *Public Attitudes Toward Education and Service-Learning*. Prepared for the Academy for Educational Development and, sponsored by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation and the Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation. New York, November 2000. [Full Report]
- Shelley H. Billig. *The Impacts of Service-Learning on Youth, Schools and Communities: Research on K-12 School-Based Service-Learning* [Full Report]
- The Center for the Advancement of Ethics and Character Boston University School of Education <http://www.bu.edu/sed/caec>
- The Character Education Network <http://charactered.net>
- The Eleven Principles of Character Education published by CEP Character Education Partnership. <http://www.character.org>
- Wise Skills Character Education Program <http://www.wiseskills.com>

**Policy on Plagiarism**

***“All people participating in the educational process at Fresno Pacific University are expected to pursue honesty and integrity in all aspects of their academic work. Academic dishonesty, including plagiarism, will be handled according to the procedures set forth in the Fresno Pacific University Catalogue.”***

## **University Information**

***“Graduate level course work reflects Fresno Pacific University’s Desired Student Learning Outcomes as it applies to professional development to demonstrate the following:***

- Oral and written communication in individual and group settings
- Content knowledge, and application of such knowledge in the student’s area of interest to affect change
- Reflection for personal and professional growth
- Critical thinking
- Cultural and global perspectives to understand complex systems
- Computational/methodological skills to understand and expand disciplines, including an understanding of technological systems”