**Community College of Philadelphia**

**Department of Psychology, Education, and Human Services**

**Education 135- Family and Community Relations (Online)**

*Instructor:* Dr. Katie Bucher

**Course Description**:

In this online course students will learn the significance of the family-child-school relationship, the role of parents and other caregivers, and how to work effectively with diverse families and within diverse communities. Particular emphasis will be paid to cultural, ethnic, linguistic and economic diversity; nontraditional families; and families and communities faced with special challenges such as poverty. Involvement of parents and/or other primary caregivers in children's schooling is discussed at length, including various types of informal and formal home-school communications, home visits, home-school meetings and conferences. Students learn how to develop partnerships with families, including those with children who have special developmental needs, and study the legal rights of the child, special housing concerns and social service agency support.

**Course Location**:

As an online course this class will be conducted entirely through Canvas, the College’s Distance Learning framework, and students must be comfortable with the minimum technical skills required to navigate Canvas. During the first week of class students will have an opportunity to familiarize themselves with Canvas and ask questions about the online logistics of this course.

**Required Textbook**:

Gestwicki, Carol (2013). *Home, School, & Community Relations,* (8th edition). Belmont, CA: Cengage Learning.

**Student Learning Outcomes**:

1. To provide information about the family as it exists in diverse cultural contexts.

2. To broaden understanding of the family system in the variety of configurations which are characteristic of families in society today.

3. To consider the impact of ecological systems on the family.

4. To develop strategies to encourage family involvement in children’s educational settings.

5. To consider possible alternative family-school partnerships and collaborations that would work in different community contexts.

*Please note that specific learning objectives are described for each class session. These learning objectives are drawn from the course text and from other content materials covered in class.*

**NAEYC Standard 2. Building Family and Community Relationships**

Students prepared in early childhood degree pro­grams understand that successful early childhood education depends upon partnerships with chil­dren’s families and communities. They know about, understand, and value the importance and com­plex characteristics of children’s families and com­munities. They use this understanding to create respectful, reciprocal relationships that support and empower families and to involve all families in their children’s development and learning.

Key elements of Standard 2:

**2a:** Knowing about and understanding diverse fam­ily and community characteristics

**2b:** Supporting and engaging families and commu­nities through respectful, reciprocal relationships

**2c:** Involving families and communities in their children’s development and learning

**Requirements and Grading:**

* Readings and Lecture Material: Each week you are expected to thoroughly read the assigned chapter(s) from the textbook. You are also expected to work through the lecture slides associated with each class session. These slides contain questions to help guide your thinking related to the readings, explanations of particular terms and concepts, links to additional materials, and outlines of key content. Please note that course lectures associated with the readings for each class session are a supplement to reading content. Lecture slides are not a substitute for reading the assigned chapters from the course textbook.All assignments and discussion board postings should reflect thoughtful reading and reflection on the textbook chapters.
* Discussion Boards: Discussion boards are the primary, most important learning opportunity in this course. Since we do not meet face-to-face in this class, discussion boards are the central means by which concepts are explained and clarified and we can make sure to clear up any misunderstandings about course topics. The forums also play an important role in this course as a means of introducing you to multiple perspectives on the topics we will be covering. It is important that you have the week’s readings completed by the beginning of the week those readings will be discussed. Students will be expected to participate in discussion boards for every class session by making postings in the appropriate forum (located in “Discussions” on Canvas). Discussion board topics will relate to the readings and content material from class lecture materials. Initial postings are due by the Tuesday of the week readings are assigned and follow up postings (responses to other students’ postings) are due by the Friday of the week the readings are assigned. Please commit yourself to participating in ways that encourage the critical and creative thinking of class members and refrain from engaging in any form of plagiarism (this includes not citing sources for your postings).In the first class session the discussion boards will be ungraded so that students can practice accessing and using this online format. There are also ungraded discussion boards related to the exams and final project. Starting with class session 2 there will be graded discussion boards. There are a total of 13 graded discussion boards and each one is worth 25 points.
* Exams: There will be two exams during the weeks indicated in the schedule (weeks 6 and 15). Exams will be posted by the specified date and once they log into the exam students will have 3 hours to complete and submit exam responses to the instructor. Each exam is worth 100 points. Additional details about the exams are given in the “Exam” tab for class sessions 6 and 15.
* Assignments: Students will be expected to complete 4 assignments this semester. Each assignment will focus on critical reflection and practical application of course material. Each assignment is worth 50 points. Assignments will be submitted directly (and privately) to the instruction in the “Assignments” tab. Your assignment file must be compatible with Microsoft. If an assignment cannot be opened or read on the computer it will be considered submitted late and deducted points accordingly (-5% for each calendar day late).
* Parent Interviews and Family Involvement Plan: Students will interview parents or guardians from two different families who have children between the ages of two and nine years about parenting and family/school/child care issues. At least one of the families must be different from you in some substantial way (e.g., race, ethnicity, primary language, etc.). You may not interview family members. Following your interviews, you will develop strategies for communicating with both families and for involving them in the classroom. Strategy plans will be posted online in a Canvas Discussion Board for class session 13. This project is worth 100 points. Additional details about the Parent Interviews and Family Involvement Plan assignment are given in the tab for Class Session 13 on Canvas.

**Grading Outline**

**Points**

Graded Discussion Boards (13 - 25 pts. each) 325

Exams (2 – 100 pts. each) 200

Assignments (4 – 50 pts. each) 200

Parent Interview/Family Involvement Plan 100

*Total Points: 825*

\**Any work turned in late will be deducted 5% for each calendar day late.*

Final Grade: 90-100%= A; 80-89%= B; 70-79%= C; 60-69%= D; 0-59%= F

**Class Attendance, Participation, and “Netiquette”**:

As an online course, attendance, and participation in this course will work in a different way from traditional face-to-face classes. Nevertheless, expectations for active and professional participation in all aspects of the course are high.

* Please note that course lectures associated with the readings for each class session are a supplement to the textbook readings. Lecture slides are not a substitute for reading the assigned chapters from the course textbook. All assignments and discussion board postings should reflect thoughtful reading and reflection on the textbook chapters.
* Students are expected to participate in all discussion boards, both graded and ungraded, by the due date. Initial postings are due by the Tuesday of the week readings are assigned and follow up postings (responses to other students’ postings) are due by the Friday of the week the readings are assigned. Instructor will participate in and provide feedback to students in the discussion boards as a way to facilitate conversations and increase learning in these online forums.
* Failure to participate in graded discussion boards by the due date will be considered a late assignment, resulting in the point deduction specified above in the grading outline. Failure to participate in discussion boards by the due date will also be considered an “absence” from that class session. Therefore it is critical that students complete initial and follow-up postings by the due date!
* How absences will impact course grade:
  + Students who miss the equivalent of three classes will have their course grade lowered by one letter grade.
  + Students who miss the equivalent of four classes will have their course grade lowered by two letter grades.
  + Students who miss the equivalent of five or more classes will receive a failing grade for the course regardless of their grades on assignments and exams.
* College policy permits students to drop the course without penalty by the published deadline for each term. Please check the college calendar for the last day to drop. *Failure to attend and not drop the course will result in a grade of “F.” This is the student’s responsibility.*
* As an online class, students and instructor are expected to use “netiquette,” a term used to describe professional etiquette through online communication. All postings on class discussion boards (graded and ungraded) should adhere to common courtesy so that we can maintain a supportive and communal learning environment for our class.

**Ethical Considerations:**

Refer to the College Handbook to familiarize yourself with College policies on cheating, plagiarism, and student conduct. Use of internet/printed passages in any course assignment must be appropriately identified to avoid plagiarism. Refer to other appropriate guidelines for notation format. Cheating cannot be tolerated at the college level; it is expected that all participants will make every effort to avoid this serious ethical failure. Credit will not be given for any assignment that does not contain all necessary citation. This means that any assignment that does not have proper citation (when needed) will receive a grade of zero.

**Student Accommodations and College Resources:**

All students will receive the needed accommodations and assisted strategies to support their success in this course. Students should provide this information at the beginning of the semester, so the instructor can assist them in the most appropriate accommodation possible. The College offers tutorial support in the various Learning Labs. Information on locations and hours can be found on CCP’s website. This information is also available in the College Handbook. Our library often has course text(s) on hold for student use and many other resources available to you. The Center on Disability should be contacted if you require instructional or testing accommodations. It is located in the Bonnell Building, Room BG-39.

**College Early Alert System:**

The Early Alert System provides faculty the opportunity to assist students by effectively communicating feedback about current academic performance and supplying recommendations beneficial to achieving academic success. At the 20% and 50% reporting periods during the semester, students may be assessed on the following items: attendance, punctuality, meeting assignment deadlines, classroom behavior, classroom participation, and other factors pivotal to student success. Should you receive an Early Alert letter, please follow up on the suggested intervention strategy as soon as possible.

**Technical Help:**

Students can receive assistance with the online aspects of this course in several ways: posting a question in the “general discussion” forum, contacting the instructor directly, going to “Help” on Canvas (upper right hand of the screen), or calling the College IT helpline: (215) 496-6000.

**Course Schedule:**

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| **WEEK** | **TOPIC** | **READINGS** |
|  | **Course Introduction;**  **A Day With Two Families**  -Description:  Welcome to Education 135- Family and Community Relations!  -Learning Objectives:   1. Students will be able to describe course goals and learning objectives, format, logistics of an online course, course expectations and responsibilities. 2. Students will be able to describe examples of both positive and negative home-school connections.   -Ungraded Discussion Board- Introducing Participants  -Ungraded Discussion Board- Course Information (Learning Objective 1)  -Ungraded Discussion Board- Personal School Experiences (Learning Objective 2) | Chapter 1 |
|  | **Families Today**  -Description:  This class session addresses the socio-cultural context of modern parenting in the Unites States as well as the increasing diversity in family structures and family experiences. We will also address how family diversity impacts early childhood educators.  -Learning Objectives:   1. Students will be able to describe the different forms of diversity found within families today. 2. Students will be able to describe how diversity in families today impacts early childhood professionals. 3. Students will be able to apply ideas about diverse family experiences by creating a mini-lesson focused on a children’s book that would help them understand the diversity of families within a classroom.   -Graded Discussion Board- Family Diversity (Learning Objective 1, 2)  - Assignment- Mini-Lesson on Family Book (Learning Objective 3) | Chapter 2 |
| 3- | **Parenting**  -Description:  In this class session we will consider the roles and emotional responses of parents. We will also look at the responsibilities of parents and the adjustments individuals have to make in their lives when they become parents. Lastly, this class session looks at policies related to parental responsibilities and what our country could do better to support parents today.  -Learning Objectives:   1. Students will be able to discuss several roles that parents play and the implications for teachers. 2. Students will be able to describe several emotional responses of parents and the implications for teachers. 3. Students will be able to provide multiple examples of ways that the United States could increase support for families through policies and programs.   -Graded Discussion Board- Parenting Roles and Emotional Responses (Learning Objectives 1, 2)  -Graded Discussion Board- Family Policy and Programs (Learning Objective 3) | Chapter 3 |
|  | **Family Involvement & Partnerships**  -Description:  This class session focuses on the various motivations that impel schools to bring families into the educational process; models of programs that encourage family involvement; and the benefits & barriers in teacher-family partnerships.  -Learning Objectives:   1. Students will be able to describe what is meant by family involvement. 2. Students will be able to list several motivations and models for family involvement. 3. Students will be able to discuss the benefits for children, families, and teachers when families and teachers work together constructively. 4. Students will be able to describe several reasons for barriers to constructive relationships between families and teachers.   -Graded Discussion Board-Family Involvement and Partnerships (Learning Objectives 1- 4) | Chapters 4 & 5 |
| 5- | **Building Successful Partnerships**  -Description:  This class session discusses methods for developing partnerships between teachers and families. Chapter 6 focuses on the foundations of successful partnerships  including attitudes of teachers that support positive partnerships as well as concrete actions and environmental factors that help lay the foundations of teacher-family partnerships. Chapter 7 focuses on steps and strategies teachers can take at the beginning of the school year to assist children in entering the classroom. Chapter 7 also focuses in particular on the separation experience for children and families and supportive measures that teachers can take in this experience.  -Learning Objectives:   1. Students will be able to identify several attitudes or ideas of teachers that are conducive to forming a positive partnership with families. 2. Students will be able to discuss concrete actions and environmental factors that are necessary in laying the foundation for a positive parent-teacher partnership. 3. Students will be able to identify several steps that are helpful in establishing a relationship prior to the child’s entrance into the classroom as well as the benefits and strategies for each step. 4. Students will be able to describe the separation experience for children and parents.   -Graded Discussion Board- Building Successful Partnerships (Learning Objectives 1- 4)  -Ungraded Discussion Board- Questions regarding the Mid-Term Exam  - Assignment- Benefits and Barriers of Teacher-Family Partnerships Professional Development Hand-out (Learning Objectives 1- 4) | Chapters 6 & 7 |
| 6- | **Mid-Term Exam**  The Mid-Term Exam will be posted online. |  |
| 7- | **Informal Communication with Families**  -Description:  This class session addresses how to build effective relationships with families through trust and open communication. Of particular focus are strategies for providing face-to-face conversations and other method for more informal communication.  -Learning Objectives:   1. Students will be able to identify several methods teachers can use to convey information, interest and support to families. 2. Students will be able to describe details for implementing each communication method. 3. Students will be able to put into practice implementation of at least one communication method.   -Graded Discussion Board-Choosing Communication Techniques (Learning Objectives 1, 2)  - Assignment- Informal Communication Through a School Newsletter (Learning Objective 3) | Chapter 8 |
| 8- | **Parent Teacher Conferences**  -Description:  This class session discusses the reasons for teachers holding formal parent-teacher conferences as well as strategies for successful parent-teacher conferences.  -Learning Objectives:   1. Students will be able to identify several reasons for holding regular parent-teacher conferences. 2. Students will be able to identify several factors that facilitate productive parent-teacher conferences. 3. Students will be able to describe several strategies for successful parent-teacher conferences. 4. Students will be able to name several “pitfalls” to avoid in parent-teacher conferences.   -Graded Discussion Board-Parent-Teacher Conferences (Learning Objectives 3, 4)  -Assignment- Mini-Conference Scenarios (Learning Objectives 1- 4) | Chapter 9 |
| 9- | **It Takes a Village**  -Description:  This class session looks at the ways that the community at large affects schools and the families they serve. We will also examine how teachers & families can be advocates within a school and the broader community. Lastly, this class session introduces Bronfenbrenner’s theory of “Ecological Systems” as an important sociological concept for understanding schooling in society.  -Learning Objectives:   1. Students will be able to describe current legislative initiatives that shape policy affecting families, schools, and children. 2. Students will be able to discuss community linkages that support families and children. 3. Students will be able to describe Bronfenbrenner’s Ecological Systems theory.   -Graded Discussion Board-Bronfenbrenner’s Ecological Systems Theory (Learning Objective 3)  -Graded Discussion Board- Family Policy in the United States (Learning Objectives 1, 2) | Chapter 12 |
| 10- | **Working with Families from Diverse Backgrounds**  -Description:  This class session focuses on cultural diversity within the classroom. Specifically, this class session focuses on the concepts of color blindness, overt culture, covert culture, dominant culture, and English Language Learners. Lastly, this class session examines how teachers can recognize the importance of culturally diverse families and develop strategies for welcoming families of all cultures into the classroom.  -Learning Objectives:   1. Students will be able to define the concepts of overt culture and covert culture. 2. Students will be able to discuss a rationale for recognizing the importance of culture and working with families from diverse backgrounds, identifying benefits for children, parents, and teachers. 3. Students will be able to describe several specific strategies for teachers welcoming all families into the classroom.   -Graded Discussion Board- The “Iceberg” Analogy of Culture (Learning Objective 1)  -Graded Discussion Board-Teaching Tolerance (Learning Objectives 2, 3) | Chapter 13 |
| 11- | **Working with Families in Particular Circumstances**  -Description:  This class session focuses on several family circumstances that teachers could face in the classroom: divorce and remarriage; families created by adoption; supporting children with special health or developmental needs; and concerns about abuse, neglect, or family violence. This class session examines the particular markers and challenges of each of these circumstances as well as emotional responses from families and supportive techniques from teachers.  -Learning Objectives:   1. Students will be able to describe behaviors in children and parents associated with the stress of divorce and remarriage, and discuss ways teachers can be helpful. 2. Students will be able to describe possible emotional responses from parents of children with special needs or disabilities, and discuss ways teachers can work effectively with them. 3. Students will be able to describe typical responses from parents of infants, and discuss ways teachers can work effectively with them. 4. Students will be able to discuss factors that create an abusive situation, indicators that suggest abuse or neglect, and teachers’ responsibilities in working with these families. 5. Students will be able to identify ways that classroom teachers can support adoptive families.   -Graded Discussion Board- Working With Families in Particular Circumstances (Learning Objectives 1- 4)  -Ungraded Discussion Board:  Questions about the Parent Interviews and Family Involvement Plan Presentations. | Chapter 14 |
| 12 | **Thanksgiving Break** |  |
| 13 - | **Parent Interviews and Family Involvement Plan Presentations**  -During this class session you will present your Parent Interview and Family Involvement Plans in a Canvas Discussion Board.  -Graded Discussion Board:  You will need to comment on the project of one other student in class. |  |
| 14- | **Conclusion**  -Ungraded Discussion Board:  Questions about the Final Exam. |  |
| 15-  Finals Week | **Final Exam**  The final exam will posted online. |  |