

## **Middle School Course Registration & Completion Instructions**

### **Civic Education in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century**

This year, Close Up is offering graduate credit through Colorado State University to teachers who participate in Teacher Program. Middle school teachers can receive 1 credit if they participate in every component of Teacher Program and complete the required assignments. The cost of the courses is \$61.00 per credit.

#### **Registration Instructions**

1. Alert your TPS of your interest in receiving graduate credit or go under Professional Development tab on our website. Contact Dr. Daniel A. Wallace the Director of Teacher Programs, [dwallace@closeup.org](mailto:dwallace@closeup.org) or 703-706-3405.
2. Attend daily Teacher Program elements and have your TPS sign your verification form.
3. Dr. Wallace will send you the link for registration at Colorado State University.

Payment can be made by credit card or by check, made payable to "CSU". Please do not send cash.

#### **Grading**

Grades will be submitted on a rolling basis through July 8, 2019. Grading for these courses is Pass/Fail.

## Course Syllabus

### EDUC 591A 671 – Civic Education in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century for Middle School

#### I. Rationale:

It is the mission of the Close Up Foundation to inform, inspire, and empower young people to exercise the rights and responsibilities of citizens in a democracy. One of the most basic responsibilities of a citizen is to register and vote in local and national elections. In the 2016 elections, however, half eligible young people between the ages of 18 and 25 turned out to vote. Clearly, more needs to be done to encourage youth political participation. New research findings have proven that the practices Close Up employs are most effective in engaging young people in political life. This course is meant to encourage teachers to incorporate aspects of Close Up's methodology in their own classrooms and continue developing the democratic dispositions of their students beyond their week in Washington.

#### II. Course Aims and Outcomes:

##### Aims:

Recent studies have found that discussions of current issues among young people predicted greater electoral engagement. Furthermore, "when parents encouraged their adolescent children to express opinions and disagreements, these young people had higher electoral engagement, political knowledge, and informed voting" (Center for Information & Research on Civic Learning and Engagement).

A large part of Close Up methodology is based on students actively engaging with controversial issues that shed light on the enduring tensions inherent in a democratic government. In this way, not only do students become familiar with the structure and processes of the American political system and its theoretical underpinnings, but they also develop a variety of citizenship skills, including: acquiring and interpreting information; communicating with fellow citizens (both listening and promoting one's interests); and making informed decisions about policy alternatives.

The specific aims of this course are to:

- Explain the civic benefits of teaching high school courses with controversial issues;
- Explain the benefits and demonstrate the use of essential questions in framing units of study, particularly with regard to the Common Core;
- Demonstrate the use of controversial issues in illuminating enduring conceptual questions inherent in democratic systems;
- Demonstrate how historical events can provide context for current policy or political issues;
- Explore strategies for addressing problems that arise in discussing controversial issues in class;
- Explore internet resources that facilitate teaching with controversial issues or that develop civic knowledge; and
- Explore a variety of projects that could demonstrate mastery of student learning objectives in issue-centered education.

**Learning Outcomes:**

As a result of participating in this course, students will be able to:

- Articulate the benefits of teaching with controversial issues, from a civic perspective
- Develop a social studies curriculum based on a series of essential questions, some of which illustrate the inherent tensions that exist in democratic societies
- Identify current controversial issues that relate to a unit's essential question
- Anticipate the problems associated with issue-based education and develop strategies for dealing with those problems
- Design group projects that assess issue-centered student learning

**III. Format and Procedures:**

This course is only open to participants enrolled in the Close Up Foundation's Teacher Program. In order to enroll in the course and receive credit, students must participate in each component of the Washington-based Teacher Program.

On Monday, students must participate in the Close Up Methodology workshops, and on Tuesday, they must participate in the Capitol Hill Walking Workshop session. On Tuesday afternoon and on Thursday, students may choose any of the options available to Teacher Program participants.

This course will be taught unconventionally, with discussions taking place during bus transfers, at site visits, and even during meals. Students will be expected to be actively engaged in program components and to participate in group discussions

**IV. Instructor Assumptions:**

It is assumed that students who enroll in this course have had classroom experience and are teaching -- or recently have taught -- a social studies class. It is assumed that participants will have some background knowledge in educational theory, classroom management, and curriculum development.

**V. Course Requirements:****A. Attendance and Participation – (60% of grade)**

Participants must attend the Close Up Teacher Program in its entirety. This includes:

Sunday evening Teacher Orientation dinner

Monday morning Teacher Breakfast Speaker

Monday morning electives (Student Choice)

- Morning and afternoon Monuments & Close Up Methodology
- Morning and afternoon A Union on the Brink, the Battle of Fredericksburg

Tuesday morning electives (Student Choice)

- Capitol Hill Walking Workshop or In-Depth
- International Intrigue

Tuesday afternoon electives (Student Choice)

- Votes for Women: Centennial of the 19th Amendment
- Controversial Issues, Close Up In the Classroom

Wednesday Citizenship Send-Off

### **B. Assignments (40% of grade)**

1. Students will write a 4-5 page paper answering one of the following questions:

Based on your observations of students who participated on the Close Up program, share your perceptions of how well Close Up's issue-centered methodology succeeded in increasing student efficacy and developing citizenship skills. What suggestions would you make to increase the program's overall effectiveness?

Close Up's program includes a mix of traditional classroom style learning and onsite study. Having experienced how onsite visits to monuments, national parks, and museums can contribute to student understanding of essential questions in social studies, identify three sites in your local area and describe how they could be incorporated into an issue-based unit of study.

### **C. Required Reading**

Circle Foundation. (2013). *All Together Now: Collaboration and Innovation for Youth Engagement, The Report on the Commission on Youth Voting and Civic Knowledge*. Center for Information & Research on Civic Learning and Engagement: Medford, MA. *PDF can be emailed.*

Close Up Foundation. (2017). *Teacher Notebook: Close Up Program* (Unpublished document). Close Up Foundation: Alexandria, VA. *Given on program.*

Close Up Foundation. (2014). *Current Issues* (38<sup>th</sup> ed., 2014-15). Close Up Press: Alexandria, VA.

Hess, Diana. (2009). *Controversy in the Classroom: The Democratic Power of Discussion*. New York, NY: Routledge.

McTighe, J. and Wiggins G. (2013). *Essential Questions: Opening Doors to Student Understanding*. ASCD: Alexandria, VA.

National Council of the Social Studies. (2013). *Social Studies for the Next Generation: Purposes Practices, and Implications of the College, Career and Civic Life (C3) Framework for Social Studies State Standards*. Silver Spring, MD: Kathy Swan. *PDF will be provided.*