Purpose
In this course, doctoral students will explore how students sustain a commitment to
learning, despite the fact that failure is as common as success in school. Specifically,
participants will establish a reading agenda that matches research projects that they
have underway and/or would like to establish. We will use the dynamic system of moral
and academic engagement to organize our conversations and explore how such
engagement is associated with learning. We will design projects by identifying research
that explores:

- What types of knowledge are valued in schools? (epistemology)
- How should academic environments be organized? (fairness)
- What makes students feel successful in school? (motivation)

Readings
Prior to each class, students should establish a set of goals related to reading in their
chosen area and writing materials that they can offer for critique. Each week, one
student will be appointed as a target presenter and will spend about half the class
presenting and organizing a discussion about their work. The remaining time will be
spend sharing dilemmas and advice among participants.

Assignments and Ground Rules
This class relies heavily on weekly discussions. The most important assignment,
therefore, is to organize thoughts and tasks before coming to class and be ready to
discuss ideas. Although I do not take formal attendance, everyone’s absence is felt.
Excessive absences have made it impossible for students in past semesters to follow
what is going on, and such students typically end up with relatively low grades in the
course.

Instead of tests, students will be asked to produce a piece of writing that either reflects
a comprehensive review of the research or a proposal for a research project. Students
who have projects underway will be encouraged to continue working on those projects
and find ways to obtain feedback from others. By the end of the semester, students
should be able to outline a detailed agenda for a piece of research and have some sort
of research underway.
UIC strives to ensure the accessibility of programs, classes, and services to students with disabilities. Reasonable accommodations can be arranged for students with various types of disabilities, such as documented learning disabilities, vision or hearing impairments, and emotional or physical disabilities. If you need accommodations for this class, please let your instructor know your needs and he/she will help you obtain the assistance you need.

**Tentative Outline**
Activities will be tailored to the needs of the students enrolled in the course. When students are ready, we will seek an external critic who will be invited to discuss our progress. Students will also solicit external review for their efforts by submitting IRB proposals, research proposals, and or literature reviews for examination by their committees.