

I. COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course involves the examination of basic philosophical problems underlying broad educational questions that confront society. This course is intended to provide a foundation for understanding of questions of modern society and education.

II. RATIONALE

The Faculty of the University of Akron has established this course as an integral part of the formal education of professional educators who pursue advanced degrees in education. Nevertheless, students enrolled in this course should be aware that prior to taking a course in the "Philosophy of Education," they have already formed personal philosophies of education. More specifically, they have developed certain conceptions of human nature, the aim of school education, educational practices, and the relationship between school and society. However, it should be noted that a lack of systematic and reflective examination of one's own philosophy of education can lead to a dogmatic attitude about one's beliefs and values. The purpose of this course is to invite professional educators to engage in a collective inquiry into the major schools of philosophical thought which have shaped the historical and current educational policies and practices. Such an inquiry will further equip them with basic knowledge and skills in developing a critical appraisal of their personal philosophies of education and of the underlying philosophical positions and arguments of public educational policies and practices.

Conventionally, philosophy is regarded as the pursuit of wisdom. As a relatively specialized inquiry, philosophy of education focuses on developing normative conceptions of human nature, growth, equality, and social justice. Since we do not develop our philosophical perspectives in a social vacuum, it is essential for us to examine the cultural, economic, and political contexts of different educational philosophies. In a culturally diverse society, a course like this one can be a forum for students to undertake a collective inquiry into varied perspectives on how individual growth, human equality, and social justice should be defined, conceptualized, and implemented. Such a collective inquiry is crucial for enhancing mutual understanding and collaboration between professional educators.

III. COURSE GOALS/OBJECTIVES

Knowledge

The student will be able to:

--identify, interpret, and appraise various philosophical traditions which have influenced historical and current educational policies and practices. **ELCC 1.6**

--articulate, define, and defend her/his own philosophical perspectives concerning the aim of public school education, administrative devices, pedagogical practices, and research methodology. **ELCC 1.6**

--engage in a critical appraisal of the underlying philosophical arguments of public educational policies. **ELCC 11.6**

Skill

The student will be able to:

--analyze and clarify divergent perspectives regarding human growth, social equality, and social justice.

--undertake a systematic analysis of the educational implications of nationalism, democracy, race/ethnicity, gender, and socioeconomic class.

--promote multicultural awareness, gender sensitivity, and racial and ethnic appreciation **ELCC 7.4**

Value

The student will be able to:

--develop a moral vision with respect to the role of professional educators in facilitating students' growth and in pursuing human equality and social justice.

IV. COURSE OUTLINE

Week 1 Introduction
Philosophy of Education: What is it? Who does it? How is it done?

Week 2 Socratic Education
Required Reading:
David H. Callhoun, "Which 'Socratic Method?'"

Week 3 Aristotle and Moral Education
Required Reading:
Clark Robenstine, "Aristotle for Teachers as Moral Educators" **ELCC 11.6**
< <http://www.ed.uiuc.edu/EPS/PES-Yearbook/1998/robenstine.html>>
Emily Robertson, "Aristotle and Robenstine on Moral Education"
< <http://www.ed.uiuc.edu/EPS/PES-Yearbook/1998/robertson.html>>

- Week 4 John Dewey
Required Reading:
John Dewey, "My Pedagogic Creed"
John Dewey, "Education and Social Change" ELCC 11.6
- Week 5 Liberalism and Education ELCC 11.6
Required Reading:
Amitai Etzioni, "Too Many Rights, Too Few Responsibilities"
David D. Boaz, "Rights, Responsibilities, and Community"
- Week 6 Freedom and Responsibilities
Required Reading:
S. Neill, "The Idea of Summerhill"
John Darling, "Summerhill: From Neill to the Nineties"
- Week 7 Postmodernism and Education ELCC 11.6
Required Reading:
J. Cavaleskie, "Power Goes to School: Teachers, Students, and Discipline"
< http://w3.ed.uiuc.edu/EPS/PES-Yearbook/93_docs/COVALESK.HTM>
- Week 8 Sports and Adventure Education
Required Reading:
James W. Keating, "Sportsmanship as A Moral Category"
Jasper S. Hunt, Jr., "Philosophy of Adventure Education"
- Week 9 Current Issues in Education: Philosophical Perspectives ELCC 7.4
Required Reading:
Selections from the PES Yearbooks
- Week 10 Current Issues in Education: Philosophical Perspectives ELCC 7.4
Required Reading:
Selections from the PES Yearbooks
- Week 11 Spring Break
- Week 12` Independent Study
- Week 13 Civic Education ELCC 11.6
Required Reading:
William Galston, "Civic Education in the Liberal State"
- Week 14 Bioethics and Education
Required Reading:
Lisa Sowle Cahill, "The New Biotech World Order"
R. L. Guyer, M. L. Dillon, L. Anderson, and L. Szobota, "Bioethics Cases and Issues"

V. REQUIRED/OPTIONAL TEXTS

1. A required packet of articles is available on electronic reserve.
2. James Proyer, "Guidelines on Writing A Philosophy Paper" at: <http://www.people.fas.harvard.edu/~jpryor/general/writing.html#PhilPaper>
3. Highly Recommended Books:

Paul Ernest (Ed.), Mathematics, Education and Philosophy: An International Perspective. London: The Falmer Press, 1994).

Ivan Karp and D.A. Masolo (Eds.) African philosophy as cultural inquiry (Bloomington : Indiana University Press, 2000).

Michel Foucault, Discipline and Punish, translated by Alan Sheridan (New York: Vintage Books, 1979).

Paulo Freire, Pedagogy of the Oppressed (New York: Continuum, 1989).

Amy Gutmann, Democratic Education (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987).

Jane Roland Martin, The Schoolhome: Rethinking Schools for Changing Families (Cambridge, Mass. Harvard University Press, 1992).

A. O. Rorty, Philosophers on Education: New Historical Perspectives (New York: Routledge, 1998).

Elleni Tedls, Sankofa: African Thought and Education (New York: Peter Lang, 1995).

VI. INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES/ACTIVITIES/TECHNOLOGY

In response to students' diverse learning styles, gender/sexuality/socioeconomic/religious/geographic differences, and exceptionalities/disabilities, this course will be taught through varied methods and activities (i.e., lecture, discussion, web-based learning projects, videotapes, and small group work). Students and the instructor will collaborate with each other in exploring, determining and implementing appropriate teaching methods and learning activities to facilitate learning and teaching.

In order to participate in web-based learning activities, students are required to apply for an active UA Net ID and password. Also, students are expected to acquire skills and knowledge that enable them to communicate with the instructor and fellow students via e-mail and conduct web-based

research. Students who have not acquired the aforementioned skills should contact the instructor in order to obtain assistance with instructional technology-related-problems.

VII. EVALUATION/STUDENT ASSESSMENT

Requirements:

1. You are required to attend and participate in all class sessions. Attendance is necessary for you to contribute your insights to our in-class discussion. If you must miss more than **four** sessions, please consider withdrawing from the class. The evaluation of your participation will be based on the instructor's observation and your written responses to study questions. In addition, you are welcome to submit your journal writing that reflectively examines the objectives, attainments, and problems of the learning activities. Please note that you are required to complete all course requirements by Dec. 8, 2002.
2. You are responsible for completing **three** written assignments pertaining to **the personal, the public, and the professional dimensions of** philosophy of Education.

Personal Dimension:

You are required to complete one of the following two assignments:

- a. **Personal Philosophy of Education.** The purpose of this assignment is to assist you to identify, explicate, and evaluate your own philosophy of teaching. First, undertake a critical inquiry into John Dewey's "My Pedagogic Creed." Specifically, attend to how John Dewey arguments support his pedagogic creed concerning the following issues:
 1. What is Education?
 2. What is School?
 - The Subject-Matter of Education
 - The Nature of Method
 - The School and Social Progress

Next, examine whether professional educators like you could adequately address their personal philosophy of education by focusing on the above issues. Are there any other significant issues missing from the above list? What are these issues? Why are they significant? Finally, identify, elaborate, explicate, and support your own pedagogical creed/personal philosophy of education. **ELCC 1.6; 11.6**

Suggested length: 5+ pages, typed, and double-spaced.

- b. **A Case Study.** Case study can help educators as they undertake a reflective examination of their personal philosophies of education and as they examine the philosophical perspectives underlying public educational policies. In writing your

case study, you may focus on your personal educational experiences or one specific educational phenomenon (e.g., one educational program, one educational document, one educational event). First, offer a narrative and descriptive account of your particular experience or the specific educational phenomenon. Your description and interpretation should reflect and illuminate your understanding of your own experiences or the specific educational phenomenon within a specific context. Second, formulate questions for yourself and your audience (members in the community of professional educators) to guide your analysis of the specific problems/issues addressed in your case. Third, identify the major themes/issues of your selected case. Fourth, offer your interpretation and analyses of these themes/issues. Finally, if your selected case presents certain problems to be solved, then explain the philosophical considerations involved in solving these problems.
ELCC 1.6; 11.6

Suggested length: 5+ pages, typed, and double-spaced.

Listed below are the criteria of an exemplary case study, suggested by R. K. Yin:

*The case study must be significant.

*The case study must be complete.

*The case study must consider alternative perspectives.

***The case study must display sufficient evidence.**

*The case study must be composed in an engaging manner.

--from Yin, R. K. *Case Study Research: Design and Methods*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage, 1984. **ELCC 1.6; 11.6**

Professional Dimension:

You are required to complete A Response to One Philosophical Paper from The Yearbooks of the Philosophy of Education Society. This course requirement is intended to facilitate the ongoing dialogue between professional practitioners and professional scholars. Listed below are my suggestions for completing this assignment:

1. First, select one paper and its response from *The Yearbooks of the Philosophy of Education Society* that pertains to your personal or professional interest.
2. Second, read, examine, and evaluate whether the article has provided professional practitioners with a clarification and insightful analysis of educational concepts, arguments, practices, and policies.
3. Finally, write up a response to the major perspectives/arguments presented in the paper.

*The complete text of back issues of *The Yearbooks of the Philosophy of Education Society* is available on line. Visit the web site at < <http://www.ed.uiuc.edu/EPS/PES-yearbook/>>.

Suggested Length: 5+ pages, typed, and double-spaced. ELCC 1.6; 7.4; 11.6

Public Dimension:

You are required to complete one of the following two assignments:

- a. A commentary or an essay on one current educational issue.** The purpose of this assignment is to invite you to construct arguments about teaching, learning, and schooling. Listed below are my suggestions for completing this assignment:
1. Select one journalistic report or one short essay/commentary on one educational issue as related to teaching, learning, or the formulation of an educational policy.
 2. Offer your own clarification regarding the facts/evidences presented in the report or essay/commentary.
 - Develop interpretative, critical, and normative perspectives (arguments) concerning the issue addressed in the report. Or, offer a critical evaluation of the perspectives/arguments presented in the essay/commentary.

Suggested Length: 5+ pages, typed, and double-spaced. ELCC 1.6; 7.4 11.6

b. A critical examination of one educational policy.

The purpose of this assignment is to invite you to undertake a critical analysis of one public educational policy. Listed below are the requirements for the completion of this project.

- (1) Select one educational policy that pertains to your interests.
- (2) Locate the text (written statement) of this policy.
- (3) Identify the author(s) of the policy.
- (4) Explain the professional responsibilities of policy writer(s).
- (5) Examine the context of the formation of this policy.
 - Why was this policy advocated and adopted? What are the intended purposes? For whose interests?
 - What are the steps involved in the creation of this policy?
 - Who are included in formulating and implementing the policy? What are the justifications for including these individuals?
 - Who are excluded in formulating and implementing the policy? What are the justifications for excluding them?
- (6) Examine and evaluate the contents of the policy.
 - What are the underlying philosophical principles of the policy?
 - Are these principles explicitly and clearly stated?
 - What is the hidden subtext?
 - Do the author(s) of this policy provide the readers with sound and well-grounded arguments?
- (7) Inquire into the practical considerations of the implementation of the policy.

- What are the respective responsibilities of the individuals(s)/organization(s) involved in the implementation of this policy? Explain the power relationship between them.
 - What are the expected barriers to the successful implementation of the policy?
 - What might be the unexpected barriers to the successful implementation of the policy?
- (8) Examine the intended and unintended outcomes of the policy.
- Whose interests does the policy intend to serve? Why? Are there any competing interests? Has the formulation of the policy adequately addressed the competing interests? Or, how have these competing interests been negotiated?
 - What might be the unexpected outcomes? Are the unexpected outcomes desirable? Why? Should the policy maker make further efforts to prevent the unintended outcomes?
- (9) Explicate your personal reflection on the formulation, implementation, and impacts of the policy.

Use the above points to present a written report of your critical analysis of the policy.

Suggested Length: 5+ pages, typed, and double-spaced. ELCC 1.6; 7.4 11.6

VIII. STUDENT ETHICS AND OTHER POLICY INFORMATION

For further information about The University of Akron's policies regarding student ethics and conduct, please consult the following sources:

<http://www3.uakron.edu/gradsch/gradbull.html>, then select "General Information" (academic honesty); or www.uakron.edu/studdev/conduct.html (Student Code of Conduct). Any student who feels she/he may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability please consult www.uakron.edu/access and the Office of Accessibility at (330) 972-7928.

IX. BIBLIOGRAPHY

None provided.