

Teacher Education 924
Philosophy of Education: Ideas and Methods
Spring 2004

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Texts: Most articles are available online through MSU library databases. Articles in **boldface type** are in PDF format and available at the TE924 ANGEL site.

Description: Selected ideas in education from different philosophical traditions. Issues of method, historical perspectives, and textual analysis.

Requirements:

Three essays (<1200 words) instructor evaluation	(15% each)	45%
Journal Report	full/half credit	10%
Final paper (≈5000 words) instructor evaluation		45%

Essays are due by email (as Word attachments) to Lynn before class on the day the assignment is due. More information about essays can be found on page 6 of this syllabus.

Journal reports will be done in groups. Instructions are on page 8 of this syllabus.

Final papers are due Monday, May 9. You should design your own paper topic and approach. General criteria for paper evaluations are provided on page 7 of this syllabus. I encourage you to talk with me in advance about the ideas for your paper. You may turn in early drafts if you want my comments in order to make revisions.

Obviously, if you don't participate, you won't get much out of the course. I understand that participation takes many different forms.

In general we will try to accomplish three things in every class meeting: understand the classical texts, become versed in and articulate about current debates in philosophy of education, and practice thinking philosophically. In order to understand the readings you should come to class prepared to make comments and ask questions that will help clarify the readings for you. Cross-disciplinary discussions provide opportunities for you to cultivate ways of thinking, talking, and writing that are useful for your doctoral research. To think critically means to examine the implications of contemporary educational research in light of power relations. I expect that class time will be spent primarily in seminar form. We may include whole-class discussion, small-group work, dialogue, film, performance, and question-answer sessions.

Readings. Weekly assignments include two required readings (a philosopher's website and a contemporary commentary) and one optional reading.

Each philosopher's website includes primary source documents, biographical information, and commentaries. Please browse freely and concentrate on those portions of the website that are most interesting for you. During class discussions, people will be able to contribute different aspects of information, all derived from the same website. In this way, we will work to understand educational philosophy in its historical context.

The contemporary commentary article is meant to be read in tandem with the philosopher's website and in view of the assigned topic. As you read, please pay attention to forms of argument, assumptions about people, historical interplays, and purposes of education.

The optional articles are provided for your pleasure.

Calendar:

 January 10

Introduction to the course and to each other.
 Questions about questions.

Generally useful site: Yahoo Search: Philosophers
<http://dir.yahoo.com/Arts/Humanities/Philosophy/Philosophers/>

 Rhetoric and Dialectic

January 24

Aristotle's *Rhetoric* (hypertext document; downloadable)
<http://www.public.iastate.edu/~honeyl/Rhetoric/>

Hawhee, Debra. (2002 Nov.). Bodily pedagogies: Rhetoric, athletics, and the sophists' three Rs. *College English*, 65(2), 142-62.

[Gates, H.L. (1990). **The signifying monkey and the language of signifyin(g): Rhetorical difference and the orders of meaning.** In Bizzell, Patricia & Herzberg, Bruce (Eds.) (1990). *The rhetorical tradition: Readings from classical times to the present*. Pp. 1193-1223. Boston: Bedford Books.]

January 31

Karl Marx & Friedrich Engels
<http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/>

McLaren, Peter & Farahmandpur, Ramin. (2000 April). Reconsidering Marx in post-Marxist times: A requiem for postmodernism? *Educational Researcher*, 29(3), 25-33.

[Sefa Dei, George J. & Asgharzadeh, Alireza. (2001). The power of social theory: The anti-colonial discursive framework. *Journal of Educational Thought*, 35(3), 297-323.]

February 7

The Frankfurt School
<http://home.cwru.edu/~ngb2/Pages/Intro.html>

Gur-Ze'ev, Ilan. (2002 August). Bildung and critical theory in the face of postmodern education. *Journal of Philosophy of Education*, 36(3), 391-408.

[Imai, Yasuo. (2003 Feb). Walter Benjamin and John Dewey: The structure of difference between their thoughts on education. *Journal of Philosophy of Education*, 37(1), p. 109-25.]

February 14

First essay due

Rene Descartes

<http://www.renedescartes.com/>*Discourse on Method*http://www.renedescartes.com/discourse/rene_descartes_discourse_001.htm

Prado, C.G. (1992). Introduction. In *Descartes and Foucault: A contrastive introduction to philosophy*. Pp. 3-33. Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press.

[Boler, Megan. (2002). The New Digital Cartesianism: Bodies and Spaces in Online Education. *Philosophy of Education Yearbook* v. 2002, p. 331-40.

Egea-Kuehne, Denise. (2002). A New Discourse for a New Method: "The New Digital Cartesianism". discussion of The new digital Cartesianism by M. Boler. *Philosophy of Education Yearbook* v. 2002, p. 341-4.]

February 21

Michel Foucault

<http://www.foucault.info/>

Clare O'Farrell's Foucault Site

<http://www.qut.edu.au/edu/cpol/foucault/>

Foucault Full text documents

<http://www.foucault.info/documents/>

Fendler, L. (1999). Making trouble: Prediction, agency and critical intellectuals. In T.S. Popkewitz and L. Fendler (Eds.), *Critical theories in education: Changing terrains of knowledge and politics*. pp. 169-188. New York: Routledge.

[Biesta, Gert J. J. (1998 Jan.). Pedagogy without humanism: Foucault and the subject of education. *Interchange*, 29(1), p. 1-16.]

 Pragmatism and Democracy

February 28

Cornell West

<http://www.pragmatism.org/library/west/>

 (by his son? <http://www.cornelwest.com/>)

Williams, Patricia. (2003 Feb). One nation, under suspicion, loses liberty and justice for all. *The Times Higher Education Supplement* (1578). p. 18-19.

[Murphy, P. Karen. (2003 Summer). The philosophy in thee: Tracing philosophical influences in educational psychology. *Educational Psychologist*, 38(3), p. 137-45.]

March 7 Second essay due [no class-Spring Break]

March 14

Guest speaker: Cleo Cherryholmes

 “On the concept of educational autonomy” (in press) *Paedagogica Historica*.

Cherryholmes, Cleo H. (1994). Pragmatism, poststructuralism, and socially useful theorizing: A reply to J. Anyon. *Curriculum Inquiry*, 24, p. 193-213.

 Art and Science

March 21

Thomas S. Kuhn

<http://www.emory.edu/EDUCATION/mfp/Kuhnsnap.html>

Latour, B. (1999). “Do you believe in reality?” News from the trenches of the science wars. In B. Latour, *Pandora’s hope: Essays on the reality of science studies*. Pp. 1-23. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

[Hacking, Ian. (1999 May/June). Are you a social constructionist? Excerpt from *The social construction of what? Lingua Franca*, 9(4), p. 65-72.]

March 28 *How to Draw a Bunny*

John Dewey

<http://www.siu.edu/~deweyctr/>

Saito, Naoko. (2002 May). Pragmatism and the tragic sense: Deweyan growth in an age of nihilism. *Journal of Philosophy of Education*, 36(2). p. 247-263.

[Stone, Lynda. (2002). Dewey’s contribution to an American hubris: Philosophy of democracy, education, and war. *Philosophy of Education Yearbook v. 2002* (2002) p. 274-81.]

 Subjects and Discourse

April 4 Third essay due

Maria Montessori
<http://www.montessori.edu/>

Sobe, Noah. (2004). Challenging the gaze: The subject of attention and a 1915 Montessori demonstration classroom. *Educational Theory*, 54(3), 281-297.

[Loeffler, Margaret Howard. (2002 Winter). The essence of Montessori. *Montessori Life*, 14(1), p. 34-6.]

April 11 [no class – AERA]

April 18

Jean-Jacques Rousseau
http://dir.yahoo.com/Arts/Humanities/Philosophy/Philosophers/Rousseau__Jean_Jacques__1712_1788_/

Oelkers, Jürgen. (2002 Nov/Dec). Rousseau and the image of 'modern education'. *Journal of Curriculum Studies*, 34(6), p. 679-98.

[Baker, Bernadette. (2001 Winter). (Ap)pointing the canon: Rousseau's *Emile*, visions of the state, and education. *Educational Theory*, 51(1), p. 1-43.]

April 25

Journal Reports.
 Oral presentations/drafts of final papers.

Final papers due: Monday, May 9

Grade Distributions	
93-100..... 4.0	75-80..... 2.5
87-92..... 3.5	69-74..... 2.0
81-86.....3.0	63-68..... 1.5

Essays

Ways to think about composing philosophical essays.

1. Analyze/synthesize/compare/integrate. Work with 1-3 articles. (four possibilities listed)
 - Figure out some underlying assumptions (about reason, people, education, or power).
 - Explain points of coherence and contradiction (within, between, or among articles).
 - Comment on the relationships between evidence and claims within one article.
 - Compare and criticize different commentaries with the same focus. Make explicit what is missing and what is shared.
 2. Historicize
 - Make connections between philosophical ideas and other things going on at the same time (business, law, science, politics, religion).
 - Ground the philosophical ideas in particular circumstances related to their production.
 3. Apply/extrapolate/get perspective
 - Take an idea or line of reasoning and extend it to make sense of some educational phenomenon.
 - Use philosophical insights to make new sense of a personal experience or event.
 4. Meditate
 - Draw poetic and literary figures derived from philosophical writings. This is not the same as free association or stream of consciousness.
 - Weave together and/or tear apart various disparate uses of a word or phrase.
 5. Defend a “should be” claim
 - In debate-like format, anticipate counter arguments (prolepsis) and provide support for a philosophically defensible assertion.
 - Agree with (or oppose) the argument in one particular article. Explain why that argument is (or is not) warranted.
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Evaluation Criteria for Papers

A good paper will:

- **Demonstrate critical thinking and/or analysis.** The paper should make a clear point that is more than description or narration. The critical analysis should be your own original contribution, not simply a summary of other peoples' ideas.
- **Acknowledge multiple viewpoints.** Your paper should give evidence that you understand and appreciate more than one perspective on an issue. This does not mean you should be wishy-washy. Make a clear point by showing that you have considered alternate views.
- **Situate the argument in the field.** Your paper should make it clear to the reader which conversation in the literature you are joining. The paper should draw from current literature, explain how others have addressed your issue, and state explicitly how your piece makes a contribution (e.g., synthesizes, emphasizes someone else's findings, compares viewpoints, changes the question).
- **Draw from course materials.** Your paper should give evidence that you are taking this course. You do not need to agree with any of the readings, presentations, or discussions, but your paper should show you have considered the course materials thoughtfully.
- **Support assertions with evidence.** Assertions or claims in your paper should be supported with appropriate evidence. Evidence can come from the readings, discussions, and your personal experience, as long as the kind of evidence is pertinent to the claim.
- **Recognize complexity.** Education is not simple. Your paper should not propose simple solutions to complex problems (e.g., "more money," "more research," or "everybody should work together"). It should not reduce issues to either/or, black/white, good/bad.
- **Challenge assumptions.** The paper should show that you have learned something by writing this paper. There should be evidence that you have been open to changing your mind.

Journal Reports

This assignment is designed to familiarize you with the production of knowledge in the area of philosophy of education. Your task as a class is to find information about publication conventions in the following journals:

Educational Theory
Curriculum Inquiry
Journal of Curriculum Studies
Journal of the Philosophy of Education
Educational Philosophy and Theory
Studies in Philosophy and Education
Journal of Curriculum Theorizing

Groups of about three people will investigate each journal. In your group you should prepare answers to the following questions. Some of the information will be available on the journal website; for some information you will need to contact an editor or editorial assistant to ask specific questions. The information you find will be posted on the course ANGEL site, and you will be asked to present this information informally in class on April 25.

Journal Report Questions

1. What are the guidelines for submission of manuscripts? For this question, you should provide a copy of the journal's call for manuscripts and/or guidelines for authors.
 2. What are the journal's most relevant topics now? Are there any special issues being planned? What's hot and what's not?
 3. What research methods are preferred by this journal? Does the journal accept quantitative, qualitative, narrative, philosophical, and/or literary studies?
 4. How many manuscript submissions does this journal receive each year? What is the publication frequency (monthly, quarterly)? How many articles are published by this journal in a year? What is the acceptance/rejection rate for this journal?
 5. How many reviewers read each manuscript? How are reviewers chosen (is there an editorial board)?
 6. What is the turn-around time for reviews? What's the average time between submission and publication?
 7. What are the most usual reasons for rejection of a manuscript? What common mistakes do authors make?
 8. How does this journal distinguish itself from other journals in the field (particularly the other journals on this list)?
 9. Describe the contents of the last two most recent issues (numbers) of this journal. Write one paragraph for each of these two issues that describes the focus, interrelations (if any), and range of articles in the issue.
 10. What are the parent/related companies that own/publish this journal?
 11. What does the journal *really* want? This is an interpretive question that requires you to read between the lines across several of these answers.
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Where I'm Coming From

Lynn Fendler

On university educational research and school teaching

I don't believe university research needs to be relevant to teaching in schools.

- Educational research that has no relevance to school teaching may have value on its own terms if it engages in inquiry that allows us to see things in a new light.
- The assumption that university research must apply to school teaching sets up a doubly problematic assumption of authority: 1) university researchers are assumed to have more authority about classrooms than teachers in schools, and 2) university research agendas are assumed to be dictated by the needs of schools. Neither of these positions is respectful.
- University research may be helpful or harmful to school teaching in ways that researchers never intended.
- One possible role for university research is to run interference between teachers and economically driven state mandates.

On theory and practice

I believe there is no theory without practice, and there is no practice without theory.

- Often the term *practical* means *familiar*, and *theoretical* means *new* or *strange*.
- Things we take for granted as practical now (like behaviorism) were once outlandish theories.
- It's useful to analyze the theories that are embedded in practices, and the practices that continually reiterate theories, because then we understand more about the consequences of our actions.

On the politics of clarity

I don't believe that accessible language is necessarily a good thing in academic writing.

- "Accessible language" often refers to familiar terminology, but if ideas are already familiar, then there's little chance to learn anything new.
- Language development is part of the learning process from childhood on. There's no reason to stop learning new vocabulary just because it's grad school.
- Becoming familiar with academic jargon is part of becoming inducted into the "culture of power" of the academy. You may elect not to use it, but it's important to be familiar with it.
- Unfamiliar ideas sometimes require unfamiliar ways of speaking.
- Sometimes fancy language is an unnecessarily complicated way of saying something simple.
- Some writers are intentionally obscure. It might be an attempt to sound profound, or it might be an attempt to create a more intense experience for the reader.

On expository writing

I believe that language and learning are intimately entwined.

- There is no necessary opposition between creative writing and exposition.
- Conventional structural demands of academic writing do not have to be limitations; they can serve to enhance multidimensional understanding.
- Good analysis is a creative process.
- Striving to put complex ideas in understandable written form is the learning/teaching project.
- There is a place for art in the academy; the best expository work has poetic elements.
- Art without exposition might get you an MFA but it won't get you a Ph.D.

On critical reading

I believe that critical reading entails being suspicious about games of truth.

- Critical reading does not mean approving or disapproving; it does not mean agreeing or disagreeing. It means to discern the strategies of argument, to articulate the assumptions of what counts as evidence, and to evaluate the political consequences of taking that stance.
- It's often useful to ask, "Who does this article think I am?"
- Personal experience can be useful evidence in some cases, but personal experience does not necessarily trump other claims.
- *Realistic* is a culturally specific and historically contingent notion, so it's helpful to ask, "What does this argument mean by *realistic*?"
- *Reason* is a culturally specific and historically contingent process, so it's helpful to ask, "What counts as *reason* in this argument?"

On the ethics of research

I don't believe we can ethically separate means from ends.

- Research methods are themselves part of the production of knowledge.
- Everything is political.
- Research methods are pedagogical techniques, whether we intend them to be or not.
- Ethically sound research in education should have pedagogical value. The research should be designed in such a way that everybody involved has a chance to learn something valuable, and nobody has a foreseeable chance of getting hurt.
- Ethical concerns can rarely be resolved according to fixed principles because most life situations are too complex for fixed principles.

On interdisciplinary reading, or "What does this have to do with education?"

I believe all fields of intellectual inquiry have something valuable to offer educational researchers.

- Education is concerned with the production of knowledge, and it is worthwhile to study the production of knowledge in all disciplinary fields.
- Cross-fertilization of ideas from different disciplines is intellectually healthy.
- Educators work in all disciplinary fields, so it is unnecessarily narrow to confine our reading to the field of education.
- Bringing other research traditions into conversation with educational issues can offer fresh perspectives.

On sacred cows

I believe it's worthwhile to problematize concepts we take for granted.

- Sometimes rhetorical forms obscure as much as they clarify.
- *Reflection, community, constructivist teaching, conceptual framework, rubric, critical theory, pedagogical content knowledge, social justice, and teach for understanding* are terms whose meanings are not at all clear or obvious to me.
- I'm not sure what *learning* and *teaching* mean either.