

**EDLF 7603: Philosophy of Education** 3 Credit Hours

Leadership, Foundations and Policy Spring 2015

Registration requirements -- None

February 9 through April 27, 2015 **NOTE: There is no class on March 23 and April 6, 2015**

Mondays, 5:00 PM-9:15 PM

Final Project Deadline: May 1, 2015

**Instructor**

Vincent T. Vaccaro Adjunct Instructor

Office: None Office Hours: Upon Request

Email: [vv4t@virginia.edu](mailto:vv4t@virginia.edu) Phone: None

**Description**

Inquiry into the applicability to present problems of selected philosophical themes and approaches. Issues include conceptions of pupils, theories of learning and teaching, educational equity and justice, indoctrination, and the adequacy of educational research itself.

**Learning Objectives**

* To formulate definitions and arguments for five competing theories of education with special emphasis on identifying basic concepts and their use as well as setting out central arguments upon which the aims and goals of education are established.
* To interpret, evaluate, and discuss five theories of human nature and learning and examine the social, philosophical, historical, cultural, moral and psychological frameworks upon which each rests.
* To discuss how each of the five educational theories can be applied in public and private schools and other educational institutions.
* To answer critics who charge the field of education is devoid of intellectual content and has no body of knowledge of its own.

**Instructional Methods**

As a graduate seminar our approach will be primarily through class discussion of readings and class exercises. There will be several mini-lectures that are designed to provide an historical context to the issues that are being discussed. The readings combine the insights of various fields including philosophy, psychology, history, social science, literature, religion and law. The seminar will allow for discussions of such issues as the relationship between ideas about human nature and the approach to educating children, process versus content in education, learning and teaching and the roles of teacher and students, equality and fairness in education, especially in relation to equality of opportunity versus equality of results, etc. These theoretical issues will be applied specifically to the practical issues and challenges faced by educators in a classroom or other educational settings, e.g., museum exhibitions, text book selection, curriculum design, program development, grant administration and sponsorship for not-for-profit institutions and public advocacy educational endeavors. . The course utilizes a number of the functions available through UVACollab.

The approach that students will be encouraged to follow during the course of this seminar involves the following process.

1. *Begin with an original source*. Select a well‑accepted and well-organized work representing a given school of thought, and work your way slowly through that work. For beginning students, we go even further ‑‑ **restrict your reading to the original source only. Thus the course consists of four books, although single chapters from five additional sources are included.**

2. *Understand what the author is saying*. There is a tremendous difference between what an author is saying and what you think he or she should be saying, especially if the author comes bedecked with labels, such as progressive, Marxist, constructivist, feminist, traditionalist, classicist, etc. Before you can evaluate any set of ideas, you must first understand them.

3. *Analyze fundamental ideas, concepts, and arguments*. From a philosophical or theoretical point of view, not everything in a work in educational theory is worth pondering. Generally, there are only a dozen or so fundamental ideas, concepts, or arguments around which the entire theory is built. These ideas and concepts must be identified, clearly defined, and analyzed. Their roots, possibly in other educational theorists, should be sought out and discussed.

4. *Try to fill in details and correct oversights*. You may expect oversights, errors, inconsistencies, and omissions in any work involving original thought. The temptation is to point out the apparent error and hold the author accountable. In a sense this is fair, but it is not particularly instructive. I suggest that before criticism begins, every effort be made to overcome the shortcomings through patient reading of the text. A good rule to follow: Seek to find what is correct and only then think about what is wrong.

5. *Appreciate what the author has contributed*. This is another way of saying, STOP AND SEE what is worthwhile about what you have read. What do you find acceptable, what matches your experience, what have you learned about human nature, society, culture, and the schools? Only after you have taken time to look over all that the author said are you truly in a position to try to evaluate it.

6. *Delineate weaknesses and problem areas*. Weaknesses and problems should be listed in simple, clear terms. The use of buzzwords for definitions and labels or -isms for understanding of the theories should be avoided. Questions you may have about the work, a particular argument, or line of thought should be put in their final form. The answers to such questions may have to be found in other works by the same author or in other authors. Your questions and concerns ***SHOULD*** be raised in the seminar or on-line discussions. *Some students find it helpful to keep a journal of questions, concerns and reactions.*

*7. Apply the theory*. How would the theory actually work either in a classroom or in the workplace? Your understanding of the theory should allow you to see how curricula or programs of study would be organized, how time would be allotted, what the expectations are for teachers, and how assessment or evaluation would be done. In short, does it work?

*8. Compare and contrast ideas or theories*. Comparison and contrast generally cannot be done on a single work. They follow after someone gains a thorough understanding of several authors or sets of ideas ‑‑ in other words, after one applies steps 1‑7 to several works. To achieve success in comparison and contrast, one must clearly identify fundamental concepts and arguments, carefully define terms, succinctly summarize positions, and systematically explain and demonstrate differences.  **Our seminar sessions will focus on discussions of comparison and contrast**.

To facilitate this approach, instruction will consist of lectures, guided discussion, small group work and written papers through a seminar format. The seminar will meet in **ten four-hour and fifteen-minute** sessions. This approach *may be* supplemented by asynchronous on-line discussion opportunities prior to and following each class session, if seminar participants desire such discussions.

**Course Texts**

*Required*

Bruner, J. S. (1996). *The culture of education*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Dewey, J. (1938). *Experience and education.* New York, NY: Collier Books.

Hirsch, E. D., Jr. (2006). *The knowledge deficit: Closing the shocking education gap for american children*. Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin.

Horton, M and Freire, P. (1990). *We make the road by walking: Conversations on education and social change*. Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press.

Kraybill , D. B., & Bowman, C. F. (2001). Ironies of a postmodern journey. In *On the backroad to Heaven: Old order hutterites, mennonites, amish, and brethern* (pp. 258-280). Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press. **(Available through UVACollab on class web site.)**

Lee, V. E. (1997) Catholic lessons for public schools. In D. Ravitch & J. P. Viteritti (eds.), *New schools for a new century: The redesign of urban education* (pp. 147-163). New Haven, CT: Yale University Press. **(Available through UVACollab on class web site.)**

Mann, H. (1848). Twelfth annual report. In L. A. Cremin. (ed.). *The republic and the school: Horace Mann on the education of free men*. Classics in Education No. 1. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.  **(Available through UVACollab on class web site.)**

Nel Noddings. (1992). Caring. In *The challenge of care in schools: An alternative approach to education* (pp. 15-27). New York, NY: Teachers College Press. **(Available through UVACollab on class web site.)**

Ryan, A. Is higher education a fraud? In l*iberal anxieties and liberal education* (pp. 143-184). New York, NY: Wang and Hill. **(Available through UVACollab on class web site.)**

*Supplemental Material [Instructor Provided]* **. (Available through UVACollab on class web site.)**

Great Thinkers: Various Topics. Unpublished**.**

Philosopher Summaries: Various Topics. Unpublished

**Course Outline**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| [Date(s)] | Class Session Topics | Assessment/Methods  (NOTE: As a graduate seminar all class sessions are guided full group discussions with some small group work) | Student work outside of class. |
| February 9 | Getting Started: Horace Mann and his Vision of the Common School | See Participation and Attendance Rubric attached in Recommended Grading Criteria for Social Foundations Master’s Program at the Northern Virginia Center |  |
| February 16 | Continue Discussion of Horace Mann and Dewey: Building a Theory | See Participation and Attendance Rubric attached in Recommended Grading Criteria for Social Foundations Master’s Program at the Northern Virginia Center | **Required Reading**: Mann’s *Twelfth Annual Report* and Dewey’s *Experience and Education* – Chapters 1-3 |
| February 23 | Dewey: Applying a Theory | Same as above | **Required** **Reading**: Dewey’s *Experience and Education* **--** Chapters 4-8 |
| March 2 | Freire and Horton: The Theory | See Participation and Attendance Rubric attached in Recommended Grading Criteria for Social Foundations Master’s Program at the Northern Virginia Center  For Assignment A -- See Quality of Assignments, Completion of Assignments and Timeliness of Assignments Rubric attached in Recommended Grading Criteria for Social Foundations Master’s Program at the Northern Virginia Center  Paper addresses questions and is organized to flow as a single paper. Arguments are supported and logically coherent. | **Assignment A due. Required Reading:** Horton and Freire’s *We Make the Road by Walking* –- Chapters 1– 3 |
| March 9 | Freire and Horton: Applications and Begin Discussion of Noddings | Same as above | **Required Reading:** Horton and Freire’s *We Make the Road by Walking* –- Chapters 4-6 |
| March 16 | Noddings and Schools That Care – Nussbaum on Liberal Education | See Participation and Attendance Rubric attached in Recommended Grading Criteria for Social Foundations Master’s Program at the Northern Virginia Center  For Assignment B -- See Quality of Assignments, Completion of Assignments and Timeliness of Assignments Rubric attached in Recommended Grading Criteria for Social Foundations Master’s Program at the Northern Virginia Center  Paper addresses questions and is organized to flow as a single paper. Arguments are supported and logically coherent. | **Assignment B due**. **Required** **Reading**: "Caring" from Noddings’ *The Challenge to Care in Schools* |
| March 23 | **No Class** |  |  |
| March 30 | Bruner: Knowing, Thinking and Learning | See Participation and Attendance Rubric attached in Recommended Grading Criteria for Social Foundations Master’s Program at the Northern Virginia Center | **Required Reading:** Bruner’s *The Culture of Education)* – Essays 6 and 7 and “Ironies of a postmodern journey” in Kraybill and Bowman’s *On the backroad to heaven* |
| April 6 | **No Class** |  |  |
| April 13 | Hirsch: Content over Process – Willingham on Learning | See Participation and Attendance Rubric attached in Recommended Grading Criteria for Social Foundations Master’s Program at the Northern Virginia Center  For Assignment C -- See Quality of Assignments, Completion of Assignments and Timeliness of Assignments Rubric attached in Recommended Grading Criteria for Social Foundations Master’s Program at the Northern Virginia Center  Paper addresses questions and is organized to flow as a single paper. Arguments are supported and logically coherent. | **Assignment C due**. **Required Reading**: Hirsch’s *The Knowledge Deficit* – Chapters 1, 4, 5 and 7 |
| April 20 | The Silent Conversation -- What is no longer said in education |  | **Required Reading:** Great Thinkers: “The Silent Conversation, Ryan’s “ Is higher education a fraud?” In *Liberal anxieties and liberal education* and Lee’s “Catholic lessons for public schools” in D. Ravitch & J. P. Viteritti’s *New schools for a new century: The redesign of urban education*. |
| April 27 | Medieval Education or John Henry Newman's ideas regarding what a university should be | See Participation and Attendance Rubric attached in Recommended Grading Criteria for Social Foundations Master’s Program at the Northern Virginia Center  For Assignment D -- See Quality of Assignments, Completion of Assignments and Timeliness of Assignments Rubric attached in Recommended Grading Criteria for Social Foundations Master’s Program at the Northern Virginia Center  Paper addresses questions and is organized to flow as a single paper. Arguments are supported and logically coherent. | **Assignment D due Required Readings: Not Yet Decided** |

**Grading**

A 96%

A- 92%

B+ 88%

B 84%

B- 80%

C Below 80%

**Weighting Scale:**

Participation in class discussions 10%

Assignments A and B 40% (20% each)\*

Assignments C and D 50% (25% each)\*

Total 100%

\*Point difference between assignments A and B and C and D is because students have more resources to draw from thus the quality of the assignment is expected to improve.

See attached Recommended Grading Criteria for Social Foundations Master’s Program at Northern Virginia Center

**Due Dates:**

Assignment A March 2, 2015

Assignment B March 16, 2015

Assignment C April 13, 2015

Assignment D April 27, 2015

**Assessments**

**Assignments A through D are required of all students**. The assignments are as follows:

Assignment A: In the mid-1930s John Dewey, the unquestioned leader of the Progressive movement in education, was asked to give a series of lectures sponsored by Kappa Delta Pi. In those lectures, entitled *Experience and Education*, he attempts to set the record straight and address a number of problems that he saw were undermining his basic beliefs.

One of the criticisms lodged against Dewey was an apparent lack of discipline or control. Students were often thought to be free to engage in any activity and it was still considered to be “education” or “learning.” In chapter 4 Dewey discusses Social Control.

If we took instances of co-operative activities in which all members of a group take part, as for example in well-ordered family life in which there is mutual confidence, the point would be clearer. In all such cases it is not the will or desire of any one person which establishes order but the moving spirit of the whole group. The control is social, but individuals are part of a community, not outside it (54).

In discussing authority or direct control, Dewey makes additional points. Control generally is exercised by situations in which people are taking part. The teacher acts with authority, but not as an authoritarian. Dewey writes:

The teacher reduces to a minimum the occasions in which he or she has to exercise authority in a personal way. When it is necessary,…, to speak or act firmly, it is done in behalf of the group, not as an exhibition of personal power. This makes the difference between action which is arbitrary and that which is just and fair (54-55).

In a 750-1000 word paper discuss the relationship between the learning community, the educational situation and school or workplace discipline. Are Dewey’s ideas of “social control” and “community” realistic in a society that emphasizes freedom, diversity and privacy as core values? Give an example of where Dewey’s ideas of social control can be applied in a learning situation. **Due March 2, 2015**

Assignment B: In *We Make the Road by Walking* Myles Horton says the following about teachers:

You don’t need to know the answer. You can help people get the answers. You have to know something; they know something. You have to respect their knowledge, which they don’t respect, and help them respect their knowledge (55).

Much later in the conversations Horton remarks, speaking about the Highlander School:

The way people lived was more important than any class or any subject that we were dealing with. That’s an extremely important experience. They had that learning experience, making decisions, living in an unsegregated fashion, enjoying their senses other than their minds. It was that experience that was probably worth more than any *factual* thing that they learned, although you know that there were some factual things that they learned (169).

In a 750-1000 word paper discuss the informal component of education. What role do you believe the educational community plays in making use of the knowledge and experiences already possessed by students and their families? How important is student choice and voice within the educational community? What role should electives play in the formal curriculum? **Due March 16, 2015**

Assignment C: In his discussion of “Narratives of Science” in *The Culture of Education,* Jerome S. Bruner writes: “…thinking comes very close to being an internal conversation, and conversations can’t be much good unless in some degree you are thinking aloud in the midst of it” (116).

But the nature of that conversation has changed. Bruner captures that change in the following remark:

It has been a curious habit of Western thought since the Greeks to assume that the world is rational and that true knowledge about that world will always take the form of logical or scientific propositions that will be amenable to explanation. It was thought until quite recently that theories, made up of such propositions, would be found to be true or false by virtue of whether they corresponded to that world. Nowadays we quite properly ask how it is that we can ever know what *the* world is actually like, save by the odd process of constructing theories and making observations once in a while to check how our theories are hanging together – not how the world is hanging together, but our theories (123).

For Bruner narrative and teaching by narrative are critical parts of constructing knowledge. Narrative is an integral combination of conversation with the narrator (past and present) and the student. Equally important is the conversation that the student has with himself or herself. The narrative as conversation is not about discovering something about *the* world, but about constructing something about *our* world.

In a 750-1000 word paper discuss the notions of “discovering” and “constructing” in education today. What is the role of the educational community? The teacher? Provide two examples of the use of narrative in education. **Due April 13, 2015**

Assignment D: In his chapter on “Achieving Commonality and Fairness” in *The Knowledge Deficit*, E. D. Hirsch, Jr., discusses the lofty goal of fulfilling our nation’s highest ideals. His basic stance is that “in a democracy, we can’t predict who will end up as a pauper and who as a president” (108).

He returns to the ideas of Horace Mann, the educational thinker that we discussed at the very beginning of this seminar. Hirsch writes:

Mann understood that fairness and social solidarity alike are linked to the common school. The two aims go together. You cannot have a good early education that is fair to all without a common body of content, and without a common body of content, you cannot have national solidarity. Yet common content is the one thing that is made impossible by the reigning ideas and practices of our school. It is no wonder that we are failing both in education and in solidarity (109).

In a 750-1000 word paper discuss whether the assumptions that Hirsch makes are correct, namely, in our democracy you can’t predict who will end up where and that common knowledge alone is a major component of fairness and solidarity. Consider whether this is possible in a diverse America where public education must make room for those with unique learning gifts and talents as well as those who are members of outlying subgroups such as those discussed in the Kraybill and Bowman chapter. **Due April 27, 2015**

**Evaluation Standards:**

See attached Recommended Grading Criteria for Social Foundations Master’s Program at the Northern Virginia Center.

**Resources**

For each class session discussion topics are prepared and posted on the UVACollab web site. In addition, for many of the primary philosophers of education discussed in this course “Great Thinkers” papers and summaries are also provided on the UVACollab web site for ease of reference. Finally, as information becomes available throughout the course of the seminar, it is posted on the UVACollab web site.

**University Email Policy**

Students are expected to activate and then check their official U.Va. email addresses on a frequent and consistent basis to remain informed of University communications, as certain communications may be time sensitive. Students who fail to check their email on a regular basis are responsible for any resulting consequences.

**University of Virginia Honor System**

All work should be pledged in the spirit of the Honor System of the University of Virginia.The instructor will indicate which assignments and activities are to be done individually and which permit collaboration. The following pledge should be written out at the end of all quizzes, examinations, individual assignments and papers: “I pledge that I have neither given nor received help on this examination (quiz, assignment, etc.)”. The pledge must be signed by the student. For more information please visit <http://www.virginia.edu/honor/>.

**Special Needs**

It is the policy of the University of Virginia to accommodate students with disabilities in accordance with federal and state laws. Any student with a disability who needs accommodation (e.g., in arrangements for seating, extended time for examinations, or note-taking, etc.),should contact the Learning Needs and Evaluation Center (LNEC) and provide them with appropriate medical or psychological documentation of his/her condition. Once accommodations are approved, it is the student’s responsibility to follow up with the instructor about logistics and implementation of accommodations.

If students have difficulty accessing any part of the course materials or activities for this class, they should contact the instructor immediately. Accommodations for test taking should be arranged at least 14 business days in advance of the date of the test(s). Students with disabilities are encouraged to contact the LNEC*:* 434-243-5180/Voice, 434-465-6579/Video Phone, 434-243-5188/Fax. For more information, visit the U.Va. Special Needs website at <http://www.virginia.edu/studenthealth/lnec.html>.

Another helpful site to keep as a reference is <https://collab.itc.virginia.edu/portal/site/e288fd3c-05d5-4c27-9297-a1d6aaa7501b>.

**Recommended Grading Criteria for Social Foundations Master’s Program at Northern Virginia Center**

(the grading process remains within the purview of the instructor)

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Grade** | **Quality of Assignments** | **Completeness of Assignments** | **Timeliness of Assignments** | **Attendance** | **Participation** |
| **A+/A (96 – 100)** | Exceptional insight valuable contribution/goes beyond assignment | 100% complete | 100% on time | 100% or excused in  advance by the instructor | Outstanding/  facilitates and promotes conversation |
| **A- (92 – 95)** | On target/logical with evidence, application, & understanding | Accurate, clear and concise /no grammar/spelling errors | Almost always on time; rare but forgivable tardiness | Absent one time | Above average; active; moves discussion toward goal; insightful questions |
| **B+ (88 – 91)**  **B (84 – 87)**  **B- (80 – 83)** | Competent, credible evidence; some lapses in organization and clarity in writing  Competent in basic material; shows some evidence how to apply basic material; clarity of writing is adequate  Competent in basic material; Just passing for graduate credit; enough to get by | Moderate shortcomings; minor elements missing; but generally on target  Covers basic material fails to convey depth of understanding or application  Barely sufficient; little evidence of revision or proofreading; lacks clarity or precision | Late enough or often enough to attract notice  Lateness detracts from quality of work or give advantage over other students  Lateness is problematic | Absent one time but lateness attracts notice  Absent 2 times  Absent 2 times with some lateness | Reliable steady worker questions/comments reveal thought/reflection/understanding of the material covered  Quiet but alert/makes few comments but those are on target and thoughtful  Few meaningful contributions to class or group |
| **C (79 and below)** | Quality of work not graduate level; writing and grammar of poor quality; lack of clarity in writing and understanding | Important elements missing or not explained well; evidence of understanding weak | Excessive and repeated lateness and unexplained absences | Absent 3 times | Passive; sidetracks group with inappropriate/off- target comments  Does not share responsibilities in the group |