
BEF 510

Social and Philosophical Foundations of Education

Fall 2017

Course Time: Tuesday, 5-7:50
Instructor: Dr. John Petrovic
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I. Course Catalog Description

Education is necessarily concerned with issues of value, knowledge, and reality - philosophy. Yet these concerns are always understood from the vantage point of cultures in transition within the framework of a social tradition - sociology and history. This course examines the development of the public school in relation to the social, cultural, and intellectual makeup of the nation as a whole.

II. Conceptual Framework

The College of Education prepares practitioners who understand the purposes of education and have the ability to engage in the ongoing processes of reflection and dialogue that lie at the heart of socially-responsible, theoretically-informed, and research-based effective practice.

Please take time to read the complete [conceptual framework for the College of Education](#).

III. Course Overview/Rationale for the Course

Schools are social institutions that have been created in certain ways, not always because people actually intended them to be that way but because certain choices were made about money, organization, and control which then resulted in the schools we have today. Schools reflect the society in which they exist, and it is important for you to understand that relationship and how it came about so that you can begin to think about how you might work for change when you are one of the actors within a school setting. Thus, in this course we will examine the role that philosophical, historical, and sociological inquiries play in educational theory and, subsequently, our beliefs about the purposes of schooling and our approaches to achieving those ends. We will also begin to imagine ways in which schools can be transformed to meet the changing social, political, and cultural context of the 21st century.

To accomplish such change, teachers need to be able to evaluate critically the multitude of suggestions for how schools should be run, reformed, and restructured. To do this, you need to be clear about your own philosophies of teaching and learning and your own beliefs about how race, class, gender and sexual orientation, among other characteristics, impact the ways students

experience schooling in today's society. It has been argued that schooling plays an important role in teaching and legitimating the dominant ideologies of any society. In this course we will examine this claim, particularly the ideological contestations over what constitutes schooling within the historical, philosophical, and social realms. For example, if the principle goal of education is to socialize students into the "American" way of life, then whose ideologies do we impart to our students? What is the political process by which certain ideologies are upheld and others are dismissed or rendered invisible? What responsibility do teachers have to reinforce or challenge specific ideologies to their students? Whose voices are heard? Whose voices have historically been kept silent? What are the effects of these silences? These are some the central questions that this course will address.

Finally, you should be aware that this is not a "methods" course. It is not designed to prepare you to teach in the direct ways that other courses in your preparation will. While we will often discuss pedagogy, this course is designed to introduce you to your chosen profession more broadly. As a teacher, you will need to have certain skills, attitudes, and dispositions to be successful. You will need to have a sense of the great responsibility a teacher takes on, concern with the quality of your work and a habit of reflecting on it, a desire to learn and improve yourself, curiosity about new ideas, and gaining a sense of criticality. You will need to be philosophically and politically informed to be a leader for progressive educational reform in a diverse society.

IV. Course Text and Readings

Required text: Anyon, J. (2011). *Marx and education*. New York: Routledge.

Required articles: Readings to be downloaded are available through the links provided in section VII below. (Click on the author's last name.)

V. Assignments and Grading

Attendance & Participation	20 points
Essay Quizzes (2-3)	30 points
Reading Response 1	20 points
Reading Response 2	30 points

Attendance and Participation. Critical discussion is at the heart of this course. Your participation grade will be determined on how well you have understood and wrestled with the key concepts and ideas presented in the readings and apply them in discussion. You can't participate if you don't come. Any absence beyond three hours will result in 2 points being deducted from your grade. Doctor's excuses or family emergencies will be taken into consideration. Regardless of reason, a written response to the reading questions for the hours missed is required.

Essay Quizzes. There will be 2 or 3 pop quizzes throughout the semester. These will be based on the readings for the class session in which the quiz is "popped." Quizzes will consist of short essay questions and are likely (hint) to be based on the discussion questions provided in the schedule below.

Reading Responses. You are expected to submit written responses to TWO of the prompts below that demonstrate engagement with and mastery of the material. Everyone will write a response to prompt #3. You may choose between #1 and #2. Or, you may work with me to develop your own prompt. No outside reading is required to complete these assignments. Your first paper (responding to prompt #1, #2, or your own) is **due** Tuesday, October 17 by 8:00 pm.

The second paper (responding to prompt #3) is **due** Monday, December 11 by midnight. Your responses should not exceed 12, double-spaced pages.

Reading response prompt #1: *Define ideology and discuss how it functions. Discuss how it might be related to epistemology and notions of “truth.” Then consider why both ideology and epistemology are relevant to questions of education, especially as regards how they might inform our understanding(s) of the purposes of education, how the purposes are differentially emphasized, and how different emphases and conceptions of one set of purposes might impact another.*

Reading response prompt #2: *Explain the development of capitalist ideology and the different foci of those who support it. How do capitalist ideology and the conservative restoration more generally direct the purpose(s), policies, and practices of schooling, thereby reproducing itself (e.g., through legitimation)?*

Reading response prompt #3: *(Re)Read the final chapter of Anyon. Discuss how she updates Marx and what both the social and educational implications are as read through this updating. One of the educational implications is the need to employ “critical pedagogy.” Drawing on our discussion of key concepts, such as ideology, hegemony (cultural and economic), and privilege, discuss what you think critical pedagogy is. Finally, it is clear how “critical pedagogy,” given its Marxist foundation speaks to the issue of class and classism. Discuss how you think it might speak to one or more of the other –isms we have discussed in this unit.*

Final Grading. 100-90, A; 89-80, B; and so on – strictly followed; an 89.9 is NOT a 90.

VI. Policies

Statement of Equal Treatment and Disabilities. The instructor and students in this course will act with integrity and strive to engage in equitable verbal and non-verbal behavior with respect to differences arising from age, gender, race, physical ability, religious preferences, sexual orientation, and national origin. If you are registered with the Office of Disability Services, make an appointment with the instructor to discuss course accommodations that may be necessary. If you have a disability but have not contacted the Office of Disability Services, please call 354-5175.

Academic honesty: You will be in violation of The University of Alabama policies if you fail to follow standard referencing rules. Submitting work done for another class, submitting someone else’s work as your own, copying and pasting from the internet, are all violations. (Internet sources may be used, but you must follow standard referencing rules.) Quotation marks should be used if material is copied directly from the readings and text citations should be used. Quotations are followed by the author, year, and page number in parenthesis of the source of the quote (Petrovic, 1998, p. 15). If you paraphrase something, put the author and year after the paraphrased material (Petrovic, 1998). Anyone suspected of plagiarism or other academic misconduct will be referred to the Assistant Dean. Please see the College of Education statement on [plagiarism](#) for more information.

VII. Schedule of Topics and Readings

Date	Reading/Discussion Questions	Reading
<i>Unit 1: The Purposes of Education in a Democratic Society: Political versus Intellectual (or the limits of patriotism)</i>		
Aug 29	Course overview and introductions: What is democracy? What have been the purposes of schooling historically? What are they contemporarily? What should they be?	
Sept 5	What is justice? What were Plato's views on democracy? What were the purposes of education for Plato? To what extent do these same goals and views drive education today?	Plato Plato Spring, pp. 3-27
Sept 12	What is the social contract? What makes it democratic (or not)? How does education mediate this relationship?	Rousseau Locke
Sept 19	What is ideology? What is the impact of ideology on education? What is interpellation and how is it a function of ideology? How do the political purposes of education [really or potentially] impact the intellectual purposes? <i>Video: Glee</i>	Kavanagh Althusser Chomsky
Sept 26	What is enlightenment? What is truth? Is it important? How does Martin's epistemology differ from Plato's? What are the implications for educational policy and practice and the general purposes of schooling?	Plato Martin Kant
<i>Unit 2: The Purposes of Education in a Democratic Society: Economic (or education for a proletariat)</i>		
Oct 3	What are the economic purposes of schooling? What are the purposes of schooling in a capitalist society? How do ideological positions engage epistemological questions?	Anyon, 1-18 Hewitt Apple, ch. 2
Oct 10	What is classism? What is equal educational opportunity? What have been the effects of class on equal educational opportunity? <i>Video: Requiem for the American Dream</i>	Anyon, pp. 19-37 Kozol
Oct 17	<i>No class meeting. Please use this time to put the finishing touches on your Paper #1 which is due at 8:00. I encourage you to make an appointment with me to discuss any questions or doubts you may have about your content. I will be available for appointments all day, until 7:00 pm.</i>	

Oct 24 What does conservative modernization look like in terms of the distribution of wealth and [educational opportunity] and in terms of educational policy broadly speaking? [Apple](#), ch. 3
Anyon, 39-64
Duncan & Murnane

Video: *Captive Audience*

“The class which has the means of material production at its disposal, has control at the same time over the means of mental production” (Marx, 1845).

Oct 31 How/why does education policy substitute for economic reform? Can capitalist schooling or schooling for consumption be democratic? Anyon, pp. 65-80
Sandlin, et al

Unit 3: The Purposes of Education in a Democratic Society: Social (or educating for cultural hegemony)

Nov 7 What is racism? What is the relationship between class and race? What does it mean to be “color blind?” Is color blindness a “privilege?” What are the effects of racism on equal educational opportunity? [Harris](#)
[Whiby](#)
[Schofield](#)

Video: *Ethnic Notions*

Nov 14 How does the history of American race relations support/negate the social and racial contracts? To what extent and in what ways is this question still relevant? What’s the difference between anti-racist education and multicultural education? [DuBois](#)
[Wilson](#)
[Blum](#)

Video: *The Color of Fear*

Nov 21 What is sexism? How does it affect opportunities for women/girls? How does it affect the educational experience of men/boys? [Martino](#)
[Davis](#)

Video: *The Mask You Live in*

Nov 28 What is heterosexism? How is it related to sexism? How does it affect everyone’s educational experience? [Elze](#)
[Murray](#)

Video: *Bullied*

Dec 5 Why/how is Marxism still relevant? Anyon, pp. 81-106