Psych 3410: Educational Psychology Syllabus

Winter 2012
Tuesdays, 8:30-11:30
Curtis Lecture Hall A

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Love childhood, indulge its games, its pleasures, its delightful instincts... May I venture at this point to state the greatest, the most useful rule of education? It is: do not save time, but lose it.

– Rousseau in Émile

Now, what I want is, Facts. Teach these boys and girls nothing but Facts. Facts alone are wanted in life. Plant nothing else, and root out everything else. You can only form the minds of reasoning animals upon Facts: nothing else will ever be of any service to them.

–Professor Thomas Gradgrind in Dickens' Hard Times.

Course Description
The purpose of the course is to develop an understanding of psychological ideas and research relevant to education and to conceptualize their application to educational practice. Psychological constructs such as learning, motivation, cognitive processes and social construction serve as the basis for examining contemporary educational practice. The progressivist theories of John Dewey and current constructivist approaches to education provide the starting point for our course, as we inquire into the nature and purpose of education, and what psychological processes it involves. The progressivist /constructivist approach will then be contrasted with competing approaches, notably classical education, and considered in light of various modern problems and controversies, such as the emphasis on testing or school choice. By the end of the course it is expected that students will be able to identify the theoretical origins of any given educational method, to think critically about the pros and cons of a given educational approach, and to explain the relevance of psychological research findings for educational methods.

Required Texts


All other course readings will be provided on the class page on Moodle.
Course Outline and Associated Readings

January 3

Historical Views of the Child and Education
(The child and education as recent psychological concepts)

Readings:
   Chapter 1: Education as a Necessity of Life
   Available Online:
   http://www.ilt.columbia.edu/publications/Projects/digitexts/dewey/d_e/chapter01.html

   Available Online:
   http://psychclassics.yorku.ca/Thorndike/education.htm

January 10

Dewey and the Progressive Revolution in Education
(How education changed in the last century and why)

Readings:
   Chapter 2: Education as a Social Function
   Available Online:
   http://www.ilt.columbia.edu/publications/Projects/digitexts/dewey/d_e/chapter02.html

   Chapter 1: Why go to School?

January 17

Dewey’s Great Ideas: Democracy and Participation
(What “progressive” means)

Readings:
   Preface, Editorial Foreword, Chapter 1: Traditional vs. Progressive Education
   and Chapter 2: The Need for a Theory of Experience

   Chapter 2: What are we Doing Here?
January 24

Education as the Result of Experience
(What kind of environment is ideal for learning?)

Readings:
Chapter 3: Criteria of Experience and Chapter 4: Social Control

Chapter 2: The School and the Life of the Child

Available Online:
http://www.wesjones.com/gatto1.htm

January 31

Classical Education Critiques Dewey
(What about Latin, the classics, shared culture, and memorization?)

Readings:
Chapter 5: The Nature of Freedom, Chapter 6: The Meaning of Purpose and
Chapter 8: Experience—The Means and Goals of Education

Available Online:
http://www.gutenberg.ca/ebooks/sayers-lost/sayers-lost-00-h.html

February 7

Modern Psychology Critiques Dewey
(Do constructivist theories ignore the realities of ‘cognitive architecture’?)

Reflection Paper Due (15%)

Readings:
Available Online:

February 14

Education for Autonomy: A Piagetian Approach
(Where does development belong in education?)

Midterm Exam (25%)

Readings: *


**Chapter 3**: Learning to Learn


* (February 14 readings will not appear on the midterm exam but will be relevant for the lecture which will occur in the second half of the course period, and will be tested on February 31’s quiz).

February 21: READING WEEK! (No class—Go rest and play!)

February 31

Introduction to Inquiry
(How can Dewey’s theories be implemented in a traditional classroom?)

Readings:


**Chapter 4**: The Skills of Inquiry and **Chapter 5**: Developing Inquiry


March 6

Alternative Education: Homeschooling, Religious Schooling, Charter Schools
(The role of citizenship, moral development, and parental freedom)

Readings:


March 13

Modern Issues I: Culture, Diversity, Disability
(The challenges of learning communities)

Readings:

Chapter 6: Why argue?


March 20

Introduction to Argument
(The new rhetoric or an extension of Dewey?)

Readings:

Chapter 7: The Skills of Argument and Chapter 8: Developing Argument


March 27

Modern Issues II: Testing, Outcome Based Learning and Practicality
(Whatever happened to music and art classes?)

Readings:

Chapter 9: Becoming Educated

Available online: http://www.yorku.ca/rsheese2/3410/testing.pdf

Available online: http://www.harpers.org/archive/2009/09/0082640


**Movie Analysis Paper Due (20%)** April 2 at midnight via Turnitin link on Moodle
Course Activities

Weekly Quizzes. Students are expected to study the assigned chapters/articles before the relevant class meeting. Documentation that one is prepared will take place by means of a brief quiz held during class. The purpose of the weekly quizzes is to motivate students to stay on schedule with the readings and to prepare them for examinations.

Reflection Paper. About a month into the class a short (2-4 pages) reflection paper on the course material taught so far will be due. The student will be asked to address the education theories of Dewey and its criticisms. Specifically the student will be asked to reflect on his or her current thinking or opinion of these theories and how their thinking of on the subject has changed over the course. The purpose of this paper is to prompt students to be reflective of their own learning process and to improve their grasp of the core concepts in the course prior to the midterm.

Movie Analysis Paper. Students will be asked watch one of the movies about education (Dead Poets Society, Finding Forester, etc.) from the list of 12 movies available on the Moodle site. The final paper in the course will be an analysis of the educational philosophy or philosophies evident in this movie. The student will be expected to draw on the various theories discussed in the course both to identify the dominant educational philosophy at work in the movie and to assess its application and effectiveness. More information about this assignment will be available later in the course. The purpose of the paper is to prompt students to critically apply the course concepts using a specific example of education.

Examinations. A midterm examination will be held in February, and a comprehensive, three-hour final examination will be held during the December examination period. The purpose of the examinations is to allow students to demonstrate their knowledge of the course materials. The examinations will be composed primarily of multiple choice questions.

Evaluation
The course is designed to facilitate basic comprehension of the readings and to encourage elaboration and integration of the concepts in those readings. This will be evaluated by means of the course activities described above. These activities are weighted as follows in calculating a final grade:

15% Quizzes
15% Reflection Paper
25% Midterm Exam
20% Movie Analysis Paper
25% Final Exam

Deadlines
Reflection Paper, February 7, at the beginning of class
Midterm Exam, February 14
Movie Analysis Paper, April 2, midnight
Final Exam, TBA (sometime during the exam period)
Course Policies

*Lecture Notes.* Plan to attend all class meetings, since substantive material will be covered in lecture that is not in your readings. Please note that the professor will not lend out or post lecture notes; it is your responsibility to borrow a classmate's notes or have someone audiotape the lecture if you must miss a class.

*Technology.* Students are asked to refrain from texting or otherwise using cell phones during class. Those observed doing so will be publicly asked to leave the classroom. If you have an urgent need to check messages or text, please feel free to leave the classroom to do so and return when you are finished. Recreational (nonclass-related) use of laptops or readers in class is also discouraged. Please do everything you can to contribute to learning environment that is respectful of your fellow students.

*Writing Assignments.* The course papers are expected to be written using correct English and to cite sources using APA style. Students are encouraged to get someone to proofread their papers, such as another student in the class. Students are also encouraged to visit the Writing Centre with a draft of their course papers: www.yorku.ca/laps/writ/writing_centre.html for help from their excellent tutors. The penalty for late papers will be a letter grade per day late, so it is recommended that students begin writing their papers early.

*Academic Honesty.* Students are expected to demonstrate academic integrity by not cheating or plagiarizing. If you have questions about what constitutes plagiarism in written work, feel free to ask the professor or TA. For more details about academic honesty, please see the York University Senate Policy on the subject: http://www.yorku.ca/secretariat/policies/document.php?document=69#_Toc89156096

*Accommodations.* If a student has a documented disability that requires accommodation involving notetaking, please contact the professor immediately to arrange accommodation. Other accommodations such as alternate exams and extended deadlines for those with disabilities will of course be accepted, provided the student has documentation accepted by York Disabilities Services.

*Make up Exam.* Only documented illnesses or emergencies are considered appropriate excuses for missing an exam. Notification concerning an absence must be received within 48 hours of the missed exam (by email to the professor and TA), and appropriate documentation in the form of a note from your physician or campus health must be provided to justify your absence. The doctor’s note must be dated within 2 days of the missed exam. A note dated a week later stating you were sick on the day of the exam will not suffice.

If a student must miss a test because of illness, he or she will be required to write a makeup exam that may differ in format and content from the original exam, at a time and date to be determined near the end of term. If the student misses the makeup, he/she will receive a grade of 0 on that exam. If a student misses more than one regularly scheduled test, he/she will be required to write all of the missed tests on the makeup date at the end of the term.