

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

Faculty of Education Department of Educational Studies



EDST 595(081) CONCEPTUAL INQUIRY IN EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH cross-listed with CCFI 501A(051)

Term 1, September 8 – December 1, 2010
Wednesdays 4:30-7:30pm
Location: Ponderosa H115

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course takes as its point of departure the assumption that education is not a social science, but rather a field of theories, policies and practices that can be approached in a variety of ways, with perspectives from the natural and social sciences as well as the humanities. In this course we will draw on the humanities and, in particular, philosophy to gain insight into conceptual methods of inquiry and what they have to offer educational researchers.


We will study philosophical research into educational questions and phenomena as it has been conducted by others, and will attempt to articulate our own conceptual inquiries. The focus will be on the actual types of thinking and writing, of analysis, questioning, critique, interpretation, and so on, that philosophers of education engage in. What are their modes of thought and discursive operations? We will study and practice philosophical research in education from a range of traditions including conceptual analysis, phenomenology, hermeneutics, genealogy, and deconstruction. We will also pay attention to the way in which writing, in philosophy, is not the representation of research, but part of the research process itself. We will, therefore, also examine questions of metaphor, translation, and performativity in conceptual inquiry.


GUIDELINE FOR PARTICIPATION

Since this is a graduate seminar, I expect all to participate, with the understanding that people participate in different ways. Participation is not graded. Inspired by the views of scholars such as Jacques Derrida and John Caputo, I place great value on the university as a space for unconditional questioning. To this end, I use the guideline that you can say and ask anything in class, but that you cannot declare what you (or others) have said or asked off-limits for questioning.

COURSE READINGS

Required text: EDST 595 Course Readings Package, available in the UBC bookstore

 indicates a reading from the course readings package

 indicates a reading that is available on-line (through the UBC library subscription to electronic journals, unless URL provided)

NB: Several of the online articles have also been reprinted in a book:

Ruitenberg, C. (Ed.) (2010). *What do philosophers of education do? (And how do they do it?)*. Oxford, UK: Wiley-Blackwell.

This concerns the supplementary readings by Vokey (wk 2), Bonnett (wk 5) and Bingham (wk 9), and the required readings by Ruitenberg (wk 7) and Biesta (wk 10). If you prefer to have these (and a few other) essays together in one print edition, you can order the book from Wiley Canada (<http://ca.wiley.com/WileyCDA/WileyTitle/productCd-144433297X.html>) or Amazon.ca.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND EVALUATION

Methodological commentary (20%)

In this short paper (no more than five pages, excluding references) you should comment on one of the philosophical methods studied in the course. What, do you think, are the benefits and drawbacks of this method, and why? Can you imagine using this method and, if so, for what kinds of concepts or questions? If not, why not? What further questions do you have about this method?

Your methodological commentary will be evaluated according to the following criteria:

- accuracy of description of the method under consideration;
- quality of your discussion (i.e., do you raise insightful, critical and relevant questions?);
- quality of the writing (i.e., is your writing clear, and free from spelling and grammatical errors?).

Due date: October 6

Methodological experiment (30%)

In this short paper (no more than five pages, excluding references) you should take one concept that is central to your own research and inquire into it using one of the philosophical methods discussed in the course. This paper is intended for you to try out a method that you are unfamiliar with. To give a few examples: the concept of risk could play a central role in your research on “at-risk youth”, and you could *critique* this concept and its use; the concept of the public could play a central role in your research on “the changing nature of research publics” and you could *analyze* this concept; the concept of care could play a central role in your research on “the ethic of care in pre-school settings” and you could conduct a brief *phenomenological inquiry* into care. The method you use for this experiment should be different from the method(s) that feature(s) centrally in your final paper.

Your methodological experiment will be evaluated according to the following criteria:

- appropriateness of the selected method for the concept;
- focus and consistency in use of the method;
- quality of the writing (i.e., is your writing clear, and free from spelling and grammatical errors?).

Due date: November 3.

Final paper (50%)

In the final paper (max. 15 pages) you can either conduct a more substantial conceptual inquiry into a topic relevant to your thesis or dissertation, using a method or methods of your choice, or you can conduct more in-depth research into the philosophical method(s) used by a philosopher of education, by studying several of her or his texts. You should get your proposal for the final paper approved by me.

Your final paper will be evaluated according to criteria specific to the type of paper you choose to write, as well as the following general criteria:

- accuracy in referring to other people's ideas
- quality of the writing (i.e., is your writing well organized, clear, and free from spelling and grammatical errors?)
- proper use of sources (i.e., do you use references to support or illustrate rather than make your points, and do you cite properly and consistently?)

Due date: December 1.

WRITING AND REFERENCING

For ease of reading and evaluating, please make all your assignments double spaced, left justified, in a reasonable font size (Times 12 is a good indicator, but you may wish to use other fonts for aesthetic reasons), with 1" margins. I do not accept handwritten work. We will discuss expectations around genre, structure, clarity, grammar and spelling in class. **Please submit all assignments electronically as Word documents.**

One of the things I value in academic work is understanding how none of us comes to know what we do on our own. As educational scholar Madeleine Grumet (1988) writes,

Lodged right in the middle of this term that we extend to honor the people who have influenced and cared for us, is the word 'knowledge.' An acknowledgment is an admission. It makes explicit what is tacit, or sometimes denied, in every scholarly monologue: none of us knows alone. (p. ix)

Please acknowledge the people through whose knowledge you have come to know what you do.

My main concerns in referencing are a) that you honour other people's ideas and wording, and b) that you are consistent in the way you note your sources. To this end, you may follow a well-known reference format, such as APA, MLA, or Chicago style. The reference format I will use is APA (6th edition).

If I have any reason to believe that you have handed in an assignment you did not write yourself, or that you have failed to attribute certain sections of your paper to their respective authors, I will examine my suspicion by submitting the electronic copy of your assignment to TurnItIn. For more information on UBC's subscription to TurnItIn, please see <http://www.vpacademic.ubc.ca/integrity/turnitin/index.htm>. If I find evidence of academic dishonesty, I will follow procedures as outlined in the Academic Regulations of the 2010/2011 University Calendar. (For your information: the word "plagiarism" comes from the Latin *plagarius*, kidnapper, which is derived from *plaga*, net. Don't kidnap other people's ideas!)

SCHEDULE

Week 1 (September 8): Introduction

Week 2 (September 15): Dialectic

- 📖 Baggini, J. & Fosl, P. S. (2003). Dialectic. *The philosopher's toolkit: A compendium of philosophical concepts and methods* (pp. 43-45). Malden, MA: Blackwell.
- 📖 Plato. Book I (327-354). *The Republic* (F. M. Cornford, Trans.). Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press. (Also available via: <http://plato-dialogues.org/links.htm>)
- 📖 Moulton, J. (1983). A paradigm of philosophy: The adversary method. In S. Harding & M. B. Hintikka (Eds.), *Discovering reality: Feminist perspectives on epistemology, metaphysics, methodology, and philosophy of science* (pp. 149-164). Dordrecht, the Netherlands: Kluwer. Available online from *Synthese Library*, 161, http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/0-306-48017-4_9

Supplementary reading

- 📖 Vokey, D. (2009). 'Anything you can do I can do better': Dialectical argument in philosophy of education. *Journal of Philosophy of Education*, 43(3), 339-355. Available online from <http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9752.2009.00701.x>

Week 3 (September 22): Skepticism and doubt

- 📖 Nagel, T. (1974). What is it like to be a bat? *The Philosophical Review*, 83(4), 435-450. Available online from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2183914>
- 📖 Descartes, R. (1901). *Meditations on first philosophy* (J. Veitch, Trans.). Available online from <http://www.wright.edu/cola/cartes/mede.html>. (Original text published 1641)
- 📖 Newman, L. (2005). Descartes' epistemology. In E. N. Zalta (Ed.), *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. Available online from <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/cartes-epistemology/>

Week 4 (September 29): Conceptual analysis

- 📖 Barrow, R. (1994). Philosophy of education: Analytic tradition. In T. Husen & T. N. Postlethwaite (Eds.), *The international encyclopedia of education* (2nd ed., pp. 4442-4447). Oxford, UK: Pergamon Press.
- 📖 Hand, M. (2007). The concept of intelligence. *London Review of Education*, 5(1), 35-46. Available online from <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/14748460701241832>

Supplementary reading

- 📖 Baggini, J. & Fosl, P. S. (2003). Necessary/sufficient. *The philosopher's toolkit: A compendium of philosophical concepts and methods* (pp. 158-160). Malden, MA: Blackwell
- 📖 White, J. P. (1967). Indoctrination. In R. S. Peters (Ed.), *The concept of education* (pp. 177-191). London, UK: Routledge & Kegan Paul.

Week 5 (October 6): Phenomenology

- ☞ Merleau-Ponty, M. (2007). What is phenomenology? In T. Toadvine & L. Lawlor (Eds.), *The Merleau-Ponty reader* (pp. 55-68). Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press. (Reprinted from preface to *Phenomenology of Perception* (C. Smith, Trans.), London, UK: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1962, pp. vii-xxiv. Original work published 1945)
- ☞ Smith, S. (2007). The first rush of movement: A phenomenological preface to movement education. *Phenomenology & Practice*, 1(1), 47-75.

Supplementary reading

- ☞ Bonnett, M. (2009). Education and selfhood: A phenomenological investigation. *Journal of Philosophy of Education*, 43(3), 357-370. Available online from <http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9752.2009.00698.x>
- ☞ Van Manen, M. & Adams, C. (2009). The phenomenology of space in writing online. *Educational Philosophy and Theory*, 41(1), 10-21. Available online from <http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1469-5812.2008.00480.x>

Week 6 (October 13) Hermeneutics

- ☞ Gadamer, H.-G. (1989). The elevation of the historicity of understanding to the status of a hermeneutic principle. *Truth and method* (J. Weinsheimer & D. G. Marshall, Trans., pp. 265-307). New York, NY: Crossroad. (Original work published 1960)
- ☞ Langewand, A. (2001). Children's rights and education: A hermeneutic approach. In F. Heyting, D. Lenzen, & J. White (Eds.), *Methods in philosophy of education* (pp. 144-159). New York, NY: Routledge.

Week 7 (October 20): Translation and metaphor

- ☞ Smith, R. (2008). To school with the poets: Philosophy, method and clarity. *Paedagogica Historica*, 44(6), 633-643. Available online from <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/00309230802486077>
- ☞ Ruitenberg, C. W. (2009). Distance and defamiliarization: Translation as philosophical method. *Journal of Philosophy of Education*, 43(3), 421-435. Available online from <http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9752.2009.00697.x>

Week 8 (October 27): Genealogy and archaeology

- ☞ Foucault, M. (1984). Nietzsche, genealogy, history. In P. Rabinow (Ed.), *The Foucault reader* (pp. 76-100). New York, NY: Pantheon Books. (Original work published 1971)
- ☞ Scheurich, J. (1994). Policy archaeology: A new policy studies methodology. *Journal of Education Policy*, 9(4), 297-316.

Supplementary reading

- ☞ Agamben, G. (2009). *The signature of all things: On method* (L. di Santo, Trans.). New York, NY: Zone Books. (Original work published 2008)

Week 9 (November 3): Critique

- 📖 Foucault, M. (1997). What is critique? (excerpt) (L. Hochroth, Trans.). *The politics of truth* (pp. 23-47). New York, NY: Semiotext(e).
- 📖 Masschelein, J. (2004). How to conceive of critical educational theory today? *Journal of Philosophy of Education*, 38(3), 351-367. Available online from <http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.0309-8249.2004.00390.x>

Supplementary reading

- 📖 Bingham, C. (2009). Under the name of method: On Jacques Rancière's presumptive tautology. *Journal of Philosophy of Education*, 43(3), 405-420. Available online from <http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9752.2009.00711.x>

Week 10 (November 10): Deconstruction

- 📖 Derrida, J. (1988). Letter to a Japanese friend (D. Wood & A. Benjamin, Trans.). In D. Wood & R. Bernasconi (Eds.), *Derrida and difference* (pp. 1-5). Warwick, UK: Parousia Press. Available online from http://lucy.ukc.ac.uk/simulate/derrida_deconstruction.html
- 📖 Biesta, G. (2009). Witnessing deconstruction in education: Why quasi-transcendentalism matters. *Journal of Philosophy of Education*, 43(3), 391-404. Available online from <http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9752.2009.00705.x>

Week 11 (November 17): Writing workshop

Week 12 (November 24): Presentations

Week 13 (December 1): Presentations