

Fall 2011

Dr. Jeffrey Morgan

Philosophy/Education 362

Philosophy of Education

Thursday 8:30 – 11:20

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Office Hours: Monday, Wednesday, Thursday & Friday 11:30-12:30

Course Text:

Bailey, Richard (Ed.). (2010). *The Philosophy of Education: An Introduction*. Continuum.

Brighouse, Harry (2006). *On education*. Routledge.

Calendar Description:

This course is an introduction to the ethical and philosophical dimensions of education. Topics to be examined concern the aims of education, autonomy, the justification of education, the value of knowledge, the distinction between education and indoctrination, the education of the emotions, the justification of educational authority, equality of educational opportunity, personal relationships in teaching, professional ethics in teaching, and moral education.

Course Description:

PHIL/EDUC 362 introduces the study of the philosophy of education, the area of applied philosophy and educational theory concerned with abstract and reflective questions about the nature, aims and methods of education. It is both practical and theoretical. Like all philosophy, it is intensely theoretical, involving closely argued reasoning about

concepts such as knowledge, learning, education, teaching, intelligence, development, indoctrination, authority and autonomy. Especially for teachers and students, but also for those concerned with educational policy—and indeed for all thoughtful moral agents—it is intrinsically valuable to understand these concepts and their inter-relations. Without such understanding, one’s educational practices might seem to be without meaning, adrift from other significant aspects of life. However, there is a significant practical dimension to philosophy of education as well. Practicing teachers—as well as educational policy makers, parents, coaches and other youth leaders—will find the abstract reflection on the concepts above to be helpful in examining and inspiring their own practice. For example, teachers who believe that critical thinking is a teachable generic skill that can be applied across subject matters will choose curricula that differ from that chosen by teachers who believe that critical thinking is always learned in a specific discipline. Teachers who believe that education is a matter of passing on information to children will proceed differently from those teachers who believe that education is a matter of developing an excellent character. If you believe that autonomy is the highest educational ideal, then you will treat your students differently than those who believe that fitting into society (socialization), preparation for a paying career, or adherence to a specific faith is the most important educational value.

This course is principally a seminar, not a lecture course, although I will indeed lecture from time to time. My overriding goal is to make you think hard about educational policy and practice—about your own teaching if you are or intend to be a teacher (or parent)—and to come to your own conclusions. I will present arguments, as would any philosopher, and the course readings will be argumentative, but I expect you to respond to these arguments with arguments of your own.

Learning Objectives:

1. Students will be able to analyze and understand the principal concepts, themes and issues in the philosophy of education
2. Students will be able to appreciate the essentially normative character of educational theory
3. Students will acquire the skills and understanding necessary to do competent applied philosophy
4. Students will develop their abilities to write clear, rational and persuasive argumentative essays
5. Students will acquire a detailed understanding of particular issue in the philosophy of education

Evaluation:**Option 1:**

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|---------------------------|-----|
| Midterm (in class) | 25% |
| 2 short papers (20%, 25%) | 55% |
| Final Exam | 25% |
| Participation | 5% |

Option 2:

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|---------------------------|-----|
| Midterm (in class) | 25% |
| Longer paper (3000 words) | 45% |
| Final Exam | 25% |
| Participation | 5% |

The in-class midterm will consist of one short essay question and a few short answer questions.

The short papers (about 1000 words) will be written on topics chosen by the instructor. You will have at least two weeks to write these papers.

I will consider requests to write a longer paper on a topic chosen by the student. If you choose this option, you will be expected to do research and meet with me regarding your issue, bibliography and argument.

The take-home final will be discussed in the last few weeks of class. At this time, I can say that the best means of preparing for the final is to complete all reading and to participate wholeheartedly in class.

Students will receive up to five points for participation. Regular attendance is necessary but not sufficient for doing well on this rubric. In addition, you must contribute thoughtfully to class discussions. Quality, not quantity, of participation is favored.

Assignment and Test Policies:

1. Assignments should be submitted on time. If you have a bona fide excuse for submitting your paper late, then I urge you to see me. If your paper is on time, I will do my best to mark and return it the following class. If it is less than two days late (i.e., submitted by Friday afternoon by 4:00), then I will not deduct points, but marking it within a week will not be high priority for me. If it is more than two days late without a good excuse (usually supported by a doctor's note indicating that you are/were unable to complete the assignment), then I will grade the paper but my comments will be minimal.

2. If you miss the midterm, then see me as soon as possible with the reason. Supporting documents (e.g. a doctor's note) will be expected. If you have a good excuse, then an alternate midterm test and date will be arranged.
3. Do your own work. Obviously, this means that you cannot submit someone else's work as your own, by for example buying a paper, hiring someone to write your paper, or copying a paper you found on the internet. Further, if you draw on the ideas or words of another person, then you must cite appropriately. Failing to do so might constitute plagiarism. Penalties for plagiarism can be severe, depending on the seriousness of the infraction and the number of prior offenses committed. It is *your* responsibility to be aware of UFV's policies on academic dishonesty. They can be found at:
http://www.ufv.ca/calendar/2010_11/General/RegulationsAndPolicies.htm#StudentConduct
4. There are more specific requirements for each assignment. Failing to follow the requirements can result in loss of points or even outright rejection of the assignment, for example, if an assignment is submitted single-spaced or without adequate margins.

Course Schedule*

| DATE | TOPIC | READING |
|-------------|---|-------------------------------------|
| Sept 8 | Introduction | Bailey pp. 1-3 |
| Sept 15 | What is the Philosophy of Education? Does Education Need Philosophy? | Bailey pp. 4-20 Bailey pp. 21-34 |
| Sept 22 | The Concept of Education I | Brighouse, pp. pp, 1-41 |
| Sept 29 | The Concept of Education II | Brighouse, pp. 42-73 |
| Oct 6 | What is Education For? | Bailey, pp. 35-47 |
| Oct 13 | What Should Go on the Curriculum? | Bailey, pp. 48-59 |
| Oct 20 | Can We Teach Ethics? | Bailey, pp. 60-73 |

* I reserve the right to make changes as necessary.

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| Oct 27 | Midterm | |
| Nov 3 | Do Children Have Any Rights? Should the State Control Education? | Bailey, pp. 74-85 Bailey, pp. 99-112 |
| Nov 10 | Educational Opportunities—Who Shall We Leave Out? | Bailey, pp. 113-124 |
| Nov 17 | Teaching, Learning & Assessment | TBA |
| Nov 24 | Should Governments Support Religious Schools? What's Wrong with Indoctrination and Brainwashing? | Brighthouse, pp. 77-94 Bailey, pp. 136-146 |
| Dec 1 | Conclusion | |
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