

EDUA3002 A45

Contested Spaces in Education

Dr. Joe Curnow

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Online, A-Synchronous

Office Hours: By Appointment

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Desired Outcomes

If we are successful in this class, by the end of the term you will:

- Actively participate in constructing a supportive and engaging learning community where people's voices are heard and valued, where we learn by working together
- Develop skills in critical reading so that we understand the big ideas of a text and can critique the political assumptions of the authors and the theories they write about
- Be able to explain different critiques of education and schooling
- Be able to make arguments about the validity of different approaches to teaching to respond to sociohistoric relations of inequity
- Begin to critically apply the course material in your classrooms

Territorial Acknowledgment

Our class meets on the traditional territory of the Nishnaabeg, Cree, Oji-Cree, Dakota, and Dene peoples, and the Métis Nation. The legacy of this place, both in terms of the rich histories of Indigenous peoples, and the ongoing histories of colonial dispossession, should inform our course, especially how we think about the role of education, teaching, and learning in enacting violence and in working toward more equitable futures. We must centre ideas of responsibility, reciprocity, and relationship in our work and be accountable to the treaty relationships we (most of us) are bound to.

COVID Care

One of the core take-aways in a course that centres equity and justice is that we all come to this classroom as full humans, with lives and responsibilities and constraints that exist beyond this space that shape our ability to participate fully. This is always important for teachers to design for, but especially during a pandemic, when many of our lives are upside down with health issues, child and elder care responsibilities, additional economic pressures, sketchy internet and tech, etc (with all of these constraints shaped by gender, race, class, ability, etc). My commitment to you is that we will do our best, together. Everything in the course is negotiable, and with good communication between us, we can figure out ways to accommodate whatever crops up. Your well-being is important, and we will work toward community care. This also means that this syllabus may change based on how things go, and how the world unfolds around us.

Course Overview

This course interrogates the concept of education. What is it? Is it important? And is it necessarily a social good? Rather than define these concepts, we will engage in the debates and a diversity of critiques of education and schooling so that each of us can understand and argue for the approaches to education that we think are valuable. We will explore education as an approach to social change — one that is fraught with tensions and contradictions brought on by its relationship to capital, the state, and civil society. This is a class about different approaches to social change, rooted in varied ways of knowing and being, varied theories of change, and varied interventions into inequity rooted in social relations of colonialism, racism, and capitalism.

The point of this is to help us think about our roles as educators. While we will not focus on specific tips and tricks for teaching and classroom management, our discussions should help you to reflect on your philosophy of teaching—both the why and the how behind the pedagogies you mobilize. You will be expected to draw on your experiences as a student and a teacher, and situate your classroom learning into your life beyond campus. If we are successful together, you will be able to think critically about how you engage in your classroom and have theoretical and historical tools to help you strategically create change within your communities.

Theory of Learning and Teaching

I believe that the *way* I teach, not just the content I teach, matters. How I teach shapes the ways that we engage, not only in this classroom, but also in our communities and in your own classrooms. I strive to build and sustain a democratic, equitable classroom that encourages co-development of critical knowledge that students are able to mobilize in their own lives. I believe that learning is not about repeating what you have read or been told in class, but about being able to assess the validity and appropriateness in specific contexts and being able to apply the knowledge and skills in your life. Starting from our experiences in life, I hope we can collectively interpret and critique the material in this class and find ways to change our communities as a result of the conversations that happen in and beyond this classroom. I will never lecture, so if you feel like you learn best in lecture environments, this will not be a good fit. But if you are willing to stretch and work collaboratively, you will not only learn a lot of content, but you will also learn a lot about learning and teaching.

While I hold responsibility for this class, I don't carry that alone. We have a shared responsibility to create a productive, engaging, and equitable learning community. I expect us to all come to class ready to participate actively and respectfully, and we will establish group agreements that will facilitate our work together. Bring your best to class and strive to build relationships with your peers to foster a better learning experience for yourself and everyone.

I'm also learning how to facilitate this type of class in an online space, and we will learn together how to navigate the challenges of the format. Please be patient with me, and I will try to be patient with you, and together we will build a course where we can learn together.

Assignments

Activities, discussion forums, and other responses

All aspects of the course are required unless marked as optional additional resources, even though they may not be evaluated/marked (forum responses, etc). Additional resources are provided, and are optional, but encouraged. Please try to keep up with activities from week to week, but if things come up let me know and communicate with your home group. Future activities will be released as we go.

20% Home Group Participation

Home groups will be expected to meet every week to discuss readings and activities. Time required will vary, but plan on an hour per week. Your group can decide the time and format that works for all of you (phone/zoom/chat/etc). Participation is vital to your success in this community. Participation counts as active engagement, not just writing/speaking, and will be evaluated by your group and yourself, based on your engagement in group work, discussions, and overall effort in the class. This will be evaluated by your peers (10%) and by self reflection (10%). Home group meetings should be held by Sunday evening each week, wherever possible, so that your group members can proceed to the next module. After completing your home group meetings someone (rotating responsibility) from the group should post an update to your home group discussion forum with highlights of your discussion, report backs, and questions.

50% Weekly Reading Annotations

You will annotate 10 readings over the course of the term. Each is worth 5% of your overall mark. We will use Hypothes.is to collaboratively annotate our articles. Annotations will be submitted for each reading and are due Monday night each week at 10pm.

You will read each article completely. As you read you will make notes (highlight, make notes, raise questions, link to other resources) in the text about:

1. Central ideas
2. Identify key terms
3. Make note of questions you have
4. Make notes on how and why pieces of the text relate to other readings and discussions in class
5. Additionally, at the end of each reading, I want to see an annotation of a few lines that theorizes what the author thinks about education- what is the goal of schooling, who benefits, etc.

I am looking for meaningful engagement with the text, not just superficial markup.

For each reading you should make at least 4 annotations (and likely more as the term progresses), and respond to at least one of your colleague's annotations (5 total). Feedback on these will be global; I will respond to your ideas in the annotations and let you know if I have any concerns, but otherwise, assume that you are doing a good job, and that the further we go, the easier these will be.

20% Midterm Reflection

This midterm reflection asks you to summarize your learning from the first half of the class, connect across themes, and identify the questions that are emerging for you. These

reflections will become the backbone for an activity using Open Space Technology, where you will be able to propose self-generated discussions on the questions you have. Details will be shared closer to the deadline. These papers will be 3-4 pages.

Due October 4th at 10pm via UMLearn.

10% Final Assignment

Creative Project of your Design

Details available on UMLearn: you propose the project and how it should be evaluated!

This will be due on Nov 1st at 10pm via UMLearn.

Course Schedule

Module 1

Theme: *Building Community*

Module 2:

Theme: What is Education

Reading:

Philip, T. M., Souto-Manning, M., Anderson, L., Horn, I., J. Carter Andrews, D., Stillman, J., & Varghese, M. (2018). Making Justice Peripheral by Constructing Practice as “Core”: How the Increasing Prominence of Core Practices Challenges Teacher Education. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 0022487118798324.

Module 3

Theme: *Schooling as Social Reproduction*

Reading:

- Collins, J. (2009). Social reproduction in classrooms and schools. *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 38, 33-48.

Module 4

Theme: *Schooling and Colonization*

Reading

- Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. (2015). Canada's residential schools: The final report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (Vol. 1). Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press
http://www.trc.ca/websites/trcinstitution/File/2015/Findings/Exec_Summary_2015_05_31_web_o.pdf
 - Chapter: The History (p. 41-183)

(I know this is long, but it's not hard reading, and it is absolutely crucial for anyone who is going to teach in MB. Do the best you can to get through it.)

Meeting 5

Theme: *Race and Racism in Canadian Schooling*

Reading:

- Henry, F., Tator, C., Mattis, W., & Rees, T. (Eds). (2000) In *The Colour of Democracy: Racism in Canadian Society*. Toronto: Harcourt Brace Co. (69-91)

- Maynard, R. "Canadian Education is Steeped in Anti-Black Racism"
<https://thewalrus.ca/canadian-education-is-steeped-in-anti-black-racism/>

Module 6

Open Space Technology

Assignment:

1. Midterm due: Monday night, October 4th at 10pm via UMLearn.

Module 7

Theme: Gender, relationship, & sexual diversity at school

Readings:

- Supporting Transgender and Gender Diverse Students in Manitoba Schools
https://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/docs/support/transgender/full_doc.pdf
- Taylor, C. G., Meyer, E. J., Peter, T., Ristock, J., Short, D., & Campbell, C. (2016). Gaps between beliefs, perceptions, and practices: The Every Teacher Project on LGBTQ-inclusive education in Canadian schools. *Journal of LGBT Youth*, 13(1-2), 112-140.

Module 8

Centring Equity in our Pedagogies

Readings:

- Paris, D. (2012). Culturally sustaining pedagogy: A needed change in stance, terminology, and practice. *Educational researcher*, 41(3), 93-97.
- Love, B. L. (2019). *We want to do more than survive: Abolitionist teaching and the pursuit of educational freedom*. Beacon Press.

Module 9

Theme: *Reflecting and Wrapping Up*

Reading:

- Giroux, H. A. (2010). Rethinking education as the practice of freedom: Paulo Freire and the promise of critical pedagogy. *Policy Futures in Education*, 8(6), 715-721.

November 1st: Final Assignment Due to UMLearn.

Course Policies

Contacting the Instructor: Please feel free to contact me via university email. Please use your university account to communicate with me. Emails will be returned in a timely manner, but not necessarily immediately. I do not check course email on weekends.

Office Hours: I have office hours by appointment, and I will try to be flexible to accommodate your availability, including evenings, so let me know if you want to meet and what format would work best for you.

Participation & Preparation: Participation in the online activities and your home groups is important for full engagement in this course. I encourage students to discuss with me any circumstances that may affect their participation in class.

The department policy is that attendance is expected of all students. An instructor can initiate proceedings to debar a student where unexcused absences exceed three hours of scheduled classes in any one term. For our class, this means I will be concerned if you consistently miss your home group meetings. Please talk to me if you anticipate this being a challenge.

Accommodation and Accessibility If you are living and working with a disability (physical, sensory, a learning disability or a mental health condition, temporary or long-term), Student Accessibility Services will provide services for self-advocacy and academic skills: <http://umanitoba.ca/student/saa/accessibility/programs-and-services.html>. If you choose to discuss any challenges or disabilities with me, I will also do my best to enhance your learning experiences in this course.

You may seek support from the Academic Learning Centre for academic support. Other support (for example, in the area of mental health) can be sought from the Student Counseling Centre and Student Health Services. Additionally, I recognize that the UofM calendar does not accommodate many religious holidays. If your practice conflicts with our class meetings or assignment due dates, please contact me in advance so we can make an arrangement.

Formatting: Papers should use APA style, one-inch margins, 12 point font, and 1.5 spacing (See <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/section/2/10/>). Do not include a separate cover page. If you save as a Word doc, it's easier for me to include comments in the text for you, but I will read and do my best on whatever format you submit, as long as I can access it.

Extensions & Late Assignments. All deadlines are negotiable this term, so if you need more time, please communicate with me (ideally not the night before). All late work must be received by the last week of class.

Contesting Marks If you disagree with your mark and wish to contest it, email me to review the exemplar paper on course reserve. To contest your mark, you must write a 2 page reflection on why you believe your assignment deserves to be marked differently, making reference to the exemplar. All re-marks must be submitted by the last week of class.

Academic Integrity: The University of Manitoba's tutorial on academic integrity policies are available at http://umanitoba.ca/student/resource/student_advocacy/AI-and-Student-Conduct-Tutorials.html.

Discrimination: The University of Manitoba wishes to promote and support a community which embraces diversity and inclusion, provides for equality of opportunity, and recognizes the dignity of all people. Members of the University Community, including every student and employee, are entitled to a respectful work and learning environment that is free from Discrimination and provides for Reasonable Accommodation, free from Harassment and Sexual Assault; and is Collegial and conducive to early resolution of conflict between members of the University Community

Your Desired Outcomes for the Course:

Please take a few minutes to think about your personal and intellectual goals for this course and this term. If you (and we, collectively) are successful, what will you have accomplished? How do you hope your learning will impact the communities you are part of. Let's be clear about these goals so that we can support each other in accomplishing them and hold ourselves accountable to them. Remember, this course is not an abstract thought exercise, but an applied, reflective process to give us tools to be more effective in our work for social change in our communities.

I look forward to working with you this term and co-developing a rich analysis of what education is, what it should be, and our collective and individual responsibilities are in making education, learning, and schooling a tool for equity and justice.