

EDUC 7055: PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION

School of Education, University of Colorado Boulder, Spring 2017
Thursdays, 5:00-7:30 pm, Education Building 338

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Office Hours: Mondays and Thursdays 1:00-2:30 pm, and by appointment

COURSE OBJECTIVES

This course is designed to explore philosophical dimensions of educational policy and practice. What, for instance, does it mean to be an educated person? What is the relationship between education and citizenship? What are the goals of schooling in a democratic society? These questions—while deeply connected to educational practice—focus on the aims of education. They are, in short, *normative* questions, or questions that ask what we *ought* to do. While many researchers have focused on assembling important evidence about the practical consequences and effects of different educational policies and reforms, evidence alone cannot resolve normative debates about the appropriate purposes, aims and values raised by such approaches. For example, how should education address issues of injustice, to what extent, and in what ways? How might school districts negotiate their responsibilities to address inequality with demands posed by more privileged families? What values and principles might guide their decisions? We'll explore these and other issues through reading key philosophical texts (both classic and contemporary) and case studies that highlight the moral and ethical dimensions of education.

COURSE TEXTS

- Levinson, M., & Fay, J. (2016). *Dilemmas of Educational Ethics: Cases and Commentaries*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard Education Press.
- Hess, D. E., & McAvoy, P. (2014). *The Political Classroom: Evidence and Ethics in Democratic Education*. New York: Routledge.
- Freire, P. (2000). *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. 30th Anniversary edition. New York: Continuum Publishing Company.

In addition to these books, we will be reading a number of articles and chapters. These will be available via Desire to Learn [D2L]. We will also be making use of D2L for online links and to share information with each other.

Please Note: You must bring a copy of that day's reading assignments to class with you. You can (preferably) print copies of the day's readings from D2L *or* bring the reading on an appropriate tablet, laptop or other mobile device. If you choose to read for class in an online format, however, you have to take responsibility for not being distracted by the many other competing applications (email, etc.) on your device ;). Also, you *must* have a way of 'marking up' the readings: highlighting key passages, taking notes in the margins and keeping track of your questions. This class asks that you engage in close and *active* reading, not just skimming. Studying philosophy involves careful reading, writing and discussion. You will be asked to make note of particular passages to share in class, and we will often turn back in class discussions to puzzle about particular sentences and sections.

LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

As a graduate seminar, everyone assumes responsibility for the quality of the class. While small lectures will be used to clarify important points from class materials, we will spend the vast majority of our time engaged in discussion and small group activities. We will also collaborate on assignments and occasionally review each others' work for class. This makes it important that we work together to foster a *cooperative learning community*. A few general guidelines govern such a community:

- We work together to build an environment of mutual trust and respect. There is no foolproof formula for doing this, but a helpful basic assumption is that each person has valuable experiences and ideas to contribute to the community. These experiences and ideas will necessarily be different and diverse; part of becoming a community involves learning from—and teaching—each other. In the course of conversation, we will learn more about our different areas of strength, passion and expertise; we will also discover that there are many things we haven't experienced, thought about, or considered.
- Class activities are a cooperative effort. Everyone can—and must—contribute. Of course, I also recognize that there are many ways to contribute. Most importantly, however, this is not a competitive environment; our goal is to collectively build knowledge, not make better points than our peers. Part of building good collective knowledge means that everyone has opportunities to participate in the conversation.
- Practice active listening (paraphrase, encourage, ask clarifying questions, allow everyone to speak, interrupt with care, monitor how well we are listening, and check distractions).
- Be self-reflective about what we each bring to class, and about how our contributions/ presence shapes and affects the experiences of others, and the class community as a whole.
- We don't withdraw from or ignore conflict (conflict offers a learning opportunity; we can respectfully disagree with each other without questioning each others' experience or competence).
- We all keep our sense of humor.

Every class is influenced by the fact that students come from widely diverse ethnic, cultural, linguistic and professional backgrounds and hold different views. Since learning involves hearing, analyzing and drawing on a diversity of views, we will work to build—and hold each other accountable for—collegial and respectful dialogue across disciplinary, cultural, and personal boundaries. We'll collectively revisit these issues throughout the semester, and I welcome feedback and ideas for how we might continuously improve our learning community.

EVALUATION

My goal is to have you thoughtfully engage the different texts and cases we will read, to develop an understanding of philosophical questions in education, and to learn how to evaluate the strength of various philosophical arguments, positions and claims. Your final grade will be based upon class participation (10%), two short reading responses (20%), the development (with a partner) of an original normative case (30%), writing two commentaries on others' cases (20%) and a brief summary final paper (25%). Each of these dimensions is described below.

| Assignment | Weight | Due Date |
|---------------------------------------|--------|--|
| 1. Participation | 10% | Ongoing |
| 2. Reading Responses (2) | 20% | Sign-up for two dates |
| 3. Original Normative Case (in Pairs) | 30% | March 23 rd (Draft), April 24 th (Final version) |
| 4. Case Commentaries (2) | 20% | May 1 st |
| 5. Final Summary Paper | 20% | May 11 th |

1. **Class Participation (10%)** Thoughtful and informed participation in the course will be a significant part of your final grade. This means (1) *attendance* in class, (2) *preparation* for class and (3) *participation* in class. EDUC 7055 is a graduate level course. Because of the smaller size of this class, everyone's attendance, punctuality and preparation is essential. More than just attendance, participation includes careful *preparation for* and thoughtful *participation in* class. You are expected to carefully prepare the readings before each class so that you can participate in both small and large group discussions and activities. In

addition to your responsibilities to prepare for our class sessions, this grade also includes your participation in a variety of in-class discussion activities, in both large and small groups.

2. **Reading Responses (20%)** For two class sessions, you will be responsible for sharing a 2-3-page analysis of the reading. Your response should be uploaded to our shared Google Drive folder no later than *Tuesday by noon* before class so that we all have an opportunity to read (and pose additional comments or questions) ahead of class. Your responses should aim to help us (as a group) engage with the reading in deeper ways and to improve our class discussion. You may point out what you consider to be the most interesting or relevant parts of the week's reading, analyze some of the core assumptions of one reading, or draw connections between various readings (or content from previous weeks). You may also dive deeper into one aspect of an argument or even a single concept (e.g., what does Brighouse mean by autonomy?). There is no assumption that you cover or address *all* of the week's reading in a single response; it's generally a good idea to focus on a few central ideas. Think small and careful. Including quotations and page numbers will better allow you to use these responses in class discussion. Your response should include 2-3 questions that we might take up in our class discussion.
3. **Original Normative Case (30%)** One of the major assignments of this course is to write an original, normative case study that explores the philosophical questions embedded in a dilemma of educational practice or policy. We will be writing these cases in pairs, in order to help you talk through (and think through) the different potential values at stake, and different perspectives on your dilemma. Cases are generally brief (about 4-5 pages in length) but are carefully written and fully realized scenarios that highlight the ethical and moral dimensions of an educational problem. Ideally, these dilemmas should arise from your own concerns, interests and experiences in education. Topics can be quite diverse in scope, but should focus in on a persistent dilemma of educational practice or policy. Dilemmas are issues that evade easy answers, in part because they focus on contested values or aims of education. At the same time, the best works of philosophy of education are not simply abstract statements; instead, they are carefully informed by the relevant facts on the ground. Possible dilemmas might focus on questions related to difference and inclusion on college campuses or in high schools, teachers sharing their personal political beliefs in classrooms, negotiating parents' rights (to, say, refuse a curriculum) with school or district objectives. We'll keep talking about possibilities; to start, try to be alert to the "tough" questions you encounter in your daily practice. What are the moral dilemmas? We'll be reading multiple sample cases and I'll share more detailed guidance in class. We'll also devote some time to forming teams early in the semester. The draft case will be due on March 23rd and the final version of your case is due April 24th.
4. **Case Commentaries (20%)** We'll also be completing two brief (2-3 page) commentaries on other teams' cases. These commentaries, modeled after the ones we will read in class, offer a thoughtful response to the dilemma of policy or practice posed in a case. Your response should focus and clarify some of the central issues of the question, as you understand them, and develop a response to the dilemma that draws on reason and evidence. How would you respond, and according to what principles, aims or ideals?
5. **Final Summary Paper (20%)** This concluding assignment asks you—individually—to reflect on your own case. You should discuss the development of the case, as well as how you understand the key dilemmas posed in the case. Then—drawing both on course texts and commentaries—you should develop a reasoned and thoughtful position on your own case. The final paper should be 5-6 pages, double-spaced, and will be due on Thursday, May 11th. Detailed paper guidelines will be shared in class.

GRADING SCALE, ASSIGNMENT GUIDELINES

Grading Scale: I will base grades on a standard system, which includes a scale determined by points accumulated divided by the total number of points available:

| | | | | |
|----------|----------|----------|----------|------------|
| A 100-95 | A- 90-94 | B+ 87-89 | B 84-86 | B- 80-83 |
| C+ 77-79 | C 74-76 | C- 70-73 | D+ 65-69 | F Below 64 |

General Guidelines: All written assignments should be submitted to the 'drop box' on the D2L site for this class. All written assignments for this class must be typed, double-spaced, and use 1 inch margins all around and 11-12 point font. Depending on your academic discipline, you can use either APA style or Chicago; just pick one and use it consistently (and correctly!). If you receive grades on your written work that you don't understand or are not happy with, please feel free to come talk to me.

Accessibility & Inclusivity: I am personally committed to making this course as accessible as possible to students with disabilities, temporary medical conditions, or mental or emotional health issues that may affect any aspect of course assignments or participation. In addition, I welcome your feedback about how to create an inclusive learning environment. I invite you to communicate with me at the beginning of the semester or at your discretion about any accommodations or ideas that will improve your experience of, or access to, the course. Please also carefully review the university disabilities policy at the end of the syllabus.

COURSE CONTENT OVERVIEW

January 19th Introductions and overview

- Abbreviated case, "Stolen Trust," to be discussed in class.
- Before next class, read the full case: Burger, K. & Levinson, M. (2016). Stolen Trust: Cell Phone Theft in a Zero Tolerance High School. In Levinson, M., & Fay, J. (2016). *Dilemmas of Educational Ethics: Cases and Commentaries* (p 73-78). Please read the case and the associated commentaries (pp. 79-105) in Chapter 3. We'll start our class discussion by revisiting the case we discussed today (in light of the commentaries).

January 26th What are the aims of education?

- Labaree, D. F. (1997). Public goods, private goods: The American struggle over educational goals. *American Educational Research Journal*, 34(1), 39-81. [PDF]
- Levinson, M. & Fay, J. (2016). Introduction. In Levinson, M., & Fay, J. (2016). *Dilemmas of educational ethics: Cases and commentaries* (p. 1-8).
- Levinson, M. & Finenter-Rosenbluh, I. (2016) Inflated expectations: How should teachers assign grades? In Levinson, M., & Fay, J. (2016). *Dilemmas of educational ethics: Cases and commentaries* (p 107-112). Please read the case and the associated commentaries (pp. 113-142) in Chapter 4.

February 2nd Who has authority over education?

- Brighouse, H. (2006). Educating for self-government (Ch 1, pp. 13-26). In *On education*. Routledge. [PDF]
- Galston, W. (2003). Parents, governments and children: Authority over education in the liberal democratic state. In K. McDonough and W. Feinberg, Eds., *Citizenship and education in liberal-democratic societies: Teaching for cosmopolitan values and collective identities* (pp. 211-233). Oxford. [PDF]
- Reich, R. (2005). Opting out of education: Yoder, Mozart and the autonomy of children. *Educational Theory*, 52 (4), 445-461. [PDF]
- McAvoy, P. (2012). "There are no housewives on *Star Trek*": A reexamination of exit rights for the children of insular fundamentalist parents," *Educational Theory*, 62(5), 535-552. [PDF]

February 9th Rousseau and the education of the citizen

- Rousseau. *Emile, or On Education*. Translated by Allan Bloom. New York: Basic Books, 1979. Book I (selected pages, pp. 37-48) and Book II (selected pages, pp. 77-101). Note: You are welcome—and encouraged—to read the two chapters in their entirety, but make sure to read the selected pages carefully. These will be available as a PDF, or you may use the text (if you have it).
- Neuhouser, F. (2011). Jean-Jacques Rousseau and the origins of autonomy. *Inquiry*, 54(5), 478-493. [PDF]
- Shuffelton, A. B. (2012). Rousseau's imaginary friend: Childhood, play, and suspicion of the imagination in *Emile*. *Educational Theory*, 62(3), 305-321. [PDF]
- Mintz, A. (2012). The happy and suffering student? Rousseau's *Emile* and the path not taken in Progressive educational thought. *Educational Theory*, 62(3): 249-265. [PDF]

February 16th Dewey and the democratic aims of education

- Dewey, J. (1916 [1997]). *Democracy and Education: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Education*. Chapters 7-10. In *The Collected Works of John Dewey, 1882-1953*, edited by Jo Ann Boydston, The Middle Works, Volume 9, Carbondale and Edwardsville, Illinois, USA: Southern Illinois University Press.

This version of *Democracy and Education* is available electronically through University of Colorado Libraries. (Link available via D2L). We'll also be reading the "companion essays" that develop ideas from these chapters, from the forthcoming *Dewey's Democracy and Education: A Handbook*. Andrea English and Leonard Waks, Editors. Cambridge University Press. (This will be published in March, but PDFs of chapters will be on D2L):

- Knight Abowitz, K. (2017). A Mode of Associated Living: The Distinctiveness of Deweyan Democracy.
- Waks, L. (2017). The Democratic Theory of Aims. On Chapter 8: Aims in Education.
- Mintz, A. (2017). What is the Purpose of Education? Dewey's Challenge to his Contemporaries.
- Wilson, T.S. (2017). Shaping and Sharing Democratic Aims: Reconstructing Interest and Discipline.

February 23rd Freire and education for social justice

- Freire, P. (2000). *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. New York: Continuum Publishing Company, Chapters 1-3.

March 2nd Guest instructor (David Meens, Director of Outreach & Engagement, CU Boulder)

- Topics and readings to be determined.

March 9th Separating politics and education

- Arendt, H. (1968). The crisis in education. From *Between past and future: Eight exercises in political thought*. (pp. 173-196). New York, Penguin. [PDF]
- Gordon, M. (2001). Hannah Arendt on authority: Conservatism in education. In M. Gordon (Ed.), *Hannah Arendt and education: Renewing our common world* (pp. 37-65). Boulder, CO: Westview Press. [PDF]
- Biesta, G. (2010). How to exist politically and learn from It: Hannah Arendt and the problem of democratic education, *Teachers College Record*, 112(2): 556-575. [PDF]

- This American Life (2011). “Kid Politics,” Episode 424 (January 14, 2011). Please listen to the podcast of this radio show. Link available via D2L.

March 16th The Political Classroom

- Hess, D. E., & McAvoy, P. (2014). *The political classroom: Evidence and ethics in democratic education*. Routledge. Chapters 1-5. (pp. 1-108).
- McAvoy, P., & Hess, D. (2013). Classroom deliberation in an era of political polarization. *Curriculum Inquiry*, 43(1), 14-47. [PDF]
- Paula McAvoy will be joining our class (remotely) for some of our class session this evening.

March 23rd The Political Classroom

- Hess, D. E., & McAvoy, P. (2014). *The political classroom: Evidence and ethics in democratic education*. Routledge. Chapters 6-10, Appendix and Afterword (pp. 109-232).
- *Assignment Due:* Your team’s draft case should be uploaded to Google Drive by today. Please read through at least 2 other draft cases and offer comments for other teams (using comments/ editing tools in Google Docs) before our next class (on April 6th).

March 30th Spring Break

April 6th Difference, safe spaces and free speech

- Bilgrami, A. (2011). Truth, balance and freedom. *Social Scientist* 39(9/10): 3-18. [PDF]
- Callan, E. (2016). Education in safe and unsafe spaces. *Philosophical Inquiry in Education*, 24(1), 64-78. [PDF]
- Ben-Porath, S. (2016). Safety, dignity, and the quest for a democratic campus culture. *Philosophical Inquiry in Education*, 24(1), 79-85. [PDF]
- Mayo, C. (2016). Anger and pedagogy. *Philosophical Inquiry in Education*, 24(1), 86-90. [PDF]
- Turcotte-Summers, J. (2016). Egalitarianism, safety, and virtue in education: A response to Callan. *Philosophical Inquiry in Education*, 24(1), 91-101. [PDF]
- If you are unfamiliar with critiques of “safe spaces” on campus, this article offers an overview: Lukianoff, G., & Haidt, J. (2015). The coddling of the American mind. *The Atlantic*. September 2015.

April 13th In what ways—and to what extent—should education policy seek to disrupt inequality?

- Levinson, M. (2016) Is pandering ethical policy? Power, privilege and school assignment. In *Dilemmas of educational ethics: Cases and commentaries* (pp. 143-150). Please read the case and associated commentaries (pp. 151-178) in Chapter 5.

- Cucchiara, M. (2008). Re-branding urban schools: urban revitalization, social status, and marketing public schools to the upper middle class. *Journal of Education Policy*, 23(2), 165-179. [PDF]
- Zirkel, S., & Pollack, T. M. (2016). "Just let the worst students go:" A critical case analysis of public discourse About race, merit, and worth. *American Educational Research Journal*, 53(6), 1522-1555. [PDF]

April 20th How different should schools be? Debates about the purposes of school choice

- Levinson, M. (2016) How, if at all, should charters be compared to local districts? In *Dilemmas of educational ethics: Cases and commentaries* (pp. 179-185). Please read the case and commentaries (pp. 186-210) in Chapter 6.
- Frankenberg, E., & Siegel-Hawley, G. (2013). A segregating choice? An overview of charter school policy, enrollment trends, and segregation. In G. Orfield & E. Frankenberg (Eds.), *Educational delusions? Why choice can deepen inequality and how to make schools fair* (pp. 129–144). Berkeley, CA: University of California Press. [PDF]
- Wilson, T. S. (2016). Contesting the public school: Reconsidering charter schools as counterpublics. *American Educational Research Journal*, 53(4), 919-952. [PDF]
- Brighthouse, H., & Schouten, G. (2014). To charter or not to charter: What questions should we ask, and what will the answers tell us?. *Harvard Educational Review*, 84(3), 341-364. [PDF]

April 27th Cases and Commentaries

- There will be no formal class session due to the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association (AERA). You should make plans to upload your team's final case study by *Monday, April 24th* and also write brief, 2-3 page commentaries on two other cases by *Monday, May 1st*
- Please review the cases and commentaries we have read in class for guidance, as well as the other sample cases and commentaries in Chapters 2 & 3, and the other resources available on the Justice in Schools website. (Link available via D2L).

May 4th Final Case Presentations

- Please read through all of the team cases and commentaries for our last class. There is no need to offer any feedback, but you should have read all of the materials in advance of the team presentations.
- Recommended: Levinson, M., & Theisen-Homer, V. (2015). No justice, no teachers: Theorizing less-unjust teacher firings in Los Angeles Unified. *Theory and Research in Education*, 13(2), 139-154. [PDF]

May 11th Final papers due

- Please upload your final papers to the D2L Dropbox on Thursday, May 11th

COURSE and UNIVERSITY POLICIES

University Disabilities Policy: If you qualify for accommodations because of a disability, please submit to your professor a letter from Disability Services in a timely manner (for exam accommodations provide your letter at

least one week prior to the exam) so that your needs can be addressed. Disability Services determines accommodations based on documented disabilities. Contact Disability Services at 303-492-8671 or by e-mail at dsinfo@colorado.edu. If you have a temporary medical condition or injury, see [Temporary Injuries](#) guidelines under the Quick Links at the [Disability Services website](#) and discuss your needs with your professor.

Observance of Religious Holidays and Absences from Classes or Examinations: Campus policy regarding religious observances requires that faculty make every effort to reasonably and fairly deal with all students who, because of religious obligations, have conflicts with scheduled examinations, assignments, or required attendance. In this class, I will make every effort to accommodate all students who have such conflicts with scheduled examinations, assignments, or attending class, provided you notify me well in advance (several weeks ahead of the scheduled conflict). See the [campus policy regarding religious observances](#) for full details.

Classroom Behavior Policy: Students and faculty each have responsibility for maintaining an appropriate learning environment. Those who fail to adhere to such behavioral standards may be subject to discipline. Professional courtesy and sensitivity are especially important with respect to individuals and topics dealing with differences of race, color, culture, religion, creed, politics, veteran's status, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity and gender expression, age, disability, and nationalities. Class rosters are provided to the instructor with the student's legal name. I will gladly honor your request to address you by an alternate name or gender pronoun. Please advise me of this preference early in the semester so that I may make appropriate changes to my records. For more information, see the policies on [classroom behavior](#) and [the student code](#).

Discrimination & Harassment: The University of Colorado Boulder (CU Boulder) is committed to maintaining a positive learning, working, and living environment. CU Boulder will not tolerate acts of sexual misconduct, discrimination, harassment or related retaliation against or by any employee or student. CU's Sexual Misconduct Policy prohibits sexual assault, sexual exploitation, sexual harassment, intimate partner abuse (dating or domestic violence), stalking or related retaliation. CU Boulder's Discrimination and Harassment Policy prohibits discrimination, harassment or related retaliation based on race, color, national origin, sex, pregnancy, age, disability, creed, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, veteran status, political affiliation or political philosophy. Individuals who believe they have been subject to misconduct under either policy should contact the Office of Institutional Equity and Compliance (OIEC) at 303-492-2127. Information about the OIEC, the above referenced policies, and the campus resources available to assist individuals regarding sexual misconduct, discrimination, harassment or related retaliation can be found at the [OIEC website](#).

Honor Code: All students enrolled in a University of Colorado Boulder course are responsible for knowing and adhering to the [academic integrity policy](#) of the institution. Violations of the policy may include: plagiarism, cheating, fabrication, lying, bribery, threat, unauthorized access, clicker fraud, resubmission, and aiding academic dishonesty. All incidents of academic misconduct will be reported to the Honor Code Council (honor@colorado.edu; 303-735-2273). Students who are found responsible for violating the academic integrity policy will be subject to nonacademic sanctions from the Honor Code Council as well as academic sanctions from the faculty member. Additional information regarding the academic integrity policy can be found at honorcode.colorado.edu.

Class Conflicts and Collegiate Sports Clubs: Students formally affiliated with University of Colorado Collegiate Sport Clubs are required to communicate with the instructor involved about any potential conflicts within the first three weeks of their enrollment in a class. Instructors are not obliged to accommodate any potential conflicts, but may, at their own discretion, allow reasonable accommodations for these absences. Instructors should also be made aware of the potential for upcoming competitions that are not yet scheduled as of the first week of class (often due to qualifying for Regional or National Championships).