

Introduction to the Philosophy of Education

Yale Summer Session 2017

Course Instructor: Allison Piñeros Glasscock | allison.glasscock@yale.edu

Office Hours: TBD

1. Course Description

This course explores three areas that are central to the Philosophy of Education. In the first part of the course, we will investigate the *aims of education*. What is an education *for*? What are some of the challenges that individual candidate aims might pose? How do we adjudicate among competing aims? In the second part of the course, we will turn to the question of *how to educate*. What disciplines or subjects does the well-educated person need to learn (and how do we decide)? What are learning and teaching? Should they aim at the development of knowledge or of understanding? Is it possible to teach oneself? Finally, we will address a constellation of questions related to *education, authority, and rights*. Who should have the authority to make pedagogical decisions? Do special interest groups (e.g. religious or ethnic minorities) have the right to educational exemptions (if so, under what circumstances)? These questions will be considered from both historical and contemporary perspectives, through careful readings of works by some of the field's most influential contributors (including, but not limited to, Plato, Rousseau, Dewey, Freire, and Du Bois).

2. Course Goals, Assignments, and Evaluation

This course is designed to

- foster critical engagement with some of the key issues and thinkers in the Philosophy of Education;
- increase competencies in reading philosophical texts;
- increase competencies in writing philosophical texts;
- hone the skills necessary for engaging in productive philosophical discussion.

Students will develop these skills through the completion of written assignments and through participation in in-class exercises, presentations, and discussion. Graded components of the course (see section 6 for more detailed assignment descriptions):

- Reading and discussion responses: 3 x 10% each = 30%
- Mid-term essay: 20%
- Final essay: 30%
- Participation (including attendance, discussion, in-class exercises, and brief presentations): 20%

Because of the condensed nature of the summer session courses, attendance is mandatory. Failure to attend every seminar meeting will impact your participation grade and (ultimately) your final class grade.

3. Accommodations

Please let me know if you require accommodations for course-related needs or if there is anything I can do to make this course accessible to you. More information about Yale’s accommodations policies and procedures can be found through the Resource Office on Disabilities website: rod.yale.edu.

4. Academic Integrity

Philosophy Department Statement: The strength of the university depends on academic and personal integrity. One of the most severe violations of academic integrity is plagiarism, which is the use of someone else’s work, words, or ideas as if they were your own. Thus, if you use a source for a paper, you must acknowledge it. There is no reason to hide the fact that you have relied on others, for the very idea of writing in a university is to trace your participation in a conversation of scholars. Showing how your ideas derive from and comment on the ideas of others is one of the high achievements of mature academic writing. It would be a mistake to downplay this achievement in an attempt to suggest greater originality. What counts as a source and requires citation is a delicate matter. Some things are clear. For instance, anything derived from readings (including those found on-line), either from the syllabus or outside sources, must be cited. What is not clear is whether ideas presented in lecture, discussed in section, or derived from conversations with faculty, TFs, or other students must be cited. If you are unsure, consult with your instructor or TF. In general, it is better to err on the side of caution and cite sources too much rather than too little. Penalties for plagiarism are severe. Students caught plagiarizing can be subject to lowered or failing grades, as well as suspension or expulsion from the University. For more information, please consult Yale’s Academic Integrity Policy or the following webpage: <http://ctl.yale.edu/writing/wr-instructor-resources/addressing-academic-integrity-and-plagiarism>.

5. Schedule of Readings and Assignments (*subject to revision*)

Seminar	Topic	Readings	Assignments
1 (5/30)	Introduction	[Orientation to the field and our project]	
2 (6/1)	Aims of education: natural and social development	[1] selections from Rousseau’s <i>Emile</i> , bk. 1 [2] R.S. Peters, “Education as Initiation”	response i: 300-500 words; due May 31, 5pm, through Canvas
3 (6/6)	Aims of education: political education	[1] Dewey, <i>Democracy and Education</i> (ch. 7) [2] Appiah, “Culture, Subculture, Multiculturalism” [3] Alex’s visit	response ii: 300-500 words; due June 5, 5pm, through Canvas

4 (6/8)	Aims of education: moral education	[1] Kohlberg, “Stages of Moral Development” [2] Noddings, ch. 8 [3] Curren, “Cultivating the Moral and Intellectual Virtues”	response iii: 300-500 words; due June 8, 5pm, through Canvas
5 (6/13)	Means of education: curriculum decisions	[1] Aristotle, <i>Politics</i> , chs. 7 and 8 [2] Du Bois, <i>The Souls of Black Folk</i> , chs. 3 and 6 [3] Scheffler, “Justifying Curriculum Decisions”	
6 (6/15)	Means of education: learning and teaching (knowledge vs. understanding)	[1] selections from Plato’s <i>Meno</i> [2] Elgin, “Education and the Advancement of Understanding”	mid-term essay: 1000-1500 words; due June 15, through Canvas
7 (6/20)	Means of education: learning and teaching (critical reasoning, teaching oneself)	[1] Passmore, “On Teaching to be Critical” [2] Ryle, “Teaching and Training”	
8 (6/22)	Stepping back: synthesizing diverse aims, the practice of teaching	[1] Film: <i>Dead Poets Society</i> or <i>To Sir, With Love</i> [2] Scheffler, “Is Education a Discipline?”	[final essay presentations]
9 (6/27)	Educational authority and rights: liberation and self-governance	[1] Gutmann, “Democracy and Democratic Education” [2] Freire, <i>Pedagogy of the Oppressed</i> , chs. 1 and 2 (pedagogy as a means to liberation)	[final essay peer reviews]
10 (6/29)	Educational authority and rights: group rights	[1] Halstead, “Schooling and Cultural Maintenance for Religious Minorities in the Liberal State” [2] Okin, “‘Mistresses of their own Destiny’: Group Rights, Gender, and Realistic Rights of Exit”	final essay: 1800-2500 words; due June 29, through Canvas

6. Assignment and Participation Details

Reading/discussion responses: In the first third of the course, you will be responsible for writing three short response papers. Each paper will focus on developing a philosophical skill or writing technique that you can use when you write your longer essays or when you are participating in class discussions.

Response 1: Briefly summarize the central elements of *either* Rousseau's *or* Peters' educational vision. What does your selected figure think an education is and what is it for? What reasons does he give in support of this position? [**300-500 words; due May 31, 5pm, through Canvas**]

Response 2: Briefly summarize a key claim from *one* of the readings for Session 3 that you agree with. Explain why you agree with this claim. You may give your own reasons for this claim or you may explain why you think the reasons the author gives for this claim are good ones. Either way, your focus should be on defending the claim you have selected. [**300-500 words; due June 5, 5pm, through Canvas**]

Response 3: Briefly summarize *an* argument or claim one of us made in the June 6th or June 8th seminar. Give the context for this claim (what view was the claim or argument supposed to defend?) Present an objection to this claim or argument. Explain why and how this objection matters. [**300-500 words; due June 8, 5pm, through Canvas**]

Essays: In the final part of the course, you will write a midterm essay and a final essay. In these assignments, you'll use the skills and techniques you acquired through writing your response papers to develop more sustained arguments. Essay topics and more detailed instructions will be circulated before the essay deadline, but you may also choose to write on your own topic (provided you discuss this with me in advance). You will have two opportunities to workshop your final essay. In Session 8, we will have group presentations of final essays (students will each talk through the central ideas and arguments in their essays and receive feedback from the whole class); in Session 9, we will do peer reviews of paper drafts (students will swap drafts of their papers with another student for feedback).

Midterm essay: **1000-1500 words; due June 15, through Canvas**

Final essay: **1800-2500 words; due June 29, through Canvas**

Participation: 20% of your final grade is based on participation. In order to participate, you must attend. Because the summer session is so compressed, it is essential that you attend all the seminars; if you miss even one seminar, your participation grade will be affected. Throughout the semester, we will be developing strategies for productive participation in philosophy courses and seminars, and I will provide you with feedback about how you are doing. In general, however, good participation involves consistently making contributions to the discussion that show evidence of genuine engagement with the topic under discussion and with what one's interlocutors are saying about that topic; it involves raising questions about the material, posing objections, or offering arguments that help the group think more clearly and carefully about the topic; and it also involves participating in any in-class activities (such as writing exercises, presentations, or peer reviews).