

EDUCATION 2010
Grande Prairie Regional College
(Section A2 - Fall 1994)

Instructor: Aian Segal

Office: C410, 539-2011

Office Hours: Monday/Wednesday: 3:00pm - 3:40pm
Wednesday: 6 - 6:25pm
By appointment.

GOALS:

1. To develop analytical and critical thinking skills in the context of Canadian education.
2. To apply knowledge of the history, philosophy, and sociology of education, to Canadian educational issues.
3. To apply your knowledge of education as a social institution to issues in Canadian education.
4. To develop cooperative group skills.

Course Prerequisite: None

Required Readings:

Social Issues in Education

Contemporary Educational Issues: The Canadian Mosaic, Second Edition - Leonard Stewin & Stewart McCann

[Sections 1 (excluding Ray's article), 2 (excluding Friesen's article), and 3 (excluding Friesen's and Pence's articles) are required. Students may select from the rest of the book sections that interest them]

Issues in Education: Schools and Sexuality

"Adolescent females: The missing discourse of desire"
- Michelle Fine. Article in *Harvard Educational Review*, Vol. 58, No. 1, Feb 1988

"Sex education in Canadian schools" - Edward Herold & Gretchen Hess. Section four in your course text, page 181

Issues in Education: Schools and Sexual Identity

"This school is out" - Jesse Green. In the October 13, 1992 New York Times Magazine.

"Educators, homosexuality, and homosexual students: Are personal feelings related to professional beliefs?" - James T. Sears. In the *Journal of Homosexuality*, Vol. 22, Nos. 3/4

Assignments:

Task

Midterm on lecture material
(Multiple choice; marked on a 1-9 scale)

Essay - due November 14
(Marked on a 1-9 scale; there is a lateness penalty of a 1/2 stanine per day)

3 Journals
(Journals are due Oct 3, Nov 2, Dec 2; each is worth a maximum of 1 stanine; details below)

Self-evaluation
(Marked on a 1-3 scale; due the last class of the semester; details below)

The total of all stanine marks available for assignments is 24. Your marks will be totaled out of 24, a percentage will be obtained, and the percentage will be re-converted to a final stanine grade according to the following table.

Stanine Grade	Percentage Equivalent
9	90 - 100
8	80 - 89
7	72 - 79
6	65 - 71
5	57 - 64
4	50 - 56
3	45 - 49
2	26 - 44
1	0 - 25

NOTE: No class averaging will be done.

NOTE: BONUS possibility: Because class discussion is a vital aspect of this course, everyone may (but not necessarily will) receive a bonus mark for the QUALITY of

your class discussion, based on a combination of the frequency and quality of the participation. You will be eligible only if you display commitment to the course by reading and completing the required assignments. The bonus mark will have a range of 1-3.

SELF-EVALUATION

This provision asks for your assessment of your overall contribution to the course. Explain your reasons when you hand in the evaluation.

Marks are generally accepted without question if you:

1. Complete all assignments.
2. Cite valid, accurate reasons to support your mark.

Essay

Your essay can be on any topic that interests you, even one not addressed in class discussions or lectures. You should critically analyze the topic, using your own and others' ideas. Do not write a descriptive report; think about the ideas you express. Additional research is expected (for example books, articles, newspapers, journals). Be precise, reason rather than merely express opinion, and be grammatical. As this course is part of your preparation to become a professional educator, the quality of writing is important. Aim for a maximum length of 6 pages. Please include a reference/bibliography, and type the essay.

Journals

Each journal is usually one page. Anything pertaining to education, Canadian education, ideas introduced in class discussions or lectures, class interaction, etc., is suitable. Observations about, and suggestions for, the course are also suitable. No research is necessary or expected. The journals allow informal communication with the instructor.

What is Critical Thinking?

Critical thinking is intellectually disciplined thinking, based on skeptical, careful, and logical analysis of evidence. Take nothing for granted and challenge universal truths or explanations. Defer dis/agreement until a later stage of analysis [or at least

do not allow it to guide your analysis], and consider alternative understandings, explanations, and ideas. Critical thought is independent and autonomous.

Uncritical thought is naive, conforming, dogmatic, closed-minded. Uncritical thinkers do not strive for greater understanding or awareness beyond what they already possess.

Critical thinking is facilitated by knowledge of a discipline or subject, skills for generating and processing ideas, and a disposition or habit of mind to use the skills consistently. Reflective teachers are knowledgeable people who think deeply and openly about what, who, and how they teach, and the circumstances in which they teach.

Critical Thinking Objectives

1. Identify and clearly articulate problems and issues

2. Identify arguments:

Premises (beliefs, assumptions, evidence),
inferences, and conclusions

Distinguish between evidence and conclusions
based on that evidence

3. Evaluate arguments:

Question the accuracy of assumptions in arguments
and practices

Assess the quality of the evidence

Evaluate the validity of an inference or argument

Identify implications and consequences of
beliefs, assumptions, and conclusions

4. Construct and communicate sound arguments orally and
in writing

A Critical Thinker's Vocabulary

Argument: Reasons given for or against something. A line of reasoning in which statements are presented to support or refute a point.

Assumption: A statement accepted as true without proof or

demonstration [or without immediately obvious proof or demonstration]. An unstated belief or premise, something taken for granted.

Conclusion: A judgment, decision, or proposition reached by reasoning.

Evidence: The data, facts, information, or understandings on which conclusions are based, or by which proof or reliability may be established. Standards for evidence include accuracy, relevance, and completeness.

Inference: The reasoning or logical thinking associated with understanding evidence and assumptions, and through which one forms conclusions.

Premise: A statement from which something is inferred or concluded. A statement on which an argument is based.

Valid Inference/Argument: A logical inference.

Sound Argument: An argument with "true" premises and valid inference.

DISCUSSION SEQUENCE

1. Introduction to course
2. Lecture: Egerton Ryerson and the development of the modern school system
3. Lecture: The school system as a social institution
4. Lecture: The history of Canadian education
5. "Teacher and pupil rights and the courts: an exploration of stability and change" - page 3
6. "Legal and ethical issues for classroom teachers" - page 21
7. "Minority education rights: Some current issues" - page 59
8. Section 2, excluding the article by John Friesen

9. "Teaching values in Canadian schools" - page 161
10. "Feminism and its impact on educational scholarship in Canada" - page 145
11. "Sex education in Canadian schools" - page 183
"Adolescent females: The missing discourse of desire"
- handout
12. "This school is out" - handout
"Educators, homosexuality, and homosexual students:
Are personal feelings related to professional
beliefs?" - handout

Additional Themes as Essay Topics:

These themes are not to be used as topics for reports, but as areas in education about which questions can be asked. These questions should bring forward points of debate over policy, ethics, purposes, ideals, etc. as they apply to education.

1. Censorship in education
2. Minorities' experiences in the education system:
race, or ethnicity, or social class
3. Human rights and the education system
4. Special needs and the education system
5. Religion-based schools and public funding
6. Technology in the classroom: what kind of curriculum do we want?
7. Technology in the classroom: schools and corporate financing
8. Private morality, public duty: does a teacher have a right to a private life?
9. Education and the definition of intelligence
10. Leaving school early
11. Home schooling
12. Does "democratic education" have more than rhetorical meaning?

The above themes are suggestions/possibilities only. You are not limited to or by them, nor are you limited by how they are phrased. You may select other themes to explore in an essay.