

## EDUCATION 2010

Grande Prairie Regional College

(Section A2 - Fall 1996)

Instructor: Alan SegalOffice: C410, 539-2011

Office Hours: Mondays/Wednesdays: 2pm - 3pm  
 Tuesdays/Wednesdays: 6 - 6:25pm  
 By appointment

GOALS:

1. To develop analytical and critical thinking skills through discussions of issues relevant to 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.

Course Prerequisite: NoneRequired Readings:***Social Issues in Education***

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

***Issues in Education: Schools and Sexuality***

"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.

"The silent minority: Rethinking our commitment to gay and lesbian youth" - Virginia Uribe. *In Theory into Practice*, Summer 1994, Vol. 33, No. 3

Assignments:

Task

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

Essay - due \_\_\_\_\_  
(Marked on a 1-9 scale).

3 Journals  
(Journals are due the first classes of October, November, and December. Each is worth a maximum of 1 stanine)

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

The total of all stanine marks available for assignments is 24. Your marks will be totaled out of 24, a percentage will be worked out, and the percentage will be reconverted 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: There will be no class averaging of final marks based on a bell curve.

NOTE: Because class discussion is a vital aspect of this course, you 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 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 part of your overall grade asks you to assess your general 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. Offer accurate reasons to support your mark.

## Journals

Each journal is usually one page. Anything pertaining to education in general, Canadian education in particular, ideas expressed in class discussions or lectures or through class interaction, etc., is suitable. Observations about, and suggestions for, the course are also suitable. No research is necessary or expected. The journals are an informal type of communication with me.

## Essay

Your essay can be on any topic that interests you, even one not addressed in class discussions or lectures, providing it is relevant to education. Do not write a descriptive report; think about the ideas you express, and write about them critically. Try to explain why these ideas persuade you enough to use them in an essay. Additional research is expected (for example books, articles, newspapers, journals).

Be precise; reason rather than merely express opinion, and be grammatical. Grammatical mistakes may affect your mark. As this course is part of your preparation to become a professional educator, the quality of writing is important. The expected standard is 1500 words. Your mark will be reduced by a half-stanine for inadequate length. Your essay can surpass the word limit.

Type and double-space the essay unless you prefer to hand in a disk with your essay on it. All disks or hard copies must clearly stipulate your name, ID number, date of submission of the essay, and the title of the essay.

If your essay is late a half-stanine penalty per day will be in effect, including weekends. If you hand in your assignment late, have another faculty member or a regular employee of the College sign and date it. There is a lateness penalty of 1/2 stanine per day. In-text referencing and a "Works Cited" section are required, and all documentation must be MLA style. Should either reference section be omitted, your assignment will be

reduced by 1 stanine per section. If a style other than MLA is used, for each kind of referencing [REDACTED] not in the MLA style there will be a reduction of 1/2 stanine.

### What is Critical Thinking?

Critical thinking is intellectually disciplined thinking, based on skeptical, careful, and logical analysis of evidence. At their best, critical thinkers take nothing for granted and willingly reconsider what some think are universal truths or explanations. Try to postpone dis/agreement until a later stage of analysis [or at least do not allow it to guide your analysis], and think about alternative understandings, explanations, and ideas. At its best, critical thought is independent and autonomous.

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

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 the arguments used by the author(s). Arguments rest on premises, which are beliefs and assumptions about the topic being discussed, and also about what the author thinks is good evidence. Arguments also rest on inferences, and conclusions  
Distinguish between evidence and conclusions based on that evidence
3. Evaluate arguments. Question the accuracy of assumptions in authors' arguments and in how they write. Assess the quality of the evidence presented by the author. Evidence can be more than "facts." It can be as well the logic used by a writer.

Evaluate the validity of an inference or argument. Identify some implications and consequences of the writers' beliefs, assumptions, and conclusions.

### 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: The school system as a social institution
3. Lecture: Egerton Ryerson and the development of the modern school system
4. Lecture: The history of Canadian education

5. "Teacher and pupil rights and the courts: an exploration of stability and change" - page 7  
"Legal and ethical issues for classroom teachers" - page 21
6. "Teaching values in Canadian schools" - page 161
7. "Sex education in Canadian schools" - page 183
8. "This school is out" - handout  
Additional article(s) to handed out later

#### Additional Themes as Essay Topics:

These themes are not to be used as topics for reports, but as areas in education about which questions may be asked. These questions should bring forward points of debate about 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.