Syllabus for Education 790  
*Fundamental Issues in Educational Studies*  
Fall Term, 2002 - Section 001  - Tuesdays 1-4  - 2229 SEB

**Purpose and Content of the Course**  
The aim of this course is to acquaint the student with a limited number of theories and concepts that are especially important for the study of educational issues and problems. A secondary, though still central, aim is to assist the student in positioning himself or herself within this theoretical literature, thereby gaining a sense of where he or she stands in relation to the larger ideas and ideals that have characterized educational thought over the centuries.

Five central concepts or ideas form the base of inquiry. They are (1) the state, particularly the pluralist, democratic state; (2) liberal democracy and liberal education; (3) culture and multiculturalism; (4) knowledge and its acquisition; and (5) moral education.

At the conclusion of the course, the student should be able to (1) discuss these five ideas with relative ease and fluency, (2) explore the relationships of these ideas to his or her specialty area, and (3) articulate a theoretically grounded point of view on the nature of formal education in a democratic state.

**Instructor**  
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Web site: [http://www-personal.umich.edu/~gfenster](http://www-personal.umich.edu/~gfenster). On urgent matters, I may be reached at home: 743 426-7853. Office hours by appointment (use email, phone or Tuesday class meetings to schedule appointments).

**Structure of the course**  
Class sessions are generally devoted to thorough explorations of the assigned readings, either through open discussion or topical presentations by the instructor. Small groups may be formed for the purpose of encouraging higher levels of participation in conversation as well as more inventive and robust explorations of ideas. Students may wish to form outside study groups for the purpose of discussing the readings, developing the weekly assignments and papers, and offering critiques of each other’s writing.

**Required texts**  


**Student Duties and Assignments**

Students are expected to (1) attend all classes; (2) complete assigned readings and written work on schedule; (3) actively engage the content and ideas presented in the course; (4) display respectful and thoughtful consideration for the views expressed by all members of the class; and (5) comply with the University's and the profession's guidelines for sound scholarly practices. Assigned and elected reading, weekly hand-ins (“weeklies”) and three papers constitute the “outside class” work for this course.

**Assigned Reading** – Readings are assigned each week near the conclusion of each class. We will begin with a short piece by Fenstermacher & Cuthbert, then to Levinson, followed by Reich, to the Phillips & Burbules text, concluding with Green.

**Weekly Hand-ins** – The weekly hand-ins (“weeklies”) describe the overarching ideas encountered in the assigned readings for the week, and may also include one or more thoughtful questions prompted by the reading. The weeklies will be graded Satisfactory or Unsatisfactory, depending upon the clarity of the writing and the depth of engagement with the ideas encountered. They are due in class on the dates noted below.

**Papers** – Three papers, each in range of 1000-1500 (4-6 pages) words, are required. The purpose of these papers is to encourage each student to engage more deeply the critical issues and central concepts encountered in readings and class presentations. You are encouraged to demonstrate your understanding of the required readings and class discussions, as well as to incorporate relevant collateral readings into your analyses and arguments. Clarity, cogency, substance, and significance are the standards for grading. The topics for each paper are as follows:

1. In John Stuart Mill’s essay, *On Liberty*, he contends that “a general State education is a mere contrivance for moulding people to be exactly like one another: and as the mould in which it casts them is that which pleases the predominant power in the government, . . . in proportion as it is efficient and successful, it establishes a despotism over the mind, leading by natural tendency to one over the body. An education established and controlled by the State should exist, if it exist at all, as one among many competing experiments, carried on for the purpose of example and stimulus, to keep the others up to a certain standard of excellence.”* Compare Mill’s position to that taken by Levinson in *The Demands of Liberal Education* and develop an argument that Levinson might make to Mill in defense of her position.

2. If effective democracies depend on some sort of common identity as well as the formation of a commons, how can a nation committed to racial, ethnic, and sectarian pluralism or multiculturalism remain a vigorous and progressive democratic state?

3. Are there differences among knowledge, opinion and belief? Does educational research depend on an explicit, robust conception of knowledge that distinguishes it from opinion and belief? Are there connections between knowledge and power that may diminish the worth of educational research?

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*This quotation is taken from Chapter V, Applications, and appears just a bit more than half-way through the chapter.*
Approximately 10 days prior to due date (see schedule below), you send a draft of your paper electronically to three other members of your four person discussion group and to the instructor. Members of the discussion group read each other’s papers before coming to class that week. One hour of class time (15 minutes/paper) will be reserved for small-group discussion of the papers. You then revise the paper and submit it on the due date. Electronic drafts are expected to be complete, well-formed papers.

Course grades

Course grades are determined as follows:
- 25% for weeklies (in total) and 20% for each paper
- 15% for seriousness of engagement with and contributions to the course

Weekly Calendar

1. 9/3 Introduction to the Course
2. 9/10 Exploring the Meaning of Education Fenstermacher (Form groups)
3. 9/17 Nature of Liberal Education Levinson, 1-63 Weekly #1 due
4. 9/24 Liberal Education & Schooling I Levinson, 64-131 Weekly #2 due
   9/29 by 5:00 PM Email paper #1
5. 10/1 Liberal Education & Schooling II Levinson, 132-end Weekly #3 due
6. 10/8 Liberal Ed in the Democratic State 1st paper due*
   10/15 Fall recess: No class
7. 10/22 Liberal Ed in the Multicultural State Reich, 1-88 Weekly #4 due
8. 10/29 Multiculturalism & Schooling I Reich, 89-141 Weekly #5 due
   11/3 by 5:00 PM Email paper #2
9. 11/5 Multiculturalism & Schooling II Reich, 142-end Weekly #6 due
10. 11/12 Reconciling Levinson & Reich 2nd paper due*
11. 11/19 The Nature of Knowledge Phillips, vii-43 Weekly #7 due
12. 11/26 Knowledge & Educational Research Phillips, 45-95 Weekly #8 due
13. 12/3 Moral Education I Green, all Weekly #9 due
   12/8 by 5:00 PM Email paper #3
14. 12/10 Moral Education II & Summation 3rd paper due
   12/13 Exam Period: No class

*No weekly due on 10/8, 11/12, and 12/10.

Selected Collateral Reading
Key to topic codes:

- C = Culture
- D = Democracy
- E = Liberal Education
- K = Knowledge
- L = Liberalism
- M = Moral


Green, Thomas F. *Voices*. Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1999. (M)


Useful Reference Works


Goodin, Robert E., and Philip Pettit, eds., *A Companion to Contemporary Political Philosophy*. Cambridge, MA: Blackwell Publishers, 1993, 1995. See especially the essays in Part III, Autonomy (by Dworkin), Community (by Kymlicka), Democracy (by Gutmann), Discourse (by Laclau), Power (Ball), The state (by Dunleavy), Toleration and fundamentalism (by Macedo), and Virtue (by Slote). (L/D/C)

See also relevant articles in the *Encyclopedia Britannica* and the *Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. Both works are available on-line, and may be accessed through the Library’s web site: www.lib.umich.edu. For the Routledge encyclopedia, go to items headed “ELECTRONIC RESOURCES,” click on “Networked Electronic Resources,” then click on the letter “R,” then on “Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy.” For the *Britannica*, click first on “Ready Reference Shelf,” and you will be directed to the encyclopedia. The Web search engine Google (www.google.com) is an excellent search engine for academic resources.