

Syllabus for Education 743
Topics in Philosophy of Education
Fall, 1999

Topic for 1999:
**Philosophical Considerations on
Teaching and Teacher Education**

Instructor

Gary D Fenstermacher
4210 School of Education Building
Phone: 734 647-2448
Email: gfenster@umich.edu
Web site: www.umich.edu/~gfenster

Texts

Required

Thomas F. Green, *The Activities of Teaching* (Edition reissued by Educator's International Press).
Allen T. Pearson, *The Teacher*. New York: Routledge, 1989.
Roger Scruton, *An Intelligent Person's Guide to Philosophy*. New York: Penguin-Putnam, 1996,
1998.
Anthony Westin, *A Rulebook for Arguments* (2nd edition). Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Co.,
1992).

Recommended

Thomas F. Green, *Predicting the Behavior of the Educational System* (Reissued by Educator's
International Press).
Jay F. Rosenberg, *The Practice of Philosophy* (3rd edition). Prentice-Hall, 1996.
Harvey Siegel, *Rationality Redeemed*. New York: Routledge, 1997

Schedule and Readings

September 9

Overview of course; introduction of major topics; overview of readings and source materials;
discussion of student responsibilities

September 16, 23, 30 and October 7

Theme for Part I: The Logic and Language of the Activities of Teaching

Part I explores the conceptual character of teaching, particularly the language used to describe the activities of teaching and the work of teachers, and the various logical forms implicit in these linguistic constructions.

We will begin this exploration with Green's *The Activities of Teaching*. To prepare for the second class, you should read the "Analysis" sections of the first five chapters in Green. If you want to gain a better understanding of the methods used to undertake the analysis, you are encouraged to read the "Methods" sections that interest you (note: do not be sidetracked by the Methods section in the first chapter; subsequent chapters offer far more concrete discussions).

For the third class meeting, read all of chapter 6 (Analysis and Method sections), and the Analysis sections of 7, 8, and 9). Also, read chapters 1 and 2 of Pearson's *The Teacher*.

For the fourth class meeting, read the Fenstermacher article from the *Handbook of Research on Teaching*, plus chapters 3, 4, 5, and 6 in the Pearson text.

October 14, 21, 28, and November 4

Theme for Part II: The Epistemic Features of Teaching

In Part II of the course, we will examine the epistemological basis for teaching. Here we are interested not only in what is known about teaching, but also in what teachers can be said to know.

Our reading for this part will begin with Gary D Fenstermacher, *The Knower and the Known: The Nature of Knowledge in Research on Teaching* (in L. Darling-Hammond (Ed.), *Review of Research in Education 20* (pp. 3-56). Washington, D. C.: American Educational Research Association). We will also look at portions of Harvey Siegel's *Rationality Redeemed*. From this point, students will branch in different directions, depending on whether they would like to explore the nature of knowledge about teaching or the nature of teacher knowledge. Suggestions for appropriate readings will be offered.

Class meetings following the first one in this section will involve the presentation by students of alternative vantage points on the epistemic features of teaching.

November 11, 18, and December 3 & 9

Theme for Part III: The Moral and Ethical Grounds for Teaching and Teacher Education

Part III will attend to the moral and ethical nature of teaching. We will inquire into whether there are moral dimensions to teaching, how these are ascertained and defended, and how they may be judged. We will distinguish between the ethical requirements to serve as a teacher, the moral qualities of a teacher, and stipulations that teachers develop the moral capacities of students.

Our readings for this last part of the course will begin with two pieces by Fenstermacher, one by Strike, and another by David Hanson. As was the case in part II, students are asked to formulate a particular focus on this theme, pursue that focus, read relevant pieces, and share findings with other students in the course. Additional, appropriate readings will be suggested.

Student Work

Students may enroll in this course for 2 or 3 units. Students electing the 2 unit option are required to do the readings, attend all classes, participate in class discussion, and write a reflective piece as a concluding paper for the course.

Students enrolling for 3 units do all of the above, but submit a scholarly paper in place of a reflective paper.

The work done when reading and discussing is as critical as the work done when writing. Philosophical inquiry requires serious, critical reading, and very thoughtful, careful discussion. Full and deep engagement in readings and discussion are as important as any written product. Thus the final grade for the course is based upon the instructor's judgment of the degree of seriousness, attentiveness, and engagement demonstrated by the student.