Philosophy of Education

MW 9 am - 10:15

Prof. Jason Stanley

Philosophy of education, historically and conceptually, is at the heart of the discipline of philosophy. In this class, we shall be studying this strong overlap between philosophy and education. The focus will be on the connection between education and political philosophy. Ultimately, the course is aimed at reflection upon the normative shape and form of education in liberal democracy. This means that we will simultaneously be discussing political systems and education systems. One theme of the course will be the dispute between education as a means to provide for social efficiency, versus education as a means for liberal democratic citizenship. Another theme, within the liberal democratic tradition in education, concerns the nature of an education for liberal democratic citizenship. Is such an education a means for establishing common general interests, something akin to what Rousseau calls the General Will, or is a means to establish a citizenry of independent minded persons who pursue their own individual interests?

Throughout, we will bring classic (and some contemporary) texts in philosophy – mostly social and political philosophy - to bear on the subject of education. If education is where one acquires the capacity for knowledge, then should education involve freedom of speech and thought, or should it involve rather restrictions on freedoms? What is the difference between education and indoctrination? What is the proper relation, in a liberal democracy, between civic education and vocational education? Should the goal of education be social efficiency, or should the goal of education be freedom? What is the shape and form of a system of education devoted to liberal ideals?

SCHEDULE OF ASSIGNMENTS

Week One

August 28

Overview

August 30

Social Efficiency versus Autonomy

Elizabeth Cady Stanton, “The Solitude of Self”
Woodrow Wilson, “The Meaning of a Liberal Education”
Recommended: Daniel Markovits, "Meritocracy Harms Everyone (Links to an external site.)"
Weeks Two & Three Ideology

September 4

Ideology

Louis Althusser, “Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses”
"Detroit's Public Schools are in Crisis (Links to an external site.)"

September 9

Patricia Hill Collins, “Black Feminist Epistemology”, Chapter 11 of Black Feminist Thought

September 11

Miranda Fricker, “Hermeneutical Injustice”, Chapter 7 of Epistemic Injustice

Week Four

September 16

Justice and Social Efficiency

Plato, Books I, II, and III of The Republic

Ralph Wedgewood, “The Coherence of Thrasymachus”

September 18

Justice and Social Efficiency, cont'd

Plato, Books IV, V, and VI of The Republic

FIRST PAPER ASSIGNED

Week Five

September 23

Justice and Social Efficiency, cont'd

Plato, Books VII and VIII of The Republic

September 25

Rousseau and the Communitarian Ideal

Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Discourse on the Origins of Inequality, Part II

Week Six

September 30

Rousseau and the Communitarian Ideal, cont'd

Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Emile(selections)
October 2

Rousseau and the Communitarian Ideal
Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Emile* (selections)

FIRST PAPER DUE

Week Seven  Nationalism and Education

October 7

Johann Gottlieb Fichte, Addresses on the German Nation (excerpts)

October 9

Fichte, Addresses on the German Nation (excerpts)
Lynne Cheney, “The End of History”

Week Eight

October 14

Catch-up day

*** OCTOBER BREAK ***

Week Nine

October 21

*Dewey on Education*
John Dewey, “The Democratic Conception in Education”, Chapter 7 of *Democracy and Education*

October 23

*Dewey on Education, cont’d*
John Dewey, “Experience and Education”
David Labaree, “How Dewey Lost: The Victory of David Snedden and Social Efficiency in the Reform of American Education”

Week Ten
October 28

*Vocational Education versus Liberal Education*

Booker T. Washington, “Industrial Education for the Negro”

W.E.B. Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk*

October 30


Week Eleven

November 4

*Midterm exam*

November 6

Carter G. Woodson, *The Mis-Education of the Negro*

Week Twelve

November 11

Carter G. Woodson, *The Mis-Education of the Negro*(continued)

November 13

Paolo Freire, *The Pedagogy of the Oppressed*

SECOND PAPER ASSIGNED

Week Thirteen

November 18 & 20

Paolo Freire, *The Pedagogy of the Oppressed*

- THANKSGIVING BREAK

- Week 14

December 2

Danielle Allen, *Education and Equality*
December 4
Danielle Allen, Education and Equality (continued)

*** END OF SEMESTER ***

Graded Requirements
There will be two 3-5 page essays assigned, a midterm and a final. These papers should be written drawing on the reading and discussions in class, unless permission is given otherwise. Grades will be based upon these assignments, regular attendance, and civil, regular participation.

Discussion Policy
Student input and participation is a central part of this course. Please come to class prepared to participate, with suggestions for what to discuss based on the readings and the direction of the class. Participation must be civil and respectful; please do not dominate discussion or speak over fellow class participants.