

INTRODUCTION TO CRITICAL PEDAGOGY

Introduction

This is a graduate seminar intended to introduce the ideas, theories and practices that together constitute the field known as critical pedagogy. Within this context we will be reading the work of several authors who are generally considered to have made important contributions to this area. Using their writings we will have an opportunity to explore some of the key themes within critical pedagogy. These include the relationship of education to power; issues of difference and pluralism; the crisis of democratic culture; what it means to teach for democratic citizenship; the social construction of knowledge; dialogic relations in the classroom; teaching for social justice; teaching history against the grain; education and the existential life; popular culture and the curriculum; education and the public space; postmodernism and the end of certainty; and the moral and spiritual dimensions of education.

Obviously the course will take us in a number of directions--considerations of education's connections to the economy, state and culture, as well as how the classroom itself is both a site that reproduces social relations and values of the culture, and also a place that can subvert or transgress traditional relations, practices and forms of knowledge. In this sense the class itself should be a space in which we might explore how to engage in an education that is personally liberating and socially just. While the agenda for the class will be broadly set by the books we will be reading, my expectation is that class participants will use the weekly readings to follow and explore those issues that arouse students' interest, perplexity, concerns and curiosity. The role of the instructor will be that of a resource and facilitator in this process. In keeping with a critical pedagogic classroom my hope is that the seminar will be one in which all participants are willing and able to fully express their thoughts and ideas, and in which there is truly collective sharing and seeking after understanding.

From what has been said it should be evident that the class will work on two--interconnected--levels: it will provide an opportunity for some serious, sometimes difficult, exploration of important philosophical and social theoretical issues in the study of education and culture. Secondly the class will provide a space for a more personal encounter with the way that ideology and culture insinuate themselves into our lives, beliefs, values and emotional being. Each level requires that students' approach the class with patience, openness, respect for others, and a willingness to struggle with the issues.

Expectations

- regular attendance in the class
- careful reading of the assigned text for each week

- energetic participation in each class discussion on the significance of the reading
- a final paper (to be discussed in class)

Readings

Maxine Green, *The Dialectic of Freedom* (Teachers College Press)

bell hooks, *Teaching to Transgress* (Routledge)

Henry Giroux, *Teachers as Intellectuals* (Begrin and garvey)

Michael Apple, *Educating the 'Right Way'* (Routledge)

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