

TPS 3055 H F  
DEMOCRATIC VALUES, STUDENT ENGAGEMENT AND CRITICAL LEADERSHIP  
Fall 2011

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Office hours: After class or by appointment

Role of T.A.: Assist in discussions; offer feedback to weekly questions as needed; read and respond to critical essay; assist in defining focus of final paper and offer feedback if needed as you are developing paper.

### COURSE DESCRIPTION AND PURPOSE

An examination and application of democratic values to issues of student engagement and leadership. The course will explore the relationship between student engagement and critical-democratic leadership, and the implications that emerge for educational administration and curriculum from the nature of this relationship. This course should be of interest to both teachers and administrators.

The course offers a critical examination of the notions of 'democratic values,' 'student engagement' and 'democratic leadership' and the relationships among them. It also applies democratic values (e.g., open-mindedness, dialogue and discussion, participation in decision making, consciousness raising and empowerment, equity, social justice, and respecting difference) to the context of student engagement and educational leadership. What conceptions of student engagement and leadership are consistent with the notion of critical-democratic values? What conceptions of student engagement and leadership are most worthwhile? What practices, conditions and policies support such forms of student engagement and leadership? The answers to these kind of questions will then be applied to the context of educational administration and curriculum. What role should/can an administrator play in supporting student engagement? What kind of community should/can a school develop? How can an administrator support the kind of curriculum (for e.g. one that takes the curriculum of life and controversial issues seriously) that connects student engagement with democratic values? What practices are conducive to and consistent with democratic leadership? How is power constituted within the context of the classroom and schools? What are the challenges and possible limitations to a critical-democratic perspective? While the course offers a strong theoretical base to these issues and questions, it will also offer the students an opportunity to inquire into the conditions of engagement and leadership in their own schools or working contexts.

More specifically, the purposes of the course are:

(1) to critically examine the meaning of and the relationship between democracy, student engagement, and critical-democratic leadership; and

(2) to encourage the students to formulate their views about the topic and support for them with the hope that this will develop/enhance an ongoing, responsible, reflective action or practice.

Topics for discussion include: different conceptions of democracy; different conceptions of student engagement; qualities and assumptions of democratic and inclusive leadership; identification and clarification of meaning of 'democratic values'; application of democratic values to student engagement and leadership; arguments for democratic and inclusive leadership; policies and practices that support student engagement or create disengagement; student engagement and resistance; power relations in the classroom and school; the role of administration in supporting student engagement in relation to the curriculum of life; the symbiotic relationship between curriculum, community and democratic and inclusive leadership.

### FORMAT

To maximize opportunities for participation the class will be a seminar format. In keeping with a discussion-based format, participants will share with instructor responsibility for developing questions central to the course, for maintaining open and thoughtful discussion, and for contributing to the development of an engaging community of inquiry. These expectations require that students a) read all the required articles carefully and thoughtfully, and come to class with prepared questions; b) enter into discussion with others in an open-minded, thoughtful, and considerate manner; c) be open to and patient with the different styles and perspectives of the readings (disagreements are welcomed, dismissals questioned). Our focus needs to include an analysis, challenge and critical inquiry of what we often take for granted, be that in research or in our practice as educators – critical does not mean to be dismissive or demeaning of the issues discussed.

**The success and meaningfulness of the discussions will greatly depend on your preparation and participation.** One of the major aims of class participation is to develop the class into a community of inquiry -- one in which the participants care about the issues discussed and the persons in the group. I urge you to adopt a manner of participation that respects the members of the group. This does not mean that we should not express disagreements, but disagreements need to be expressed in a non-attacking manner.

### TEXTS

1. Selection of articles
2. Paulo Freire, Pedagogy of Freedom: Ethics, Democracy, and Civic Courage. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Pubs., Inc,1998.
3. Philip Woods, Democratic Leadership in Education. London: Paul Chapman, 2005.
4. James Ryan, Inclusive Leadership. San Francisco: Jossey Bass, 2006.
5. John P. Portelli & Rosemary Campbell Stephens, Leading for Equity. Toronto: Edphil Books, 2009.
6. Gary Anderson, Advocacy Leadership. New York: Routledge,2009.

**BOOKS AVAILABLE FROM THE BOB MILLER BOOK ROOM, 180 BLOOR ST. WEST (416-922-3557)**

## CLASS SCHEDULE:

1. **14 September: Introduction**
2. **21 September: Democratic values and differing conceptions of democracy**
  - J. Kincheloe, Critical Democracy and Education
  - b. hooks, Democratic Education
  - B. Levin, The Educational Requirement for Democracy
  - J.P. Portelli, Democracy in Education: Beyond the Conservative and Progressivist Stances
3. **28 September: Democracy and Neoliberalism**
  - E. Hyslop-Margison & A.M. Sears, Neoliberalism, Democracy and Education
  - Ross & Gibson, Neoliberalism and Educational Reform
  - T. Wrigley, Is 'School Effectiveness' Anti-Democratic?
  - M. Apple, Understanding and Interrupting, Neoliberalism and Neoconservatism in Education
  - F. Henry & C. Tator, The Ideology of Democratic Racism
4. **5 October: The pedagogy of Paulo Freire as a basis for examining student engagement and leadership**
  - P. Freire, Pedagogy of Freedom. Chapters 1, 2 and 3.
  - T. Heaney, Issues in Freirean Pedagogy
5. **12 October: Freire continued**
  - P. Freire, Pedagogy of Freedom, Chapter 4
  - Peter McInerney, Toward a critical pedagogy of engagement for alienated youth: Insights from Freire and school-based research
6. **26 October: Conceptions and practices of student engagement**
  - F. Newmann, G. Wehlage & S. Lamborn, The Significance and Sources of Student Engagement.
  - B. McMahon & J.P. Portelli, Engagement for What? Beyond Popular

- Discourses of Student Engagement
  - G. Dei, Understanding Student Disengagement.
  - B. McMahon & D. Zyngier, Student Engagement: Contested concepts in two continents
7. 2 November: **Conceptions and practices of student engagement**
- G. Munns, A sense of wonder: pedagogies to engage students who live in Poverty
  - G. Dei, Rewriting Success: A view of education as holistic
  - J.P. Portelli & A. Vibert, The curriculum of Life
  - B. McMahon & D. Zyngier, Student Engagement: Contested concepts in two continents
  - J. Chesley, Student Engagement and Academic Achievement: A Promising Connection
8. **9 November: Student engagement, 'students at risk', deficit mentality, and equity**
- R. Valencia, Conceptualizing the Notions of Deficit Thinking.
  - J.P. Portelli, C. Shields & A. Vibert, Toward an Equitable Education: Poverty, Diversity and 'Students at Risk' (available from: [http://www.oise.utoronto.ca/cld/images/Toward\\_an\\_Equitable\\_Education.pdf](http://www.oise.utoronto.ca/cld/images/Toward_an_Equitable_Education.pdf))
  - Barbara Comber and Barbara Kamler, Getting Out of Deficit: Pedagogies of Reconnection
  - S. Garcia & P. Garcia, Deconstructing Deficit Thinking: Working With Educators to Create More Equitable Learning Environments
9. **16 November: Conceptions of Educational Leadership and Equity**
- Michael E. Dantley, Uprooting and replacing positivism, the melting pot, multiculturalism, and other impotent notions in educational leadership through an African American perspective,
  - Theoharis, G. (2007). Social Justice Educational Leaders and Resistance: Toward a Theory of Social Justice Leadership.
  - H.Singh, Diversity and Equity in Educational Leadership: From Elusive Conceptions to Arrested Developments.
  - J.P. Portelli & R. Campbell-Stephens, Leading for Equity
  - A. Vibert & J.P. Portelli, School leadership and Critical practice in an Elementary School
  - J. Smyth, Educational leadership that fosters 'student voice'
10. **23 November: Panel presentations on Woods, Democratic leadership**
11. **30 November: Panel presentations on Ryan, Inclusive Leadership**
12. **6 December: Panel presentation on Anderson, Advocacy Leadership And Conclusion**

## REQUIREMENTS AND ASSIGNMENTS

### 1. **Class preparation and participation** (15%)

Come to class prepared to thoughtfully and seriously participate in discussions of course readings and issues. At the beginning of each class you are expected to submit a short response to an aspect of the readings (maximum 120 words), identifying questions, or points that need clarification, or issues for discussion. Copies of your responses will be distributed at the beginning of each class. Please come prepared to talk about your issues. Regular attendance is a requirement. If you have to miss a class for a valid reason please inform me, and by the following class you are expected to submit a one-page response on each of the readings.

### 2. **Short critical essay** (20%) Due: 26 October

A short critical essay (Length: about 1500 words) on the following:  
Are democracy and neo-liberalism irreconcilable? Clearly identify your position and critically argue for your position. What are some of the implications of your position for student engagement and leadership in education?

The evaluation of this assignment will be based on the clarity of your writing, the organization of the discussion, and the extent to which it is analytical, reflective, and critical.

### 3. **Panel Presentations** (25%)

In the last 3 weeks of classes the participants will present on an aspect of one of the following books: Woods, Democratic leadership, Ryan, Inclusive Leadership, Anderson, Advocacy Leadership.

Each presenter will present for 15 minutes. The presentation should be clear and to the point and should include: an explanation and clarification of the aspect as seen by the author of the book, and a critical/analytical/reflective commentary on the aspect which includes the view of the presenter on the matter and its justification. It is important to make connections with aspects of topics/readings discussed earlier in the course. Each presenter should conclude with 2 questions for discussion and should prepare a one page handout with the major points.

The evaluation of this assignment will be based on the clarity of your writing, the organization of the discussion, and the extent to which it is analytical, reflective, and critical.

### 4. **Paper** (40%) Due: 14 December

Length: 4000 words

The purpose of this paper is to give you the opportunity to focus on one of the educational issues of your choice, **selected from the issues (or directly related to the issues) dealt with in this course**. This paper is meant to help you formulate (or re-formulate) some of your major educational views and support/justification for them.

Whatever the issue you deal with and the format the paper takes, your written work is expected to show that **you have seriously thought about the issues arising from the readings and our discussions**.

While describing or summarizing differing positions may be helpful, **the paper is meant to go beyond the level of description**. Keeping in mind the perspectives we have been discussing in the readings and by referring to the readings when necessary, you are expected to analyze and critically discuss the issue of your paper. You are also expected to express your view about the issue and give support for your view. The paper should include a relevant bibliography with at least 3 items other than the required readings

### Criteria for Evaluation

1. Caring, willing and serious consideration of issues arising from readings and our discussions.
2. Reasonableness, which includes: looking at alternative point of views; giving support for your view/s -- this can be done in a variety of ways, for example, giving relevant examples and anecdotes from one's experience, expressing one's feelings and providing arguments; clarifying assumptions; avoiding fallacies; identifying contradictions; connecting ideas and views.
3. Clarity (not the same as offering clichés and jargon)
4. Contribution to the community of inquiry.

