

Philosophy of education HBCSE course outline Jan-Apr 2023

Course Number: SCE201.2

Foundational Elective course; Credits: 4

Course Day & Time: Tuesday (3 PM to 5 PM) and Thursday (11 AM to 1 PM)

Instructor: K. Subramaniam

Course objectives:

1. Understand and appreciate the broader context of human living and collective structures in which education is situated; connect science education to this broader context.
2. Engage with philosophical analyses of foundational ideas in education, understand and critically evaluate them
3. Provide opportunities to read philosophical and non-philosophical texts with philosophical lenses and develop associated skills
4. Provide opportunities to identify, formulate and critically evaluate arguments in philosophical texts and develop associated skills

Introduction

The course will be organized thematically. It will address four broad themes: (i) the broader intellectual, social and institutional context for mass education including science education (ii) inclusive education and social transformation (iii) philosophical reflections on teaching and learning (iv) epistemological perspectives on knowledge with implications for the school curriculum. An additional unit will deal with seminal educational texts and thinkers.

The readings listed below are provisional and may be changed as the course progresses. Depending on the interest of participants, some units may be curtailed while giving other units more attention.

Assessment will be aligned to the course objectives listed above and will be through classroom discussions and presentations and short and longer written essays.

Unit 1: Modernity, Enlightenment, Democracy

Unit 1 will begin with a historical perspective on modernity through a discussion of the scientific revolution, the Enlightenment and associated changes. The central place of reason and autonomy in post-Enlightenment thinking and its impact on education will be discussed. We will also discuss critiques of the educational aim of autonomy together with critiques of the notion of modernity. Further readings will discuss the close link between democracy and education.

Readings

1. Russell, B. (1946/2000) *The History of Western Philosophy*, Routledge. Book 3, *Modern Philosophy*, Part 1, *From the Renaissance to Hume: Chapter I (General Characteristics)*, and
2. Chapter VI (*The Rise of Science*), pp. 479-482 & pp. 512-525.

3. Kant's essay "What is Enlightenment?"
4. Foucault's response: "What is Enlightenment?"
5. Hand, M. "Against autonomy as an educational aim"
6. Responses to Hand (reading/s to be selected)
7. NCERT Social Science textbook for Class 9: Chapter 1: What is democracy? Why Democracy
8. B.R. Ambedkar "Democracy" and "Franchise" In Rodrigues, V. (2019). *The essential writings of B.R. Ambedkar*. Oxford.
9. Democracy and Education (Reading to be selected: Dewey/ Nussbaum)

Unit 2: Education, Inclusion and Social Transformation

Unit 2 will focus on the aim of education as social transformation and examine the discourse on inclusion in this context. It will examine the roots of exclusion in institutionalized education.

Readings

10. Freire, P. Selection from *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*
11. Selection from Phule's *Memorial to the Hunter Commission*
12. Ambedkar and Dewey on education (Reading to be selected)
13. Discourse on merit (Reading to be selected: Aman/ Subramanian)
14. Analysing a film text: "Aarakshan"
15. Human Dignity (Reading to be selected)
16. Guru, G. Theorizing Humiliation. In *Humiliation: Claims and Contexts*

Unit 3: Philosophical reflections on teaching and learning

This unit will explore address questions such as "What is good teaching?", "Is teaching a profession?", "How are views of teaching and learning connected?" through a reflection on the practice of teaching.

Readings

17. Reading a video text: Young historians
18. Reading a video text: Ball – teaching episode
19. Lampert, M. (2001) *Teaching problems and the problems of teaching*. US: Yale University Press. Chapters 1 and 2.
20. Carr, D. "The complex character of teaching", In *Making sense of Education*.
21. Further Selection/s from Carr, D. *Making sense of Education*. (To be identified.)

22. Giroux, H. A. (2018). Teachers as transformative intellectuals. In *Thinking about schools* (pp. 183-189). Routledge.

Unit 4: Concepts, Meanings, Knowledge

Sense-making or meaningful learning is contrasted with rote learning in nearly all education policy documents. This unit will examine this idea from a philosophical standpoint and will be somewhat more technical than the previous units. How have concepts and meaning been understood in post 19th Century philosophy beginning with Frege? How do concepts function in the different disciplines of knowledge: mathematics, science and social science?

Readings

23. Carr, D. "Learning: meaning, language and culture". In *Making sense of Education*.
24. Understanding Frege's contributions to logic and conceptual analysis (Reading to be selected)
25. "Concepts" – *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (available online)
26. Vosniadou, S., Vamvakoussi, X., & Skopeliti, I. (2008). The framework theory approach to the problem of conceptual change. In the *International handbook of research on conceptual change*.

Unit 5: Classics in the Philosophy of Education

This unit provides an opportunity for participants to engage with classics in the philosophy of education. Students will read and analyse an important text and present it to co-participants. Readings will be selected in consultation with the participants from among thinkers including the following: Aristotle, Rousseau, Dewey, Tagore, Gandhi and J. Krishnamurthi.

Assessment (provisional):

Discussion in and outside the classroom is strongly encouraged. Interventions should be thoughtful and respectful, with listening and speaking having equal importance. Multilingual expression is strongly encouraged. Presentations and written submissions should be clear and crisp, reflecting critical engagement with the literature referred to, not mere summarizing or reproducing. Plagiarism of any kind is totally unacceptable.

- Discussion: 10%
- Two short write-ups: 30%
- Two presentations: 20%
- Final essay: 40%