Trends in Philosophy of Education

In this course, we will explore fundamental questions regarding education raised by dominant philosophical trends in the history of thought, primarily in western tradition and try to see how these conceptual issues derive from thinkers’ larger metaphysics and epistemology. In accordance with those, how aims and methodologies of education, the nature of curriculum, the role of teacher have been envisaged by various thinkers, what role states have played in propagating and implementing these aims giving rise to different educational practices, and in this curious politico-philosophic matrix, what role and status of learner emerges in the end.

Some themes cross-cut these trends like changing concepts of knowledge, learning, education etc. Through their philosophic evolution, we will explore how these trends have impacted current educational practices of our times.

Reading material: Selected excerpts from original texts of the thinkers.
Supplementary readings: Articles (may be updated)

Format: Readings will be given prior to the class. Student-led discussions.
Evaluation: Problem-based assignments (for each trend) and a presentation at the end of the course

Idealist trends:
- Knowledge, Education and Learning
- State’s role in education
  
  Plato: Learning as recollection [Republic, Meno, Theatetus]  
  Descartes: Methodical doubt, reasoning [Meditations, Discourse] 
  Kant: character formation, moralization [On Education]

Realist trends

- Practice, Observation
- Empirical verification of knowledge claims
- Role of science and experimentation
- “Back to nature”

  Aristotle: learning by doing [Nico. Ethics, Politics]  
  Bacon: empiricism, inductive reasoning [Essay, Some Thoughts Concerning Education]  
  Locke: Mind as ‘tabula rasa’, empiricism Emile]  
  Rousseau: Back to nature

Pragmatist trends

- Role of society and culture
- Role of play in children’s learning activities
- Implications for education: aims and outcomes
Dewey: Role of experience in education  
Mead: social character of education

Contemporary Cognitive trends:
- Theories of cognition
- Learning and cognition
- Behaviorist theories of learning
- Cognitivist theories of learning
- Constructivist theory of learning
- Situated theory of learning
  - Learning as transfer
  - Learning as construction
  - Learning as legitimate peripheral participation

Lave: situated cognition  
Lave and Wenger: legitimate peri. part.

Primary texts

**Plato:** Learning as Recollection = Meno 70a-85d, 96-100 (knowledge vs opinion)
Pheado 72c-78b
Theory of knowledge: knowledge vs opinion (Book 5), innate ideas, divided line (Book 6 509d-511e), allegory of the cave (book 7, 514a-520a)
Theatetus: Knowledge as perception (151e-187a)
Knowledge as judgment (187b-201c)
Knowledge as true judgment (201d-210a)
Republic – Books 5, 6 and 7
Meno: 70-100
Theatetus: 151 – 210

**Descartes:** methodical doubt, reasoning
Meditations – 1 (perceptual illusion, dreams, deceiving god)
Meditations – 2 (cogito ergo sum)
Discourses – part 2

**Kant**
On education: Chapters 3 and 4

**Aristotle:**
Nicomachean Ethics: Book 1, 6. Politics: Book 1, 7, 8
Bacon
Inductive reasoning: New Organon IV

Locke
Essay: Book 2 (1-3, 6-10)
Some thoughts concerning education: Intro (xlvi, Sections 29-58, 158-190)

Rousseau
Emile: Books 3, 4, 5

Heidegger
What is called thinking? = Lecture 1, 2

Dewey
Education and Experience: Chapters 1-4, 8

Mead
Philosophy of education: Lectures 1, 18-21, 27-34

Lave
Cognition in practice: Chapters 2-3, 6-7
Communities of practice: Intro., Chapters 1, 3, Epilogue

Supplementary Readings

First module: Idealist Trends

4. ‘The Implications of Idealism as an Educational Philosophy in Jordan as Perceived by Elementary Teachers’ M.A. Momany and O. Khasawaneh, 2014

Second Module: Realist Trends

1. A Comparison of the Scientific Method and Achievement of Aristotle and Bacon, W. M. Dickie, 1922
2. Francis Bacon’S Philosophy under Educational Perspective, G. A. Batista, 2013
3. Enlightenment and Education, R. Mclean, 2010

Third Module: Pragmatist Trends

1. What Exactly is Constructivism in Education?, Leslie Smith, 1999
2. New Perspectives on Context-Based Chemistry Education: Using a Dialectical Sociocultural Approach to View Teaching And Learning, Donna King, 2012

Fourth Module: Cognitive Trends

2. Situated Learning and Cognitive Apprenticeship, M. Gessler, 2009
3. Candy Selling and Math Learning, G. B. Saxe, 1988
4. Situated Cognition and the Culture of Learning, J. S. Brown et al, 1989
7. Information, Knowledge and Learning: Some Issues Facing Epistemology and Education in a Digital Age,