**PHIL 285: Moral and Philosophical Issues in Education**

Spring 2017

MWF 10:10-11:00 a.m.

Caldwell 105

**Instructor: Macy Salzberger**

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Caldwell 206B

Office hours: MW 11:10 a.m.-12:10 p.m.

**Course Description:** Given any particular aim of education, how can we politically justify a public institution of education? How should our politics affect educational practice through educational policy? Should we support school choice? Should we endorse affirmative action? How should our conception of education and its aims, political justification, and policies, affect the content and modes of instruction in the classroom? What should our curriculum look like? What should our teaching practices look like? The substantive goal of this course is to work toward familiarizing ourselves with the various voices in contemporary debates on education, carefully evaluating the arguments they give and trying to develop rationally defensible positions of our own. The course requirements are designed with the intention of developing your ability to reason philosophically in conversation, in presentation, and in writing. Please note that this is a writing intensive course: your papers and forum posts will amount to over 10 (single-spaced) pages of writing by the end of the semester.

**Required texts:**

*On Education* by Harry Brighouse

*Education and Equality* by Danielle Allen

*Dilemmas of Educational Ethics* edited by Meira Levinson and Jacob Fay

These can be purchased in the student bookstore, or through online retailers (sometimes for a great deal less). All of the other readings will be provided to you on the Sakai site for this course.

**Learning objectives:**

1. mastery of the material
2. the ability to reason philosophically
3. highly thoughtful and imaginative engagement with the issues
4. sympathetic and constructive engagement and/or disagreement with the arguments of your classmates and the authors you read
5. clear presentation of your own arguments

**Grading:**

1. Paper #1: 20%
   1. 10% First Submission
   2. 10% Revised

(2) Paper #2: 20%

(3) Paper #3: 25%

(4) In-class presentation: 5%

(5) Discussion Forum Contributions: 15%

(6) Attendance and In-Class Participation: 15%

I adhere to a strict policy of blind grading. This means that (with a few announced exceptions), the work that you hand in should have only your PID number.

What constitutes good writing for a philosophy course may be unlike writing for many other kinds of disciplines. Given this, I will dedicate class time to making sure that you have a good sense of what it is that I will be looking for in your papers.

I rely on the standards set by the registrar in assigning letter grades to work. You can find the explanation of letter grades here: <http://registrar.unc.edu/academic-services/grades/explanation-of-grading-system/>

**Participation (15%)**: You will attend every class, unless you have a good reason not to. If you anticipate missing class, write to me, explaining why, beforehand, understanding that I am a reasonable person, but that I also have responsibility to ensure that you are learning.

Since this is a discussion- based course, you are expected to be a regular participant in the discussion. However, the quality of your comments is far more important than the quantity of comments you make. So, to be a good participant in the discussion (and to be successful in the class) you will need to both come to class and carefully read the material assigned in advance.

To have fruitful class discussions, everyone must do the reading in advance. If you don’t do the readings, you will be lost in class. If you don’t come to class, you will be lost in the readings and assignments. So, arrive prepared and willing to engage. Without this preparation and willingness on your part, we will not be able to have the sort of productive class discussions that will enable you to succeed in and to enjoy this course.

As you will be assigned particular questions to discuss in the online forum, I expect that you have come to class with something to say prepared. In an effort to get more reticent students to engage in classroom discussion, I may cold call students based on what they have written on the discussion forum. This practice is not intended as a means of humiliating or “outing” students for not having done the reading. On the contrary, I will call on students whose discussion forum contributions I have found particular useful in guiding discussion, whose voices might not be otherwise heard without some form of cold-calling employed. In addition, I may occasionally employ in-class writing assignments that I will collect and use in part to determine your participation grade.

**Papers (65% total):** Everyone is required to write three papers for this course. Each paper should be around 1000-1500 words (roughly 2-3 pages single-spaced) and should present, explain, and critically engage with a particular issue brought up in the readings and class discussions. I will provide a list of paper topics well in advance of the due date for the first paper. For the second and third paper, you will be expected to come up with your own paper topic. While my approval is not required for your paper topic, it is strongly encouraged that you come to discuss your proposed paper topic with me before you begin writing. You must provide both a hard copy (prepared for blind grading) and a soft copy of your paper (emailed to me with document named as “PID-#of paper assigned.”). An example document name would be something like, “906444444-3” where “906444444” refers to the student’s PID and “3” signifies that it is the third paper for the course. Papers are due at the start of class on the due date. The weight of the papers increases throughout the course to give credit to students who have improved on their writing throughout the course.

**Revise and Resubmit:** You will be given the opportunity to revise and resubmit your first paper after you have received feedback from me. This is not an opportunity to submit a half-baked paper the first time around because you will be given a second chance to turn in the “final” paper. The first submission will be worth half of your paper’s grade and the revision will be worth the other half. The aim of this assignment is to give you a chance to learn how to write a philosophy paper without penalizing you for just learning the ropes. You will not be penalized for submitting a worse version in your second paper; if you perform worse with your revision, you will receive the same grade as your first submission. However, it is not guaranteed that you will receive a higher grade and I will make note in the comments if your performance has declined.

**Electronics policy:**  All electronics (laptops, iPads, cellphones) are prohibited in this class and must be put away and out of sight before class starts. You will leave a very bad impression by texting or fiddling with your phone in class. If you would like to request an exception, you must first discuss it with me.

**Discussion Forum (15%):** Every week, you will be expected to contribute to an online discussion forum on Sakai. These forum discussions are intended as a way to get you engaged with the material and each other outside of the classroom. Half of you will be assigned to “Group 1” and half of you will be assigned to “Group 2.” Group 1 and Group 2 will alternate between Role A and Role B each week. Your “Role A” posts will count toward your discussion forum grade while your “Role B” posts will count toward your participation grade.

On the week your group is assigned to perform Role A, you will be expected to post an original response to the readings based on the discussion question posted for the week. Your post must also be between 200 and 300 words (roughly half a page to three quarters of a page, single-spaced) and submitted to Sakai no later than by Sunday at noon. For those assigned to perform Role B, you will be required to respond to someone else’s post (either an original post or a response someone else has written on an original post) by Tuesday at noon.

In either role, your post should demonstrate that you have read the material for the week and that you have exercised independent thought. Respectful disagreement is encouraged, but you should make sure that you have done your best to understand what the author has said before disagreeing. Disrespectful behavior, such as insults, aggression, or discrimination, will be penalized and subject to the Honor Code.

At the end of term, you will have ideally contributed seven Role A posts and seven Role B posts (cumulatively, this should be at least seven single-spaced pages of writing). Your Role A posts will be graded out of 10. If your Role A forum post demonstrates to me that you have made at least a good-faith effort to carefully engage with and understand the week’s readings, you will receive at least a grade of 7. If the point you discuss not only demonstrates such a good-faith effort but is also fully accurate, you will receive at least an 8. Scores of 9 and 10 are reserved for those who demonstrate a cogent, critical contribution. In posts of this sort, the author will have raised some objection or offered some support of their own that challenges or reinforces arguments in the week’s readings. Your total discussion forum grade will be out of 70. Your Role B posts will essentially be graded for completion, although you will only be considered to have “completed” the assignment if you have demonstrated a good-faith effort to engage with or understand the material. Your Role B posts will be worth 7% out of the 15% of grade assigned to your participation.

**Peer Feedback:** For each paper, I will assign you a partner to whom you will submit a draft five days prior to the paper’s deadline. Within 48 hours, you must provide feedback to your partner on their draft. When you send your peer their feedback, you must also cc on the email so that I can give you credit for your feedback. These comments will be worth five points of your final paper grade.

**In-class presentation (5%):** In the last unit of the course, you will be asked to facilitate discussion with one or two other students. Your job will be to produce the daily handout, present the day’s readings to the rest of the class, and engage the class in discussion. You will also be required to write a 500 word report (about one page, single-spaced) on how you prepared for your presentation and reflecting on how your presentation went. This is a good opportunity to present ideas you might have for a final paper and receive feedback from the class, although you are not bound by the topic you present on in class for your final paper.

**Late work policy:** Late work will not be accepted without a grade penalty. For every 24-hour period your paper is late, I will deduct half a letter grade, or 5 points, from the grade you would have received on that assignment if it were on-time (that means a B paper that is one day late becomes a B- paper, or, an 85 becomes an 80). That said, I understand that we all have bad luck sometimes. If you feel you are under special circumstances that justify me giving you an extension, please ask me for one as soon as possible. The earlier you ask, the more likely I am to give you an extension. Failure to turn in either one of the papers will result in failing the course.

**Academic integrity and honor code:** Be aware that academic dishonesty is a serious offense at UNC. All students are expected to adhere to the UNC Honor Code. Do make yourself familiar with the university’s policies on plagiarism. It may be useful to take the UNC plagiarism tutorial: http://www.lib.unc.edu/instruct/plagiarism. As your instructor, I am required to report any case of suspected plagiarism to the Honor Court (which I hear is pretty brutal. The minimum sentence is expulsion for a semester, even if you plead guilty).

The UNC Honor Code defines plagiarism as

“the *deliberate* *or* *reckless* representation of another's words, thoughts, or ideas as one's own without attribution in connection with submission of academic work, whether graded or otherwise”.

**Some things that count as plagiarism:**

1. Copying and pasting someone else’s ideas without citation. Citations must include author’s name and page number(s).
2. Paraphrasing someone else’s ideas (for instance, ethical theories) without citation.
3. Unauthorized collaboration with others (students or otherwise). You are permitted to discuss with others, but all work that you turn in must be your own.

As the Office of Student Conduct stresses, plagiarism occurs in many forms and for many different reasons, and sometimes even when we are not aware of doing it. So please consult me if you are unsure or worried that something you have written may count as plagiarism, before it’s too late!

**Useful Resources**

* **Your student rights and responsibilities** along with the Instrument of Student Judicial Governance can be found here:<http://studentconduct.unc.edu/students/rights-responsibilites>
* **The Writing Center** provides various services that can help you develop and perfect your writing skills. They also have great writing guides on their website. See especially the handout on writing a philosophy paper:<http://writingcenter.unc.edu>
* The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy ([online](https://plato.stanford.edu)) is an excellent resource.
* My [website](http://macysalzberger.wixsite.com/macysalzberger/resources-for-students) provides resources for writing a short philosophy paper.

**SCHEDULE OF CLASSES**

**COURSE INTRODUCTION**

*FORUM TOPIC*: Introduce yourself!

Week 1: Why study philosophy of education?

Wednesday January 11

introductions- no reading assigned

Friday January 13

Laden, Tony. “Prologue” in *Reasoning A Social Picture*. Schouten, Gina and Harry

Brighouse. “The relationship between philosophy and evidence in education.”

**UNIT I:** **The aims of education**

*FORUM TOPIC:* Is autonomy always valuable?

Week 2: Educating for Self-Government

Monday January 16

**NO CLASS MLK DAY**

Wednesday January 18

Brighouse, Harry. “Education for Self-Government” in *On Education*.

Friday, January 20

Ebels-Duggan, Kyla. “Autonomy as an Intellectual Virtue.”

*FORUM TOPIC:* Is public education responsible for creating good workers?

Week 3: Education for Economic Participation

Monday January 23

Friedman on neighborhood effects

Wednesday January 25

Brighouse, Harry. “Educating for Economic Participation” in *On Education*

Friday January 27

Morton, Jennifer. “Molding hardworking, conscientious students.”

*FORUM TOPIC:* What does it mean to flourish?

Week 4: Education for flourishing

Monday January 30

Brighouse, Harry. “Educating for Flourishing” in *On Education*.

Wednesday February 1

Allen, Danielle. “Chapter One: Two Concepts of Education” in *Education and Equality*.

Friday February 3

Curren, Randall. “Education as a Social Right in a Diverse Society.”

*FORUM TOPIC:* What is civic education?

Week 5: Creating citizens

Monday February 6

Gutmann, Amy. “Democracy and Democratic Education.”

Wednesday February 8

Allen, Danielle. “Participatory Readiness” in *Education and Equality*.

Friday February 10

Lebron, Chris “Thoughts on racial democratic education and moral virtue.”

*FORUM TOPIC:* What justifies public education?

Week 6: Political liberalism and the aims of education

Monday February 13

Shelby, Tommie. “Justification, Learning, and Flourishing” in *Education and Equality*.

Wednesday February 15

Brighouse, Harry. “Should Citizenship Education be Compulsory?” in *On Education*

Friday February 17

Concluding thoughts on Unit I/Catch-up

**PAPER #1 DUE**

**UNIT II: Topics in K-12**

*FORUM TOPIC:* What rights should parents have over their children’s education?

Week 7: Parental rights

Monday February 20

Brighouse, Harry. “Should Governments Support Religious Schools?” in *On Education*.

Wednesday February 22

McAvoy, Paula. “There are No Housewives on Star Trek.”

Friday February 24

Gutmann, Amy. “What Does School Choice Mean?”

*FORUM TOPIC*: Should we endorse school choice?

Week 8: School choice

Monday February 27

JEN MORTON VISITING- reading TBD

Wednesday March 1

“Waiting for Superman”

Friday March 3

“Waiting for Superman”

*FORUM TOPIC*: How should we evaluate charter schools?

Week 9: School choice ctd

Monday March 6

“To charter or not to charter” Brighouse and Schouten

Wednesday March 8

Charter schools and evaluation case study

Friday March 10

**PAPER #1 REVISE DUE**

**NO CLASS SPRING BREAK MARCH 9-MARCH 18**

*FORUM TOPIC*: What is the point of grading?

Week 10: Grading and assessment

Monday March 20

Lareau, Annette. “Invisible Inequality.”

Wednesday March 22

Promotion or retention case study

Friday March 24

Grade inflation case study

*FORUM TOPIC*: How much attention should we pay to kids below the bubble?

Week 11: Educational triage

Tuesday November 1

Monday March 27

Jen Jennings “Below the bubble”

Wednesday March 29

Rocky choices case study

Friday March 31

Concluding thoughts on Unit II/Catch-up

**PAPER #2 DUE**

**UNIT III: Topics in Higher Education**

*FORUM TOPIC*: Are the liberal arts justified?

Week 12: Justifying the liberal arts

Monday April 3

Robinson, Marilynne. “Save Our Public Universities: In Defense of America’s Best Idea.”

Wednesday April 5

Gutmann, Amy. “What Makes a University Education Worthwhile?”

Friday April 7

Hudes, Quiara Alegria. “A World of Cousins” in *Education and Equality*.

*FORUM TOPIC*: How comprehensive should academic freedom be?

Week 13: Politics and academic freedom

Monday April 10

Steve Drummond’s interview with Paula McAvoy and Diana Hess, Harry Brighouse’s Crooked Timber post

“Should teachers of controversial issues disclose their opinions?”

Wednesday April 12

Haidt, Jonathan and Greg Lukianoff. “The Coddling of the American Mind.” Levine, Joseph. “Did Salaita Cross the Line of ‘Civility’?”

Friday April 14

Manne, Kate. “Why I Use Trigger Warnings.”

*FORUM TOPIC*: Should we endorse affirmative action?

Week 14: Affirmative action

Monday April 17

Excerpts from *Living with Moral Disagreement* by Michelle Moses

Wednesday April 19

Blum, Larry. “Affirmative Action, Diversity, and Racial Justice: Reflections from a Diverse, Non-Elite University.”

Friday April 21

Morton, Jennifer. “Can education undermine representation?”

*FORUM TOPIC*: What are the responsibilities of the university professor?

Week 15: The role of the university professor

Monday April 24

Fish, Stanley. “Save the World on Your Own Time.”

Wednesday April 26

Brighouse, Harry. “Obligations in Non-Ideal Conditions: The case of tenured professors in selective colleges”

and universities.”

Friday April 28

Concluding thoughts on Unit III/Catch-up

**MAY 1, 8 A.M., FINAL PAPER DUE AND CLOSING DISCUSSION**