



EDUCATION 5200
**Curriculum Studies and Classroom
Practice**

Spring 2018: January 8th – April 14th, 2018

Online Delivery

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Office Hours: Please feel free to call, email, post a message or question on Moodle for me, or if you would like to make an appointment to meet in person or skype.
Weekly online drop in (Zoom) office hours will be set up.

The course will be administered through Moodle. All relevant resources, criteria and assessment tools will be provided there:

<https://moodle.uleth.ca>

COURSE DESCRIPTION

If you have the end in view of... children learning certain set lessons, to be recited to a teacher, your discipline must be devoted to securing that result. But if the end in view is the development of a spirit of social co-operation and community life, discipline must grow out of and be relative to that aim.

(Dewey, 1943)

Good teachers are more than they do; they are the teaching.

(Aoki, 2005).

Welcome to Education 5200! The calendar course description for Ed 5200 is that it is an examination of the relationship between curriculum studies and practices in a variety of educational settings. I look forward to our work together as we explore a wonderfully rich topic!

What is curriculum? At first, that question may seem straightforward. Some may suggest it is a document, what we teach, the content that our subject specialization focuses on, and/or the work we do to prepare students for post-secondary/the world of work. Of course, as Pinar (2004) states, curriculum does include these “literal and institutional meanings” (p. 185), but as we dig deeper into the concept of curriculum we find that the concept is much richer, multifarious and complex than we may first assume. Curriculum, according to Pinar (2012) and others, is a “complicated conversation between teachers and students over the past and its meaning for the present as well as what both portend for the future, curriculum theory is focused on educational experience” (p.2). Curriculum understood from its infinitive form of the noun *currere* means “to run a course”. This suggests that curriculum is an event or an experience as opposed to a noun (Pinar, 2015).

This course offers the opportunity to dig deeper into curriculum theory. Educational practice is constantly being bombarded by movements, new techniques, and ways of understanding what we do in schools. When we slow down and explore these current trends we find they have ancestors; history that is embedded in ways of thinking about and understanding the work that we do as teachers. This course invites you to explore curriculum in its complexity and to begin asking important questions such as (but not limited to):

- Who decides what knowledge is of most worth?
- Whose voices are heard, and whose are left out?
- How do social, cultural, historical, political, and geographical forces influence curriculum change?
- What is the role of the teacher as curriculum worker and change agent?
- How do students and teachers together negotiate the lived reality of the classroom?
- How do we read and write the world in educational contexts?
- What does it mean to be a literate, ethical, participatory citizen?
- What is schooling? What 'should' it be? What 'could' it be?
- What do communities/society need the young to know, be able to do, and become?
- What are the histories, current states and future directions of curriculum studies and classroom practice?

(Adapted from Leah Fowler, 2015)

Course Goals

Our work in this course is to become aware of and to join in these complex, rich conversations that are already at play in education and society. We will read thoughtfully and carefully from key curriculum theorists and movements throughout the 20th and 21st century to help explore how our current educational settings have been impacted and still, in many cases, echo many of the ideas throughout time.

David Jardine (2013) reminds us that part of our work is to recognize that schools are not a predetermined institution that is “just the way things are.” Schools, curriculum and education are human creations, that were created in response to human, social, political, cultural, environmental and philosophical understandings of the world and schooling.

The trick here, of course, is to remember that this is not what the real world is in some intransigent, ontological sense. Rather, it is how the world has turned out and therefore, two things. First, there are causes and conditions that can be untangled that can help us understand something of how and why things turned out like this, thus loosening their grip on our imaginations and practice. (Jardine, 2013, p. 7)

This means part of our work is to look at why schools and curriculum have turned out the way they have. We will find that as we pull threads of current and past schools of thought that there are connections, ideas, assumptions, beliefs, arguments that are all connected to these ideas. Our job then is not to end these conversations with definitive answers, but become a part of these conversations that are always already at play, and allow our understandings of curriculum to become part of the important dialogue in exploring how else could curriculum be understood and enacted. Maxine Greene (1995) contends it is imperative to disrupt seeing the school as “predefined and given” (p. 23).

Only when the given or the taken-for-granted is subject to questioning, only when we take various, sometimes unfamiliar perspectives on it, does it show itself as what it is – contingent on many interpretations, many vantage points, unified (if at all) by conformity or by unexamined common sense. Once we can see our givens as contingencies, then we may have an opportunity to posit alternative ways of living and valuing and to make choices. (p. 23)

In order to do this work carefully and thoughtfully we need to be **active participants** with the literature and with each other by engaging in the following:

1. Deepen your knowledge of curriculum theorists, trends and conceptualizations.
2. Articulate developing views about the purpose and complexities of how we understand curriculum, teaching and learning.
3. Compare and contrast multiple discourses throughout curriculum research.
4. Contextualize the readings, activities and discussions to your own experiences within the classrooms and/or place of learning.
5. Demonstrate effective communication through proficient writing, online platforms (ie. Moodle, Zoom and others as appropriate).

Key Course Topics for Ed 5200

The key topics/themes for Ed 5200 will roughly frame our course structure, yet we recognize that often these themes are recursive and connected. As well, bringing current Canadian curriculum context will be embedded throughout the course.

Introduction to Curriculum Studies and Classroom Practice

- What do we know and believe about curriculum?
- Curriculum definitions, beliefs, theories
- Key curriculum theorists through time and movements

Historical Foundations and Origins of Curriculum

- Traditional frames, components and language of curriculum
- Key curriculum movements in the 20th and 21st centuries

Reconceptualizing Curriculum Theory

- Metaphors Curriculum-as-Plan; Curriculum-as-lived
- Curriculum as critical pedagogy
- Curriculum of care
- Curriculum, contemplation and place

Current Curriculum Considerations

- Curriculum and Reconciliation of Indigenous knowledge
- Ecopedagogy and critical global curricula
- Current curricular trends, movements, conceptions

RESOURCES AND SUPPLEMENTARY RESOURCES

Assigned Textbook:

Flinders, D.J. & Thornton, S.J. (Eds), 2017. *The curriculum studies reader, 5th Edition*. New York: Routledge (it will be available in UofL Bookstore. You can access the online bookstore site <http://lethbridge.verbacompare.com/>)

Other Assigned readings will be posted each week on Moodle.

An important resource book that I will be referring to throughout the course (not assigned text) is Stanley, D. & Young, K. (2011). *Contemporary studies in Canadian curriculum: Principles, portraits and practices*.

- Tensions, politics, and responsibilities in Curricular accountability
- Issues and trends in curriculum studies

Educational reforms in Alberta, Canada, and many countries in the world are wrestling with the complexities of what do we want our students to know and who do we want them to be in the face of our current global challenges. The work in this course will engage participants in reading, writing, and debating the role of the student and teacher in curriculum, instruction and assessment.

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS AND ASSESSMENT

There will be 2 synchronous online Zoom classes throughout the term:

- 1. Wednesday, January 10th 7:00pm-9:00pm**
- 2. Monday, April 9th 7:00-9:00pm**

A. What is my professional curriculum context?5% (Max 1000 words. Due date January 13)

This assignment is an informal introduction and description of your current professional, curriculum and working/life context as well as your beginning thoughts about curriculum studies. As we begin our work, taking time to reflect on your own understandings of curriculum, teaching and learning is an important first step in your journey. Based on the two beginning articles: John Dewey's "My Pedagogic Creed" (text book) and Cynthia Chambers' article on "A Topography for Canadian Curriculum Theory" – uploaded to Moodle reading site), plus our initial discussion on Zoom, this initial assignment asks you to explore your current state of thinking about curriculum and education in general. Please describe your own professional context and your reading response to those two articles (looking back, looking now, looking ahead) as a way of beginning your written work. If helpful, you can use Dewey's titles as pointers to help you organize your thoughts, or any other form that makes sense to you. Please send this first assignment to me on Moodle dropbox by January 13 (January 16 at the latest) so that I can learn your needs and interests to help shape the upcoming discussions and readings.

B. Weekly Group Discussions (10 weeks). 40%

“Surpass the given and look at things as if they could be otherwise.”

(Maxine Greene, 1988)

- As we go through the course we will be exploring complex topics on curriculum theory and practice from a wide range of key theorists. **As an important member** of a learning group you are asked to read and reflect on the assigned readings and videos and then take up the posted questions in your assigned group(s) on the Moodle discussion board site. You are expected to respond to the information from the readings and connect them with your own experiences as educators and learners. It is crucial for you to **go beyond just stating opinions and instead provide evidence** linked to the research. Keeping in mind the process you have used in previous courses in analyzing a research article, your job is to explore the authors’ ideas and explore the ways the authors’ ideas either speak to or go against your own experiences and how the ideas may allow new understandings for your teaching practice to emerge.
- You will be placed into a discussion group (depending on numbers) where you will be posting and responding to throughout the course). The intent is to create a rich conversation (as opposed to stilted, disconnected responses).
- Each week you will receive feedback in the form of a grade (please refer to the discussion rubric provided) as well as written feedback.
- The group discussion board will close at midnight at the end of the week. Please try to submit your **initial response early in the week** so that others can have time to respond to your post.

Background and Purpose: This assignment assures that you closely read the required texts, gives you practice in writing academic summaries, and practice in how to integrate your own voice from personal experience. This means that you do not write from ungrounded opinions, but organize your thoughts in levels that connect concrete references to abstract generalizations, informed by your synthesis of the readings. I encourage a critique of the readings to create a deep discussion in your responses to each other. Different voices and theories will purposefully be given so that you can explore the complexity of what we call curriculum. Blogging these summaries is a worthwhile tool for discussion and inquiry. By providing a platform that promotes involvement, educators can learn to inform their practice, and public and academic discourse. Researchers identify factors that inform effective use of discussions/blogs in graduate work as: providing writing practice, receiving timely feedback through comments and replies, providing opportunities to read and write across disciplines, and developing incentive for considering a variety of viewpoints. See <http://blogs.scientificamerican.com/literally-psyched/2013/04/12/why-grad-schools-should-require-students-to-blog/>

Procedure:

1. I will create weekly discussion groups on Moodle. Your **first entry** (not for marks-but for participation) will be an introductory piece in which you tell us a bit about yourself, your teaching context, your hopes regarding this course-after reading the course outline and participating in the online Zoom session.
2. **For the subsequent weeks**, write and post your initial response to the questions posed online based on the readings/activities from the week. Ensure that your response is written not as a rant or opinion paper but a well argued point of view using and citing the readings from the week, tying it in with earlier readings or other readings you may have done in the past, and connecting it with your own lived experience as an educator.

3. Read, reflect upon and respond to the other group members' posting. These should not be simply "I agree or disagree", but respond in a way that is thoughtful, meaningful and engages in a deeper dialogue. It can include asking questions and making connections to your own understanding which furthers the dialogue.
4. Some key questions to help frame your reflection/discussion will be provided on Moodle. These are starting points only, not a prescribed list.

Criteria for assessment of weekly discussions: 10 postings throughout term.

1. There will be 10 weeks of discussion forums that will be assessed. See attached schedule for dates and topics. The first assessed response will be the week of January 15-21. There will NOT be a discussion forum for Reading Week (February 19-25) or on the last week of classes (April 9-14).
2. You will be assessed (rubric posted on Moodle) on your ability to engage in the conversations with your group members in deep, meaningful ways by responding to the questions (initially) as well as contributing to the conversations that emerge with your group members. **It is expected that students will be online a number of times throughout the week.** It is crucial to go beyond stilted individual posts and instead immerse yourself into a conversation. It is also very important to post your original posting early on in the week (Sunday, Monday or Tuesday) so that others have time to read, reflect upon and respond to your posting. The weekly discussion will be closed at Midnight on the Sunday of the week.

C. Personal journaling through Thoughtbook and Final Summary 15%
Deadline: April 11th, 2017
Thoughtbook and Final Summary posted on Moodle (if possible)

As you engage in the readings, discussions, and your final inquiry project, it is hoped that your understanding of teaching and learning deepens and may even be transformed in the process. In order for you to map your thinking and contemplate on your insights and growth you are asked to keep a Thoughtbook throughout the term. This should be an integral part of where your discussions for each week emerge as well as ideas and understandings for your final project. This should not be seen as an extra but an integral part of your learning for this term.

What is a Thoughtbook?

A Thoughtbook is a place for you to explore a defined inquiry using an iterative process. It provides a place for you to record your critical and creative thinking about the course. They have 3 defining elements:

- a. **They are a response to genuine inquiries:**
 - This is the place where you can, without concern for assessment or getting it "right" explore an issue, question through careful reasoning, reflection and revision. It is a space where you can build upon what you have read, discussed and thought about, and to be able to "Muse critically and creatively" (p.3)
- b. **They are ongoing and iterative:**
 - You are to return repeatedly throughout the semester to revisit and build upon what you have previously thought or proposed. The recurring question is: *"How has what I have just learned informed, altered, or challenged my thinking about the issue, problem, or project that I am inquiring into?"*
- c. **They involve reflective and investigative thinking**

- They serve a dual purpose: First to encourage you to think back by reviewing, critiquing and testing what you have already proposed and thought and, second, to invite you to “think forward” by imagining, hypothesizing, and extending your ideas and plans for your own teaching and learning.

Despite its name, a Thoughtbook does not need to be a book. It can exist in a wide range of formats, depending on what works best for your own learning and the context. Here are some examples:

- A dedicated journal/notebook separate from class notes that is used only to capture and support your thinking about the particular question/topic with which you are pondering/wondering about.
- One-page templates that provide a scaffold for repeated observations and conclusions.
- Blank sketchbook or scrapbook – that provides open spaces for you to free think, draw, mind map, sketch, paste images.
- Digital notepads (cyberpads) where you can create, assemble and annotate multiple iterations of your ideas and designs.

- **Audio or video recordings**

- **Or any other form that makes sense for your own learning.**

(Based from *Using Thoughtbooks to Sustain Inquiry. The Quick Guides to Thinking Classrooms.* The Critical Thinking consortium, www.tc2.ca.)

What you choose to pay attention to, and the format that you do this is up to you. Some questions that *may help* guide your reflection:

- What are some of the ideas that you are asked to think about that you may not have considered in the past?
- What are some ways you are being opened and challenged?
- What ideas provoke you?
- What do the readings bring your attention to in your own practice? How could you understand teaching/learning differently?
- What are some possible changes you could see emerging from these new ideas?
- What are the underlying assumptions regarding why we teach and what education is and who is it for?
- What are the underlying assumptions about the role of teachers? Students?
- Based on what we discussed about what is curriculum and the purpose of education, what are some of the discourses and assumptions the author(s) is making about the topic?

As you reflect, keep in mind the idea of Maxine Greene’s quote and wonder about the “givens” that are being addressed and how could they be otherwise? Keeping this openness and wonder into possibilities is really important. It is important to go beyond critiquing and think and move towards how these ideas could possibly impact your students.

At the end of the semester you will be asked to write a **short, reflective paper** (4-5 pages double space) on the learning and new understanding that has emerged for you. ***Instead of a paper, you can choose another mode of representation that would provide insight into your reflection and growth.*** Please discuss possibilities with the instructor to confirm it will meet the requirements of the assignment. Ideas can include an aesthetic representation, audio/visual reflection, prose/poetry or any other ideas you may have!

Final Summary

Your reflection should address:

- Your initial thoughts, things you wondered about and reflected upon during the semester.
- What were some key turning points for you during the semester? Use some excerpts/images/quotes as artifacts for these moments and describe why these were important for you and your understanding.
- Explore where you are now compared to your initial thoughts and things you still wonder about.
- Share the reflective experience that the Thoughtbook offered for you as a teacher and anything you have learned about yourself as a reflective practitioner.

A holistic rubric will be used for assessment of summary (posted on Moodle). Thoughtbook will be based on completion only.

D. Inquiry Proposal and Project 40%

**Deadlines: Proposal: February 10th (Moodle dropbox)
Final Project: April 13th (Moodle dropbox)**

There is 2 parts to this assignment:

1. **Inquiry Proposal - 5%**
2. **Final Inquiry Project – 35%**

Part 1: Proposal

As early as possible you need to identify a topic of study that intrigues you in relation to curriculum theory and practice. Give yourself time to investigate the topic first before firmly deciding what it is that you wish to inquire. Then begin to hunt and gather, research, question, ponder, wonder, dig into your topic. What is your question? What is it that you want to examine closer? How and what do you want to actually do and why? Why is it a topic worthy of anyone's attention?

After you have considered these questions, you are ready to write your proposal for your topic. In 500–750 words (as a rough estimate), submit your proposed topic of inquiry, explaining what you are interested in learning, why you care about the topic, and how you are going to make others care about it. In your proposal, you will also need to explain the shape your inquiry will take. Are you creating a video? A blog? A website? A podcast? A paper? Please include in your proposal all peer-reviewed sources you have gathered that will inform your work, as well as any other sources you hope to use. An initial list of references you have explored in determining your proposal needs to be included (APA Format).

Part 2: Project

This is your opportunity to take up something that you are passionate about in regards to curriculum theory and explore in depth. Where should you start? It can be from an event/experience or a question about the everyday aspects of teaching or learning. Or it can be from becoming engaged and interested in one author's ideas or a theme we have taken up in this course that you now want to deepen your understanding. I challenge you to be creative and imaginative. Do something that inspires you and will be meaningful for you as a critical pedagogue.

Some ideas (not exhaustive)

- A deeper exploration of a past curricular movement and impacts it has on today's education (Progressive movement, Efficiency movement, post-sputnik, Freire and Social reconstructionist movement as a few examples)
- An exploration of current curricular movements (STEM education, Whole language movement, Trends in Mathematics, Social studies, Art, Physical Education, Science, Place-based Education, First Nations, Metis & Inuit perspectives, for example) that is currently being used/explored in schools. This would be a great opportunity to explore more deeply where these ideas originate from, key thinkers and concepts within the movement and assumptions of curriculum theories within the movements). Most "new ideas" have a past and ancestry that is often ignored in the latest fads.
- An indepth exploration of ideas of a certain theorist and their impact on curriculum theory. Works of John Dewey, Paulo Frieire, Maria Montessori, Jerome Bruner, Ralph Tyler, Ted Aoki, Bill Pinar, Cynthia Chambers, David Jardine, Michael Apple, Ned Noddings, Chet (C.A.) Bowers, William Doll, Paulo Freire, Dwayne Donald are some possibilities.
- A project that you are implementing or considering implementing that includes both the development of the project as well as a study into the theory, history of where the conceptual framework of this project may be connected with.

Use your time during the first part of the course to begin to dig into topics and pay attention to the research so you can unearth your real questions. Begin by taking up a significant event or experience from your own pedagogical practice and experience, or a reading/author that you are intrigued by. This can be something that is ordinary and day-to-day that you have taken for granted but you now wonder about, or something that addressed you or shattered your preconceived notions of education, teaching and learning. Begin your paper by writing about the story of your experience/situation carefully describing what happened. Be as descriptive as possible.

Now go back and read your narrative. What themes emerged, what questions do you have that need exploring? What broader contexts are they situated in? Are there multiple voices with different foci on your topic? Begin exploring how best for you to take this up: Is this a paper? A blog? A project? A website? A classroom project? No matter which form your project takes up, a thorough review of the literature is needed to help ground your work.

It is crucial no matter what and how you take up your topic that you **reference (using APA) the relevant literature that informs your deepening understanding**. What broader curricular issues, questions, ideas, problems, etc. does your work illuminate? How will this understanding impact your classroom and your students? How does this shape your understanding of what it means to teach well? What does this say about your own curricular beliefs?

Final Project will be due on April 13th, 2017 in Moodle drop box. Possible length of a written inquiry project should be 3500 to 4000 words in length and follow APA Format. Assessment Criteria posted on Moodle.

GRADES AND UNIVERSITY REGULATIONS

The Faculty of Education has a standardized grading schedule for graduate courses. This schedule will be used for determining final grades for graduate students in this course.

Numeric Value	Letter Grade	Grade Point
97 – 100	A+	4.00
93 – 96	A	4.00
90 – 92	A-	3.70
87 – 89	B+	3.30
83 – 86	B	3.00
80 – 82	B-	2.70
Note: Any course with a grade of less than B- cannot be considered for credit in the M.Ed. program.		
77 – 79	C+	2.30
73 – 76	C	2.00
70 – 72	C-	1.70
67 – 69	D+	1.30
63 – 66	D	1.00
<63	F	0.00

Student Accommodations:

If you have a disability, special learning needs, or a recent injury that requires academic accommodation to complete the required activities and/or assignments, please follow the procedures outlined in the University Calendar.

You are encouraged to contact the Accommodated Learning Centre (<http://www.uleth.ca/ross/accommodated-learning-centre/>) for guidance and assistance. Counselling Services (<http://www.uleth.ca/counselling/>) is another resource available to all students.

Professional Writing Expectations:

It is expected that your writing meet the expectations of a graduate level program, including abiding by the **APA Publication Manual 6th edition**. All writing must demonstrate appropriate standards of written communication; grammatical errors, lack of clarity, poor structure or organization are not acceptable.

Student Conduct and Professional Standards:

Students are subject to the student discipline policy for academic and non-academic offences in accordance with the University Calendar (www.uleth.ca/ross/academic-calendar/sgs)

Additionally, in the Faculty of Education graduate programs, students are required to adhere to the conduct expectations as stipulated in Faculty of Education policies, and the Standards of Practice/Conduct, Code of Ethics, and/or the Code of Professional Conduct for the field, as noted below.

ATA Code of Professional Conduct

[http://www.teachers.ab.ca/About the ATA/UpholdingProfessionalStandards/ProfessionalConduct/Pages/CodeofProfessionalConduct.aspx](http://www.teachers.ab.ca/About_the_ATA/UpholdingProfessionalStandards/ProfessionalConduct/Pages/CodeofProfessionalConduct.aspx)

Standards of Professional Conduct for Master of Education Students:

<http://www.uleth.ca/graduate-studies/master-education/resources/beginning-your-program/professional-conduct>

Academic Honesty:

The University of Lethbridge subscribes to Turnitin.com, a plagiarism detection service. Please be advised that assignments submitted in this course may have their originality verified using this system.

Privacy and Confidentiality:

- Although we place a heavy emphasis in this course on your own school settings, practices, and data, it is imperative that we refrain from using personal identifying information in our dialogue.
- The personal information your classmates and course instructors disclose to you should not be discussed with anyone outside the course, now or in the future, unless the author of the personal narrative has stated otherwise. Unless you have the person's specific permission, please do not mention identifying information about the person's story (e.g., no names, no agency) and keep the disclosure broad rather than specific.
- Recording lectures or class discussions is not permitted unless the instructor and all audience members have granted permission in advance.
- If you are aware of any situations where individuals are not honoring the expectation of privacy/confidentiality, you are encouraged to intervene by discussing the matter with that individual. If you are not comfortable doing so, or if a resolution is not forthcoming, please contact your instructor as soon as possible.
- While faculty/staff and students are expected to take all possible precautions to safeguard the personal information that is exchanged in each course, whether it be in discussion forms, web conferencing, recordings, assignments, etc., there is no guarantee of confidentiality.

Withdrawal from an Online Course:

If you have indicated in writing to your instructor that you will be withdrawing from an online course, your access to that course will need to be removed as soon as possible. You must notify the program staff immediately to complete the required paperwork.

REFERENCES (Possible sources for your work)

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