

TE 917 Contemporary Theories and Discourses in Education
Fall, 2008

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I. Course Books

The Passion of the Western Mind

by Richard Tarnas

The Metaphysical Club: A Story of Ideas in America

by Louis Menand

Cultural Theory And Popular Culture: An Introduction

by John Storey you should get the updated 2006 version ONLY

From Modernism to Postmodernism: An Anthology

ed. Lawrence Cahoone (oldest and cheapest is fine)

Derrida For Beginners

by Jim Powell

How to Read Lacan (How to Read)

by Slavoj Zizek

Political Philosophy: A Very Short Introduction (Very Short

by David Miller

The rest of our readings are on ANGEL

Suggested:

APA (2007). **Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association**
(Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, 5th Ed) American
Psychological Association.

Concepts of the Self (Key Concepts (Polity Press). (Paperback)

by Anthony Elliott

II. Introduction to the Course

This course is designed to provide a substantial foundational introduction to contemporary educational theories and discourses including brief discussions of logical positivism and structuralism, and focused study of neo-pragmatism; liberal democratic theory; diversity, race and postcolonial theories; critical theories; post-structuralism(s) and queer theory; and psychoanalytic theories. These theoretical frameworks offer various interpretations of society, knowledge, ethics, identity, culture, and power - and the relations among them. In philosophical terms, this means that contemporary theories differently imagine the epistemological, axiological, and ontological nature of education, curriculum, instruction, teachers, school policies, text, and related phenomena. Your exploration of the use of theory in education -together with an analysis of primary theoretical texts-provide points for reference and departure for developing a rich beginning understanding of contemporary theory in education studies.

In this class you will:

- * Learn to understand the ways in which contemporary theories arose in the context of cultural movements and historical circumstances.
- * Critique ideological, historical and theoretical assumptions about curriculum and education.
- * Understand the principal discourses that define current scholarship in education.
- * Characterize themes that inform specific theoretical examinations of education.
- * Apply a range of contemporary theory and discourses to the analysis of education.
- * Appreciate the practical consequences of theories for research and change in schools.

III. POLICIES

Please bring the readings for the day with you to class.

Attendance: Attendance is required and is an integral aspect of this course. The environment of discussions, activities and collaborative work cannot be reproduced outside of class. Thoroughly preparing for class by careful reading, completing participation assignments accounts for 40 % of your grade.

Readings: Theoretical work requires a different type of attention than ordinary reading. Plan to read each piece at least twice. During your first read, you should get oriented to the overall meaning. During your second read you should take notes and outline for exact meaning and also to prepare your summaries.

Collaboration: Sharing your perspectives and engaging in dialogue with peers is a valuable source of continued learning in education, and is integrated into this course. You will sometimes be asked to work with others to summarize ideas and lead discussions.

Assignments: Ordinarily, late submissions will be considered only in the case of documented situations which are serious enough to prevent a student from completing the work and are outside of the student's control, such as documented medical emergencies. When assignments are submitted late without an excuse, grades will be lowered a letter grade for each day that the work is late. If a late submission is anticipated, please contact the instructor as early as possible.

Academic Honesty and Citations: All of your writing must be your own and must be meticulously referenced according to APA style. Directions for APA style is available at http://webster.comnet.edu/apa/apa_index.htm and many other places on the web. You may also wish to purchase the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* published by the American Psychological Association (4th ed. American Psychological Association: New York. 1994).

II. Assignments

10% In-class Participation Your active participation, in which you knowledgeably discuss readings and assignments for the day, is expected. Your writing assignments and discussion leadership responsibilities will help you to highlight major points of the readings and clarify questions for discussion.

I. Short Writing 40%

Early writing 8%

4% Summaries for week three. See syllabus

4% Short Paper on Pragmatists for Class four. See syllabus

Four Summary OR Reaction Writing 32% (4 X 8) (*Due at the beginning of class*).

Students are required to submit about typed summary OR reaction to the assigned readings **for 5 weeks. We'll do the first two together. You can decide which weeks' readings you'd like to respond to.**

Summaries. If you find a set of readings especially difficult, detailed or important, you should carefully **Summarize the major points** and **identify key terminology and concepts** for readings that you find especially challenging or especially interesting. You can do outlines bullet points if you want. Do each article for a given day. Each is worth 10 points. Aim to be concise but accurate. This is to be typed.

- **Summarize** the major points this author make about curriculum and education.
- **Identify** key terminology and concepts.

Reaction Papers.

Reaction Papers should be well-formed academic essays (about 4-5 pages) that make connections across the week's assigned readings, and, if relevant, to your own particular interests. Your paper should be well-grounded in the texts themselves. As you see fit:

- **Contextualize** this theory (or theories) within the history and philosophy of curriculum. What type of approach is described? How does it "fit" within philosophies of curriculum? What theories are related?
- **Critique** this theory or issue in curriculum, or an aspect of this theory. Analyze the way in which it is presented. Compare related readings.

II. Deconstructing Power and Knowledge 20% (more detailed guidance will be provided)

- A. Deconstruct a cultural space or a "placed" event that is educative in some way, keeping in mind that *most if not all* spaces can be "read" and educative. It can be a museum, a football game, a store, part of a school, a clinic, a library etc.
- B. Deconstruct a hegemonic concept or ideal like "good teacher" or "ideal family" or "science education."

III. Theories in use - “Contributing to the Conversation” 30% (more detailed guidance will be provided)

Literature Review

Our class offers a broad overview of major theories. However, each of our class members is most interested in a particular topic or theory. You will write an overview paper of about 10 -15 pages and then include short annotations of survey scholarly articles, books and other sources (e.g. dissertations, conference proceedings) relevant to the particular issue, area of research, or theory, providing an overview as well as a description, summary, and critical evaluation of each work. In writing the literature review, your purpose is to convey to your reader what work is “out there” and how theory is being used. Titles will be something like this: “Queer theory in Education” or “New theoretical perspectives in Rehabilitation Counseling” or “New Ways of Theorizing Teacher Education: Poststructural and Psychoanalytic Perspectives.”

Critical Essay. (This is the hardest to do well)

Article critique: In these critiques, which should be approximately 15-20 pages in length, you should present your critical responses to the claims of an exiting recent article including or focusing on the use of theory in the article. Say something interesting. Other options: Compare or contrast this theory or an aspect of this to another thinker. Discuss the implications of this theory for a field. You may wish to write a critical response to a current issue or an article in-print or respond to the contents of a themed journal.

OR This can be a Critical Book Review Essay, about 12-15 pages. A list of numerous suggested titles will be offered. You may locate a book of your choice with instructor’s approval. The book should be published in the last two years and address a contemporary theory in education. You may review two related books and address both in your essay. Detailed guidance about how to write a review and select a journal will be provided.

Your paper should be formally written and documented in APA style and have a clearly articulated thesis highlighting the main point you are trying to make, using the best evidence you can marshal. “Contributing to the Conversation” should be written for and submitted to a conference or a print or electronic journal. You may submit this after class is over but you must give me a copy of your acknowledgement letter or e-mail by Dec 13, 2008

Some web sites for Terms in Philosophy and Cultural Theory:

<http://www.utm.edu/research/iep/> (*Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*)

<http://www.freedonia.com/panic/> (*Postmodern Dictionary*)

<http://www.press.jhu.edu/books/guide/> TARGET= (*Guide to Literary Theory*)

<http://plato.stanford.edu/contents.html> (*Encyclopedia of Philosophy*)

http://carbon.cudenver.edu/~mryder/itc_data/postmodern.html (*Postmodern references*)

Pronouncing names

Peirce -- rhymes with “terse”

Nietzsche --pronounced “knee-chuh”

Foucault --pronounced “Foo-koe”

Baudrillard --pronounced "Bo-dree-ar"

Kuhn --pronounced “Coon”

Liotard --pronounced “Leo-tard

Giroux--pronounced “Jer-roo”

Derrida--pronounced “Dare-ee-DAH”

1. 8/25 Introduction: Pre-Modern to Modern to Postmodern

Death of God and Technologies of Power

Handouts:

Foucault: From "Truth and Power"

Lyotard, From *The Postmodern Condition A Report on Knowledge*

C. Beck: Postmodernism: Pedagogy and philosophy of education

http://www.ed.uiuc.edu/EPS/PES-Yearbook/93_docs/BECK.HTM

2. 9/1 No class

3. 9/8 Intellectual Foundations of Contemporary Theory- Pre-Modern to Modern

Death of God and Technologies of Power

2. Tarnas: from *The Passion of the Western Mind. parts V and VI.*

MP: Friedrich Nietzsche, "The Madman," "How the World Became a Fable,"

"The Dionysian World" 116-17 and "The Genealogy of Morals," 120-129

Michel Foucault, "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History"

Due: Practice doing an outline. Start with the Tarnas outline and complete and improve it as you see fit, and move on to outline the Foucault pieces.

4. 9/15 Pragmatism to Neo-Pragmatism: The Death of Ideology

Menand: *The Metaphysic Club*. All Read: Preface, Chs. 1,2, and 13

MP: From 'How to Make Our Ideas Clear': Charles S. Peirce.

MP: William James: What Pragmatism means:

<http://www.marxists.org/reference/subject/philosophy/works/us/james.htm>

Hollinger and Depew: Pragmatism: from Progressivism to Postmodernism: General Introduction

skim: Dillon, D., O'Brien, D. & Heilman, E. (2000). Literacy research in the next millennium:

From paradigms to pragmatism. *Reading Research Quarterly* 35 (1), 10-26.

Due: Write a 3-4 page paper defining the main ideas of pragmatism and explaining how and why Holmes came to his theory and why Dillon, D., O'Brien, D. & Heilman came to recommend pragmatism. Holmes, Peirce, James, and Dewey shared and promoted a new attitude to human inquiry, captured, Menand says, in "an idea about ideas": "they all believed that ideas are not 'out there' waiting to be discovered, but are tools—like forks and knives and microchips—that people devise to cope with the world in which they find themselves." Knowledge, according to this way of thinking, is socially produced by groups, not by individuals, and the "survival" of ideas in a culture depends not on their correspondence with the world, but their "adaptability" to prevailing circumstances.

5. 9/22 Ideology and Power: Political Structuralism

Compare Gramsci's and Althusser's ideology with Foucault's concepts of discourse and power.

What examples of panopticism (internalized policing and monitoring of thoughts and actions) and hegemony (consent to dominant views, beliefs, and practices) do we encounter every day? In schools?

Storey: Cultural Theory and Popular Culture, Ch. 4 Marxisms

McLaren, P. Critical Pedagogy: A Look at the major Concepts

MP; Foucault, Michel Panopticism from *Discipline & Punish: The Birth of the Prison*

Also read: Panopticism in Wikipedia.

Heilman, E. (2005). Towards a eutopic critical pedagogy honoring identity and practice. In Gur Ze'v, I. (Ed). *Re-imagining Critical Pedagogy and Critical Theory*. New York: Kluwer Academic Publishers.

Bring: An article using Foucault in education or in your area if you can find one.

6. 9/29 Linguistic Structuralism to Poststructuralist and the Subversion of the Sign

Storey: Cultural Theory and Popular Culture, Ch. 6 Structuralism and Poststructuralism

Ferdinand de Saussure, From *Course in General Linguistics*

Hall, S. (1997). The Work of Representation. In S. Hall (ed) *Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices*. London: SAGE

Heilman, E. (2007). Little hegemonies and transgressions of family: Tales of pride and prejudice. (pp.7-27). In Turner-Vorbeck, (Ed.) *Other Kinds of Families: Diversity in School and Culture* N.Y.: Teachers College Press (just see how theory is used here)

7. 10/6 Derrida and Deconstruction

Derrida for Beginners by Jim Powell

MP: Jacques Derrida, "Différance" 225-40

Derrida, Jacques. (1978). Structure, sign and play in the discourse of the human sciences. In Jacques Derrida, *Writing and difference* (Alan Bass, Trans.) (pp. 278-293). Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

8. 10/13 Class Presentations "Deconstructing Power and Knowledge"

9. 10/20 Psychoanalytic Theories

Storey: Cultural Theory and Popular Culture, Ch. 5 Psychoanalysis

Davis and Sciefler: Psychology and Psychoanalysis

Shoshana Felman: Psychoanalysis and Education

10. 10/ 27 Zizek and Lacan

Lacan: The Mirror Stage

Zizek: Two ways to avoid the real of desire Zizek: How to read Lacan

12. 11/3 Critical Race and Postcolonial Theory

Childs, Peter & Williams, R. J. Patrick. (1997). *An introduction to post-colonial theory*. London: Prentice Hall.[Introduction: Points of departure, pp. 1-25]

MP: Cornel West, "A Genealogy of Modern Racism"

Ladson-Billings, G.: New directions in multicultural education: Complexities, Boundaries and Critical Race Theory

13. 11/10 Feminist Analysis

Weiler: Feminist Analysis of Gender and Schooling

St. Pierre: Poststructural feminism in education: An overview

MP: Butler: Contingent Foundations: Feminism and the Question of Postmodernism

14. 11/17 Queering Identity/Difference, Performing Sex/Gender

Butler: Gender Trouble

Jagose, "Queer" and "Afterword," pp. 72-100, 127-132; and
Davis, "Gaining a Daughter," pp. 1-4. [IV]

Britzman and Gilbert: What will have been said about gayness in teacher education

Shlasko: Queer (v.) Pedagogy

15. 11/24 Liberalism after Identity Politics

Miller: Political Philosophy: A Very Short Introduction chs. 3, 4, 5
(read for core liberal concepts of freedom and justice)

Appiah: Liberal Education: The United States Example

Feinberg and McDonough: Liberalism and the Dilemma of Public Education in the United States.

16. 12/1 Hyperreality, Representation and Postmodern Popular Culture

Storey: Cultural Theory and Popular Culture, Ch. 8 Postmodernism

Baudrillard: The Process of Simulacra

Giroux: Animating Youth: the Disnification of Children's Culture
<http://www.gseis.ucla.edu/courses/ed253a/Giroux/Giroux2.html>

O'Barr, William. (2006). Representations of Masculinity and Femininity in Advertising.
Advertising & Society Review, 7(2).

Lacroix, Celeste. (2004). Images of Animated Others: The Orientalization of Disney's Cartoon Heroines From The Little Mermaid to The Hunchback of Notre Dame. Popular Communication, 2(4), 213-229.