ED130: HUMAN DEVELOPMENT AND LEARNING
Talloires 2019

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Description of the Course:
How do knowledge and learning unfold? And how much of what we know is a product of our education and culture? What impact does early education have on later learning? What is the role of play in learning? Does learning unfold from individual intellectual growth or from social experiences? Study in a foreign country invites questions about one’s own identity, education, and the universality of human development. In an effort to explore these questions, this course introduces students to theories of child development and learning across cultures. Central to the study of human cognition, students start by examining the work of Swiss psychologist, Jean Piaget and travel to the Piaget archives in Geneva. Following, students compare and contrast European models of education, including the methods of Maria Montessori, Rudolf Steiner, and Reggio Emilia, taking a trip to a local Montessori school to observe this philosophy in practice. Classes emphasize the role of play in learning, and students help to plan and organize the Tufts in Talloires Kids Day. In class discussions students question the universality of human development, explore the influence of culture on learning, evaluate best practices of education and teaching, and compare French, European, and American attitudes toward childhood, education, and learning.

Goals for student learning:
● Students will evaluate formative theories of human development and learning through different cultural perspectives;
● Students will compare and contrast the purposes of different educational pedagogies and practices, with an emphasis on French, European, and American models of education;
● Students will analyze the influences that have shaped their own identities as learners and apply these theories to their reflections.
● Students will engage in a spirit of playful curiosity and collaborative learning.

Course Requirements:
● Carry out readings assigned for each class before coming to the class meeting.
● Participate in class discussions, presentations, excursions, and other activities.
● Keep a journal to record observations, insights, questions, and new knowledge.
● Participate in a collective practice of daily reflection by keeping a moon journal.
● Write a 3-page response paper (typed and double-spaced) analyzing theories of development and learning across cultures.
● Write a 3-page reflection paper comparing and contrasting a student’s own educational experience with theories of education presented in the course.
● Create a final paper or project integrating course and students’ own developing understanding of human growth and learning across cultures.

Course Readings
Supplementary weekly readings are listed in the course syllabus and will be made available.

Course Assignments:
Journal: (15%) Due weekly
For the duration of the course students should keep a thorough record of their empirical observations of
childhood, child rearing practices, socialization, schooling, notions of intelligence, and educational
practice, policy, and pedagogy. Students can gather data from their interactions with others,
conversations with host families, or observations in the community. Student writing should explore the
way in which learning, thinking, and education is constructed across cultures. Students should also
reflect on the how we come to know something. We will reserve a few minutes of class time each week
to talk about the journals and observations. Students should submit weekly entries. Students will be
evaluated on the detail of their observations, the quality of their reflections, their ability to ask relevant
and thoughtful questions, and the creativity of their work.

Moon Journal: (15%) Due weekly
Adapted from Eleanor Duckworth’s description of this exercise in her article, “Teaching and learning,“
the moon journal invites students to reflect on the construction of their own knowledge by recording
daily observations of the moon. The movement and patterns of the moon are phenomena we have all
observed, however many of us have not spent a great deal of time trying to understand the way the
moon, the earth, and the sun interact. Observing the moon carefully offers an opportunity for you to
reflect on a scientific study and the process of your own learning. Observations should include a
scientific record, but students may also add creative reflections, drawings and should include reflections
that arise from their observations.

Reflection paper: (15%) Due Week 3
In this 2-3 page assignment, students are asked to draw from their own experiences in education,
describing and evaluating their most meaningful learning experiences. Students should cite specific
elements from their own experience and begin to relate these to course theories and ideas. Papers will
be evaluated on their clarity, strength of writing, overall understanding of course theories, and
presentation of critical thinking and analytical skills

Reflection paper: (15%) Due Week 4
This 2-3 page paper asks students to respond to course theories on the development of learning and
cognition, including the work of Jean Piaget, Maria Montessori, Rudolf Steiner, and Loris Malaguzzi, as
well as other educators from course readings. Students should compare and contrast the strengths and
limitations of different models of schooling as they begin to articulate their own philosophy of
education. At the end of the paper, students should discuss possible applications of theories of learning.
Papers will be evaluated on their clarity, strength of writing, overall understanding of course theories, and
presentation of critical thinking and analytical skills.

Final projects: (30%) Due Final Week
Drawing on course materials, students are asked to create a lesson or unit of study, an ideal school, or
alternative learning environment in which they connect and apply course theories of learning to
practice. Students may submit a creative project, but this must also include a paper that explores
students’ developing thoughts about human growth and learning and insights on cross-cultural
comparisons of education. Students may work with a partner or group on this assignment. Students
will have an opportunity to present final projects in the last week of classes.

In-Class Participation and Kids’ Day (10%) Students are expected to come prepared to engage in each class. Students will help plan for and
participate in Tufts Kids’ Day.
Class Meetings Dates, Discussion Topics, and Reading Assignments:

**Class 1: Introduction and Overview**

What is human development and learning? What assumptions do we have about education? Where do these assumptions come from?

**Class 2: Introduction to Development and Learning**

Are development and learning universal or culturally dependent?

Readings:

**Class 3: Theories of Learning**

What are some core theories of learning? How do these theories differ? What are the implications for teaching and learning?

Reading:

**Class 4:**

What can we learn from examining development through a cultural lens?

Reading:

In addition, select 1 of the following:

Class 5: Cognitive development
Where does knowledge come from? How does thinking change as a child develops? What influences cognitive development? Who was Jean Piaget? What are the major principles of his theory?

Readings:

In class video: Piaget on Piaget

Reflection Paper # 1 due

Class 6: Applying Piaget
What do Piaget’s theories look like in practice? How can we use and apply these theories to education?

Readings:

Class 7: Vygotsky
Who is Lev Vygotsky? What does his theory of learning look like? How does this compare and contrast to Piaget’s theory of cognitive development? What would it look like to apply Vygotsky’s work to the classroom?

Readings:
Class 8: Philosophies of Education
What does it mean to create a philosophy of education? What are some influential philosophies of education? How do (or should) these influence contemporary practice?

Readings:

In class video: Ken Robinson “Changing Education Paradigms”
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zDZFcDgpL4U
In class video: Introduction to the Sudbury Valley School
http://www.sudval.org/

Class 9: European Models of Education
What are the guiding philosophies of Maria Montessori, Rudolf Steiner, and Loris Malaguzzi’s approaches to education? How do these theories reflect the sociocultural context? What are the strengths and limitations of the Montessori, Waldorf, and Reggio Emilia approaches to education?

Field trip to a Montessori school

Readings:

Class 10: French and European Approaches to Education
How do French and European models of child development, learning, and educational practices compare and contrast with American models and practices?

Readings:

In class video: TED Talk Takaharu Tezuka: The Best Kindergarten You’ve Ever Seen
https://www.ted.com/talks/takaharu_tezuka_the_best_kindergarten_you_veEver_seen?language=en
Class 11: Cross cultural perspectives on learning and schooling

How do different cultures view education and schooling? How does this influence learning and teaching?

Readings:


Class 12: Cross cultural perspectives on learning and schooling

Who attends school? What are the perils when children are not educated?

Readings


Class 13: Cross cultural perspectives on learning and schooling

Reading:

Blogs for discussion

In class video: Mardell, B. (2011). Learning is a team sport: Kindergarteners study the marathon. Project Zero, Making Learning Visible: Cambridge, MA.

Reflection paper #2 due

Class 14: Pedagogies and practice
How do we apply theories of learning? What can we take away from the experience of studying child development and education in different cultural context? What can and should education look like? Should children go to school? What might it mean when an individual actively resists learning?

Readings:
- Kohl, H. “I won’t learn from you.” In “I won’t learn from you” and other thoughts on creative maladjustment (pp. 1-32). New York, NY: W. W. Norton.

In class video: TEDx Talk Callie Vandewiele: Learning through unschooling http://tedxtalks.ted.com/video/Learning-Through-Unschooling-Ca
In class video: TED Talk Logan LaPlante: Hackschooling makes me happy https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h11u3vtcpaY

**Class 14: Pedagogies and practice**
What can schools do to create greater equity?

Readings:

**Class 15: Pedagogies and practice**
What is a practice of engaged pedagogy? How can education serve to liberate students? What is the role of the teacher in this process?

Readings (select 2):

In-class video: Born into Brothels

**Class 16: Final course meeting and presentations**
Final presentations

**June 27: Final paper due**