

**University of Ottawa  
Faculty of Education**

**EDU 5260**

**Introduction to Curriculum Studies**  
*WINTER 2011, Wednesday 5:30-8:30 pm, LMX 422*

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**Office Hours:** Wednesday 2:00-5:00, or by appointment

**COURSE OUTLINE**

**Calendar Description**

Overview of recurring curriculum issues in historical and contemporary perspectives; introduction to the practices of curriculum theorizing; investigation of the effects of shifting paradigms within the field of curriculum studies.

**Background**

Curriculum Studies is an intellectually dynamic and ever changing field. For curricularists engaging the processes of situating and defining curriculum theorizing and development remains a historically situated and contested “complicated conversation.” Furthermore, within the context of this course certain curricular issues will be contradictory, confusing, and paradoxical. As a result, each week we will try to reconceptualize and complicate our historical, present, and future understandings of the discrepancies between various disciplinary discourses, which in turn inform curriculum theorizing and development. Moreover, our weekly conversations will critically examine how such discrepancies create tensions between both internal and external stakeholders to the field of curriculum studies, and the school curriculum writ large. This course thus invites us to participate in a personal dialogue, indeed a “complicated conversation,” in which we will be asked to recursively consider alternative approaches to curriculum theorizing and development, and in turn with the conversational issues that these alternatives involve.

## Course Rationale

Introduction to Curriculum Studies 5260 is a graduate course designed to:

- 1) Investigate historical and present perspectives on curriculum issues within the field of curriculum studies;
- 2) Introduce various interdisciplinary strategies for curriculum theorizing; and
- 3) Understand the historical and present effects of various curricular paradigms and respective discursive trends within the field of curriculum studies.

## Course Expectations

It is anticipated that through **active participation** in this course, each candidate will develop:

- i) An understanding of the dialectical tensions between curriculum theory and curriculum development;
- ii) An appreciation of the ironies, contradictions and paradoxes that influence curriculum theorizing;
- iii) An ability to examine historical and/or existing curricular discursive trends and illustrate an understanding of their theoretical basis; and
- iv) Engage in the playful processes of curriculum theorizing (and if needed, translating such theoretical implications in relation to our discussions around classroom practices).

Through group work, presentations, individual assignments, and thoughtful discussions, you are expected to critically engage course material, as well as develop educational perspectives that take into account the major curriculum theorists and issues covered in this course. The format of the course will vary each week according to content and will be organized to encourage your participation. This means that your thoughtfulness and engagement is both valued and important. At various points throughout the course, we will potentially cover difficult and controversial knowledge, and thus an important expectation is that all participants will be committed to creating an intellectually stimulating, “safe” (if there is such a thing), and respectful class atmosphere.

## Required Readings:

The **course reader** can be purchased at Enviro-copy on Dalhousie Street.

## At Agora bookstore:

Gidney, R. (1999). *From Hope to Harris: The Reshaping of Ontario Schools*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Pinar, W. and Irwin, R. (2005). *Curriculum in a New Key*. New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates

## **Persons with Physical and/or Learning Disabilities**

If you require accommodation due to any physical, cultural, neurological, or psychological needs, please schedule an appointment with me as soon as possible so that we can negotiate the necessary adjustments to course curriculum. You are strongly encouraged to visit Student Services on campus for assistance with regards to physical or psychological learning needs. Staff there can help you formally request the professor to arrange alternatives regarding assignments and exams. Please do so at the beginning of the term.

### ***Late Assignment Policy:***

Assignments which are submitted after the due date without an agreed upon extension are considered late assignments. The penalty on late assignments in all courses amounts to a grade loss of 5% per day up to a maximum of 10 days, after which time assignments will not be accepted. Submission of late assignments requires my prior consent and written verification of a medical professional or due to compassionate reasons necessitating a deadline extension. In the event of extraordinary personal circumstances that prevent completion of an assignment by the specified due date, students should speak with the instructor as soon as possible.

### **Attendance**

The Faculty of Education policy that regular attendance in classes, seminars, and workshops is compulsory applies to this course. Any student who is unable to attend a scheduled meeting must notify the instructor before the scheduled meeting time. In the case of absence, students are expected to complete the required readings and in-class assignments on their own.

### **Academic Fraud**

Students are advised to become familiar with the University of Ottawa's policy regulations on academic fraud. The University of Ottawa's regulations on academic fraud, as stated in the Teacher Education Calendar (pp. 6-8), apply in this course. It is imperative that any ideas or styles of writing that are not yours are properly referenced and will need to be done in compliance with American Psychological Association (5<sup>th</sup> ed.) style guidelines. Failure to properly reference places you in a situation of academic fraud. Academic fraud/Plagiarism is one type of academic fraud. A student found guilty of committing plagiarism will be subject to sanctions, which range from receiving a mark F for the work in question to being expelled from the University, and even the revocation of a degree, diploma, or certificate already awarded. For useful guidelines to help you avoid plagiarism, please consult the following web pages:

[http://www.uottawa.ca/academic/info/regist/fraud\\_e.html](http://www.uottawa.ca/academic/info/regist/fraud_e.html)

<http://www.uottawa.ca/plagiarism.pdf>

## Assignments and Evaluations

Your final grade will be determined arithmetically first by reducing the numerical grades for each assignment in accordance with each assignment's percentage value of the final grade (listed immediately below). Once summed, the individual figures yield a total that is the percentage grade for the course.

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|---------------------------------------|--------|
| 1) Reader Response Paper              | (20 %) |
| 2) Curriculum Artifact Presentation   | (20 %) |
| 3) Curriculum Artifact Analysis Paper | (20 %) |
| 5) Final Paper                        | (40 %) |

### **Reader Response Commentaries (20%):**

Students must sign-up during the first class to present *a reader response* over the course of this term. The sign-up sheet will have a limited amount of spaces for each week.

During each class two or four students will share their commentaries with other students in round table sessions. Your commentary should stimulate an ensuing conversation on your assigned articles or book chapters for that week. Your commentary need only focus on the one assigned article for the week in question, but can make reference to the other articles covered prior to, and for that class. Assuming that each student, including myself, has read the assigned readings, *the commentary should not be a straight summary* of the article. Instead, you should *utilize the articles or book chapters as a methodological filter*, if you will, which in turn informs your commentary on the curricular issues you decide to *complicate* and put forth to your fellow graduate students. *You must send a draft of your commentary to me at least one week prior to your presentation* in order to receive formative feedback on your writing.

I encourage you to *play with* the theoretical underpinnings of each article or book chapter. Focus on what speaks to your educative experiences both historically and presently? How do the various theoretical concepts *inform your educative experiences* both inside and outside the institutional walls of schools in terms of *curriculum studies (or school curriculum)*? Or, how can *your lived experiences* inform or create dialectical tensions with the articles or book chapters in terms of *curriculum studies (or school curriculum)*?

*Your commentary must be between 600-1000 words (which is 2 to 4 pages double-spaced in 12 font Times New Roman, no more than 1000 words).* You will have 15 minutes to present/read your commentary in small round table groups. We will have a 20-40 minute small and large group conversation afterwards. Once you have read your paper, you will turn in a hardcopy to me at the end of class. *These will commence during week three of course. You must sign-up to respond to a reading on the first night of class.*

## **Curriculum Artifact Presentation (20%):**

Over the course of the term in groups of 5 or 6 you will be responsible for choosing a curricular artifact and then present it to the rest of the class. The curriculum artifact can be a curriculum policy document, a textbook, a school board policy, a film clip or YouTube clip (3-4 minutes maximum), a newspaper or magazine article, a photo, art, historical documents that depicts teacher and/or student engagement with an aspect of the of the “curriculum” (curriculum-as-planned, -implemented, -lived, and/or –evaluated for example). For the presentation you must present a short overview of your chosen curriculum artifact. You must also provide examples of how the course readings have helped you to deconstruct your chosen artifact. Finally, you must utilize the course readings to create questions that will help to facilitate small and large group discussions at the end of your presentation. ***The presentation itself must not exceed 18 minutes. This does not include taking up the discussion questions. Time management will be taken into consideration as part of the assessment criteria for this assignment.***

How might your questions push your peers to deconstruct what the artifact might teach us about how various curricular (ideological, cultural, linguistic, political, racialized, gendered, environmental, etc.) discrepancies create tensions between both internal and external stakeholders working either within the field of curriculum studies and/or with the school curriculum writ large for example? Or how our readings might help us to deconstruct the complexities of the curriculum-as-planned, -implemented, -lived, and/or -evaluated put forth in your chosen artifact? What kinds of assumptions are being made? Who is being represented in your artifact and who is being silenced? Are there any stereotypes and prejudgments? What is being socially reproduced, subverted, reconceptualized, reconstructed, and/or challenged? What is the underlying message behind these the mediated representations put forth in your chosen artifact? How might your curricular artifact help us to understand both historical and present perspectives on curriculum issues within the larger field of curriculum studies? **Each group must hand in a 3-4 pages overview of your presentation that draws on the readings. Not everyone in the group has to present during the presentations.**

## **Curriculum Artifact Analysis Paper (20%):**

For this assignment you are responsible for analyzing a curriculum artifacts. You can choose any artifact that affords you an opportunity to engage the readings through your analysis in terms of themes and/or theoretical concepts linked to the larger field of curriculum studies. Why does the chosen curriculum artifact speak to you as a teacher and/or student? In what ways does the curriculum artifact connect to you autobiographically either inside and/or outside the institutions of public schooling? While addressing these example questions linkages among your chosen artifact, analysis, and course content are required. Consider the curriculum artifact analysis as a writing assignment that affords you a curricular and pedagogical opportunity to practice and develop the following:

1. Quality of writing in terms of style (aesthetics of referencing, narrative structure, etc.);
2. Ability to utilize theoretical concepts put forth in readings to analyze/make connections with chosen curriculum artifact; and
3. Originality of such theoretical connections and analyses.

Finally this writing assignment provides you an opportunity to experiment with your writing as a curriculum theorizing and with various ways you are utilizing the readings to reread the historical and present reproduction, representations, subversions of certain identities, cultural marginalization, ideologies, social justice policies, etc. found within your chosen curriculum artifact. **This assignment is due on March 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2011. The paper should be between 6-8 pages not including references.**

### **Provoking Curriculum Studies Conference Paper (40 %):**

Drawing on the course readings, you will prepare a paper, which in turn will be presented at an in class *University of Ottawa Graduate Student Curriculum Studies Conference* (of which we will organize to take place at the end of the term in December). ***You can choose any topic for your paper as long as you utilize the course readings.*** Strategically, you might try to utilize our course readings to write a paper on your current thesis topic, if you are currently at that stage of the graduate program. This final paper could also be the commencement of a theoretical chapter for your thesis and/or synthesis paper. This final paper could also be the commencement of a theoretical chapter for your thesis and/or synthesis paper. You can also organize panel presentations where each of you present an individual paper which focus on the same curricular/educational research question (for example, how might one develop a culturally responsive curriculum for urban aboriginal students?). For those attempting to write a publishable article you should situate your article in relation to an existing curriculum studies journal. If you choose this route make sure to consult the journal in question and see if there are existing articles that relate to your chosen topic. You want to make sure that you take up these articles within your final paper in some way or another in order to join the ongoing “complicated conversation” within that journal.

Each conference session will be 1 hour and 30 minutes. Each session will host three presenters and each of you will have a 20-minute slot to present your paper. As a result the conference version of your paper should not exceed 7-8 pages double-spaced (1750-2000 words), depending on how fast you read.

### **Final Paper Writing Schedule**

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|---|---------------|
| 1) First draft of final conference paper due <b>March 16<sup>th</sup></b> | <b>(10 %)</b> |
| 2) Conference title and abstract due <b>March 23<sup>rd</sup></b>         | <b>(5 %)</b>  |
| 3) Final papers due night of conference <b>March 30<sup>th</sup></b>      | <b>(25 %)</b> |

### **Grading framework:**

Grades are awarded according to the following scale:

Grade	Percentage	Description
A+	90 - 100 %	Exceptional
A	85 - 90 %	Excellent
A-	80 - 84 %	Excellent
B+	75 - 79 %	Very good
B	70 - 74 %	Very good
C+	65 - 69 %	Good
C	60 - 64	Fail

All grades below C (60-64 %) are failing grades for graduate students.

### **Bibliography**

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