

PL348. EDUCATION AND LIBERATION

Seminar Leader: Hans Stauffacher
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Office hours by appointment

Course Time: Thursday, 15:45-19:00

Course Description

Beliefs about education have always been closely associated with ideas of freedom and liberation. From Antiquity to the present, education has been conceptualized as the high road to the liberation from personal, social, political, economic, intellectual, and spiritual limitations, as a decisive factor in struggles against oppression, as a prerequisite for political participation, and as an essential precondition for a better life of the individual as well as a better society. But at the same time, particular frameworks and institutions of education have often led to oppression, exclusion, discrimination, and limitation. Just think of the way “the uneducated” are talked about in today’s media landscape or of the selective, standardizing, prescriptive, and exclusive character of schools and universities. In this course, we will read and discuss seminal philosophical texts and educational manifestos from antiquity to the 21st Century that conceptualize the correlation between education and liberation in diverse and often contradictory ways. We will use these texts to ask ourselves what education means for us and our society; whether, how, and to what extent education can indeed lead to liberation, or whether education, on the contrary, requires conformity and constraint. Given that the “liberal education” BCB strives for carries the notions of freedom and education in its name, this also means that we will critically reflect on what we are doing in courses like this one.

Course Materials

All course readings will be provided as PDF files. Students are expected to print the texts and bring paper copies to class.

In addition to the readings, we will watch the four-part documentary *College Behind Bars* (Lynn Novick, 2019), which can be streamed here:

<https://www.pbslearningmedia.org/resource/college-behind-bars-video-gallery/college-behind-bars/>

Please note that the schedule and the readings are subject to change. All changes will be communicated in class and via email.

Requirements

Class Preparation

Preparing for class means reading thoughtfully and engaging with the texts, for instance, by thinking through the argument of a particular section and taking notes while reading. The readings for this course will be difficult and challenging. You should give yourself enough time to read them more than once. You will be expected to submit short written comments or questions about the readings regularly. Details about this will be communicated in the first session.

Attendance

Attendance at all classes is a crucial part of the education offered by Bard College Berlin. To account for minor circumstances, two absences from twice-per-week courses or the

equivalent (e.g. one absence from a once-per-week course) should not affect the participation grade or require documentation.

Bard College Berlin may not offer credit for any course in which a student has missed more than 30% of classes, regardless of the reasons for the absences. The full Bard College Berlin attendance policy can be found in the Student Handbook, Section 2.8.

Academic Integrity

Bard College Berlin maintains the highest standards of academic integrity and expects students to adhere to these standards at all times. Instances in which students fail to meet the expected standards of academic integrity will be dealt with under the Code of Student Conduct, Section 14.3 (Academic Misconduct) in the Student Handbook.

Accommodations

Bard College Berlin is committed to inclusion and providing equal access to all students; we uphold and maintain all aspects of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, and the ADA Amendments Act of 2008, and Section 3 of the German Disability Equality Act of April 27, 2002 (Federal Law Gazette I p. 1468). If you have a disability, or think you may have a disability, please contact the Disability Accommodation Coordinator, Atticus Kleen, (accommodations@berlin.bard.edu) to request an official accommodation.

Requests for accommodations should be made as early as possible to ensure adequate time for coordination and planning. Please note that accommodations are not retroactive and may require advance notice to implement.

If you have already been approved for accommodations with the Disability Accommodation Coordinator, please arrange to meet with me outside of class so that we can develop an implementation plan.

Students may face extenuating circumstances related to various personal or external factors, which impact their academic performance. While these circumstances often do not fall within the legal framework of Disability Accommodations, Bard College Berlin is committed to supporting students experiencing such circumstances. A student needing a short extension or a replacement assignment because of an extenuating circumstance is encouraged to make arrangements directly with instructors if possible. If further support is needed, please visit the [Bard College Berlin Accessibility page](#). Questions about this process can be directed to James Harker (j.harker@berlin.bard.edu) or Maria Anderson-Long (m.andersonlong@berlin.bard.edu).

Assignments

Students are required to complete the following assignments for this course:

A midterm paper of about 2000 words, due Oct. 26;

a final essay of about 4000 words, due Dec. 21;

an in-class presentation of about 10 minutes on December 11;

and two short proposals of about 200 words due Oct. 12 and Oct 23.

All of these Assignments will be part of an ongoing engagement with the students' own educational paths in conjunction with the class readings and will include several rounds of feedback. Details about the assignments will be communicated in the first session.

Policy on Late Submission of Papers

Essays that are up to 24 hours late can be downgraded up to one full grade (from B+ to C+, for example). Instructors are not obliged to accept essays that are more than 24 hours late. Where a professor agrees to accept a late assignment, it should be submitted by the new

deadline agreed upon by both parties. Thereafter, the student will receive a failing grade for the assignment. Grades and comments will be returned to students in a timely fashion. Students are also entitled to make an appointment to discuss essay assignments and feedback during instructors' office hours.

Students receive mid- and end-of-semester grades for their seminar work. Students are entitled to make an appointment with an instructor to discuss seminar participation, or may be asked to meet with the instructor at any stage in the semester regarding class progress.

Grade Breakdown

Participation and preparation: 40%

Midterm paper: 20%

Presentation 10%

Final paper 30%

Schedule*

Sept. 4	Introduction bell hooks: <i>Teaching to Transgress</i> (1994) Gert J.J. Biesta: <i>Good Education in an Age of Measurement</i> (2010)
Sept. 11	Educating Citizens Plato, <i>The Republic</i> (c. 375 BCE) Aristotle: <i>Politics</i> (c. 330 BCE)
Sept. 18	Educating Princes Niccolò Machiavelli: <i>The Prince</i> (1513) Desiderius Erasmus: <i>The Education of a Christian Prince</i> (1516) + watch <i>College Behind Bars</i> , Ep 1
Sept 25	Educating Christians Ignatius of Loyola: <i>The Spiritual Exercises</i> (1524) Martin Luther: <i>Why Children Should Be Sent to School</i> (1530)
Oct. 2	Educating Enlightened Subjects Immanuel Kant: <i>Answering the Question: What Is Enlightenment?</i> (1784) Michel Foucault: <i>What is Enlightenment?</i> (1984) + watch <i>College Behind Bars</i> , Ep 2
Oct. 9	Educating for Liberation Karl Marx: <i>The German Ideology</i> (1845) John Stuart Mill: <i>On Liberty</i> (1859) Proposal due Sunday, Oct. 12
Oct. 16	Educating Children Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi: <i>How Gertrude Teaches her Children</i> (1801) Charlotte Mason: <i>Towards A Philosophy of Education</i> (1923) + watch <i>College Behind Bars</i> , Ep 3
Fall Break	Midterm Paper due Sunday, Oct. 26
Oct. 30	Education of the Natural Man Jean-Jacques Rousseau, <i>Emile, or On Education</i> (1762)

Nov. 6	Aesthetic Education Friedrich Schiller: <i>On the Aesthetic Education of Man</i> (1794) Wilhelm von Humboldt: <i>Theory of Bildung</i> (c. 1795) + watch <i>College Behind Bars</i> , Ep 4
Nov. 13	Democratic Education John Dewey: <i>Democracy and Education</i> (1916)
Nov. 20	Pedagogy of the Oppressed Paulo Freire: <i>Pedagogy of the Oppressed</i> (1968) Proposal due Sunday, Nov. 23
Nov. 27	Feminist Education Nel Noddings: <i>Caring: A Feminine Approach to Ethics and Moral Education</i> (1984)
Dec. 12	Emancipatory Education Jacques Rancière: <i>The Ignorant Schoolmaster</i> (1987)
Dec. 11	Student Presentations Final Paper due Sunday, Dec. 21

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