

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON
Departments of Educational Policy Studies and History
Spring 2015

EPS 906/History 906
Proseminar on the History of Education
Topic: History of Progressive Education

Mondays: 2:25-5:25
Education 151

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Office Hours: Education 223
Mondays: 11:00 to 12:30 and Wednesday 11:00 to 12:00 & by appointment

Course Description

This is an advanced graduate seminar on the history of progressive education. Often called the “new education” in the nineteenth century, progressive education has always generated considerable debate and controversy. It has been praised by some people as a symbol of romanticism and enlightenment and condemned by others as the source of modern educational decline. Little wonder, then, that a recent search on Google for “progressive education” yielded 43,100,000 results.

Our class will try to understand the historical forces that gave rise to the “new education,” its eclectic nature, and influence upon schools in different eras. Our common readings will first focus on Europe and then shift to American history.

What is “progressive education”? How has it been defined by friend and foe? How can we measure its influence upon pedagogical theory and school practice? To what degree was John Dewey responsible for the spread of progressive education in the twentieth century? To what degree have progressive ideas transformed public education?

Required Books and Articles

The success of the course will depend upon our mastery of a number of common readings. The following books are available at the UW Bookstore; some may also be available more inexpensively at used bookstores or via the Internet. A copy should also be on reserve at College Library at Helen C. White.

- 1) John Howlett, *Progressive Education* (Bloomsbury Academic)
- 2) Norman Brosterman, *Inventing Kindergarten* (Harry N. Abrams Publisher)
- 3) Lawrence Cremin, *The Transformation of the School* (Vintage)
- 4) William J. Reese, *Power and the Promise of School Reform* (Teachers College Press)
- 5) Robert Westbrook, *John Dewey and American Democracy* (Cornell University Press)
- 6) John Dewey, *School and Society, Child and the Curriculum* (University of Chicago Press)
- 7) John Dewey, *Experience and Education* (Free Press)
- 8) Larry Cuban, *How Teachers Taught* (Teachers College Press)
- 9) Diane Ravitch, *Left Back* (Simon and Schuster)
- 10) Susan F. Semel and Alan R. Sadovnik, eds., *'Schools of Tomorrow,' Schools of Today* (Peter Lang)

Assigned articles are available electronically via Madcat.

Course Outline and Assignments:

Week #1 January 26	Introduction to the Course
Week #2 February 2	Howlett, <i>Progressive Education</i> , Introduction, Chapters 1-3.
Week #3 February 9	Howlett, <i>Progressive Education</i> , Introduction, Chapters 1-3; William J. Reese, "The Origins of Progressive Education," <i>History of Education Quarterly</i> 41 (Spring 2001): 1-24 (JSTOR).
Week #4 February 16	Brosterman, <i>Inventing Kindergarten</i>
Week #5	Cremin, <i>The Transformation of the School</i> ; and John L. Rury,

February 23 “Transformation in Perspective: Lawrence Cremin’s *Transformation of the School*,” *History of Education Quarterly* 31 (Spring 1991): 66-76 (JSTOR); and Tova Cooper, “The Scenes of Seeing: Frances Benjamin Johnston and Visualizations of the ‘Indian’ in Black, White, and Native Educational Contexts,” *American Literature* 83 (September 2011): 509-545. (Locate through Madcat via Journals.)

Week # 6 Reese, *Power and the Promise*
March 2

One page prospectus for research paper due; see below

Week #7 Westbrook, *John Dewey and American Democracy*
March 9

Week #8 Dewey: *School and Society, Child and the Curriculum, Experience and Education*
March 16

Week #9 William J. Reese, “Progressivism.” [an essay in process], with reviews by Eileen Tamura and John L. Rury.] Students will receive a copy of the original essay and reviews by Professors Eileen H. Tamura and John L. Rury. The essay will ultimately appear in their co-edited volume, *The Oxford Handbook of the History of Education* (Oxford University Press). Students will also offer suggestions on how to improve the essay and how they would respond to the reviews if they were the author of the essay. This is an opportunity to see how an essay on the history of progressive education is conceived, reviewed, and revised! With thanks to my friends Eileen and John for their permission and encouragement.

Week #10 Spring Break, March 28-April 5.
March 30

Week #11 April 6	Semel and Sadovnik, <i>'Schools of Tomorrow,' Schools of Today</i>
Week #12 April 13	Cuban, <i>How Teachers Taught</i> ; and David F. Labaree, E.D. Hirsch, Jr., and Barbara Beatty, "The Ed School's Romance with Progressivism," <i>Brookings Papers On Education Policy</i> 7 (2004): 89-129. (JSTOR)
Week #13 April 20	Ravitch, <i>Left Back</i> ; and Kathleen Weiler, "What Can We Learn From Progressive Education?" <i>The Radical Teacher</i> No. 69 (May 2004): 4-9. (JSTOR)
Week #14 April 27	Research
Week #15 May 4	Research Presentations

**** Paper due by Monday, May 11, noon** See instructions below****

Laptops, Phones, and Electronic Devices

Please remember to turn off all phones before the beginning of class. To maximize discussion, please store laptop computers, tablets, smart phones, iPads, and other screen-based, electronic devices, unless you have approval from the McBurney Disability Resource Center. (Please let me know if you have such approval.)

Student Responsibilities and Course Requirements

The formal course requirements include weekly preparation of assigned readings, class attendance and participation, and the completion of one research paper. You will also make a presentation to our class, based on your research, at the end of the semester.

More information on the format for the presentation will be provided in class.

There are no examinations. Your final grade will be based as follows: 70% for the quality of your class participation during the semester, and 30% for the research paper.

If you miss a class, you are required to submit a three-page written analysis of the assigned readings for that particular class. It is due two weeks after that class.

Please come to see me early in the semester to discuss ideas for your research paper. You can also initiate a conversation about an idea for a project via email, before we discuss it in person. Then please submit a one page, double-spaced, typed prospectus for approval. The prospectus is due no later than *March 2* (at class). The prospectus, which will not be graded, should include your name, title of the paper, a one-paragraph description of your proposed study, and a tentative bibliography.

Instructions for Paper

This research paper should address a major question about the history of progressive education. Informed by the secondary literature, it should be based solidly on primary sources, documents and materials generated during the time period you are studying. The list of possible topics is endless. You can examine the social thought or philosophy of a particular progressive educator, movement, or school practice, policy, or reform, in Europe or America.

The time period covered in your paper should be restricted to the nineteenth or twentieth century, up to roughly 1980. While the period from the 1980s to the present constitutes “history,” compared to earlier periods relatively few bona fide histories of this era have been written.

- The paper should be about 16-18 double-spaced pages of text, exclusive of end notes and bibliography.
- Every paper should have endnotes and a bibliography. Scholars use various style guides; historians tend to use the University of Chicago’s A Manual of Style. A shortened version of the Chicago Manual appears at the back of many issues of the History of Education Quarterly. If you use a different style guide, just be consistent.
- The paper is due by *May 11, at noon*. Please place a hard copy either in my EPS or History department mailbox, whichever is more convenient.

Please do not send the paper as an e-mail attachment.

Except for illness or other reasons recognized by the UW, extensions will not be granted either for the prospectus or the paper. In fairness to everyone, late papers will lose one grade for every day late.

Each paper will be evaluated on its scholarly strengths: the clarity of the thesis, elegance of the prose, depth of analysis, and use of sources.

Due Dates

Prospectus for research paper, *March 2*, hard copy, in class.
Hard copy, *May 11 by Noon*, either in *EPS or History department mailbox*. No email attachments please.