

**Foundations of Educational Research**  
**CI 597 & EPS 597**  
**Monday 6 to 9 p.m.**  
**Fall 2011**

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 Meeting Rooms: EPS: 107 Rackley; C&I: 214 Chambers

Course Description and Objectives: Within the highly politicized environment of the *United States Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002*, we are studying to become education researchers. The act provides opportunities for and sets limits upon our work as education researchers by defining scientifically-based education research. Understandably, the act has caused controversy among education researchers who find their work affirmed or discounted by this definition. In order to explore these controversies and to begin to identify our places as researchers among them, this course is designed to begin a reading of the history and philosophies of education research (primarily focusing on the United States).

Course goals are:

- to identify underlying assumptions of competing forms of social inquiry, each determined to uncover new knowledge;
- to bring those assumptions to bear on education research in our chosen fields of study; and
- to begin to develop our own positions in order to direct further study and research.

Required Texts:

Ellen Condliffe Lagemann. 2000. *An Elusive Science: The Troubling History of Education Research*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Michael Peters and Nicholas Burbules. 2004. *Poststructuralism and Educational Research*. Lanham, MD : Rowman and Littlefield.

D. C. Phillips and Nicholas Burbules. 2000. *Postpositivism and Educational Research*. Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield.

Max van Manen. 1997. *Researching Lived Experience, 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed.* London, Ontario, CA: The Althouse Press.

Gert Biesta and Nicholas Burbules. 2003. *Pragmatism and Educational Research*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.

Wilfred Carr and Stephen Kemmis. 1986. *Becoming Critical*. New York: Routledge.

Articles on ANGEL

Assignments:

**My Head Hurts responses:** One-paged (single-spaced) responses to each reading assignment and participation in the weekly discussions. (50% of final grade)

**Here I Am essay:** A ten-paged (double-spaced) essay assessing your understanding of the foundations of education research, placing yourself among the controversies, and your immediate plans for study and inquiry. (50% of final grade).

Class format:

In general, we spend two weeks on each perspective. We begin by reading a secondary source that takes up the philosophical perspective and explores its relevance/relatedness to education. We shift gears in the second week when we move to texts illustrate how the perspective informs empirical work or policy decisions. The C&I and EPS sections will meet separately to work their way through these texts. The objective of this portion of class will be to figure out **What's it all about?** We will attempt this mainly through sharing **My Head Hurts responses**. Our assumption will be that **this person is right!** but to look to the text to find how arguments are framed, how claims are justified, and how critics are dealt with. By engaging in this exercise, we will leave each session **thinking like a \_\_\_\_\_ (positivist, post-positivist, pragmatist, etc)**. Every other week, the two sections will meet together to engage in exercises that draw comparisons between/among perspectives and discuss how each might differentially address what are considered pressing (and/or persisting) educational problems. All whole-group meetings will be held in 214 Chambers Building.

Schedule and readings:

- August 22: Intro to course. Lagemann's *An Elusive Science* (read BEFORE coming to this class)  
(Whole-group meeting)
- August 29: What's all the fuss about?  
Education Science Reform Act 2002  
<http://www2.ed.gov/policy/rschstat/leg/PL107-279.pdf>  
read up to Title 1 and skim the rest.  
Eisenhart & Towne; Feuer, Towne & Shavelson, etc.  
(Whole-group meeting)
- Sept 5: Labor Day (no class)

- Sept. 12: Positivism.  
Thordike; Watson;  
Coalition for Evidence-Based Policy (search via Google);  
Slavin; Henson, Hull, & Williams
- Sept. 19: Postpositivism 1  
Phillips & Burbules *Postpositivism and Educational Research*
- Sept. 26: Postpositivism 2  
House; Shaffer & Serlin; Riehl; Johnson
- Oct. 3: Interpretivism 1  
Van Manen *Researching Lived Experience*
- Oct. 10: Interpretivism 2  
Geertz; Maxwell; Peshkin; Howe
- Oct. 17: Critical 1  
Carr & Kemmis *Becoming Critical*
- Oct. 24: Critical 2  
Comstock; Gitlin; Glass; Fraser
- Oct. 31: Poststructuralism 1  
Peters & Burbules *Poststructuralism and Educational Research*
- Nov. 7: Poststructuralism 2  
Kaomea; Fischman; Barone; Alim; Bullough & Pinnegar; Harding
- Nov. 14: Pragmatism 1  
Biesta & Burbules *Pragmatism and Educational Research*
- Nov. 21: Thanksgiving Break (no class)
- Nov. 28: Pragmatism 2  
Edwards; Cherryholmes; Lamberg & Middleton, Reinking & Bradely
- Dec 5: Back to the Beginning - Baez & Boyles; Gee; Phillips; Moss, et al.  
(Whole-group meeting)

Quotes to think about for the first day's discussion:

### **Plato's Republic**

Then he called to mind his fellow prisoners and what passed for wisdom in his former dwelling place, he would surely think himself happy in the change and be sorry for them. They may have had practice of honoring and commending one another, with prizes for the man who had the keenest eye for the passing shadows and the best memory for the order in which they followed or accompanied one another. Would our released prisoner be likely to covet those prizes or to envy men exalted to honor and power in the Cave? Would he endure anything rather than go back to his old beliefs and live in the old way?

### **John 1: 10-13**

That was the true light which enlightens every man that comes into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made by Him, but the world knew Him not. He came into His own, and His own received Him not. But as many received Him, He gives the power to be made the sons of God, to them that believe in His name. Who are born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, but of God.

### **Republic (again)**

A man whose thoughts are fixed on true reality has no leisure to look downwards on the affairs of men, to take part in their quarrels, and to catch the infection of their jealousies and hates. He contemplates a world of unchanging and harmonious order, where reason governs, and nothing can do or suffer wrong; and like one who imitates an admired companion, he cannot fail to be fashioned in its likeness. So the philosopher, in constant companionship with the divine order will reproduce that order in his soul and so far as men may, become godlike.

### **Francis Bacon - New Organum (1616)**

For fruits and work are as it were sponsors and sureties for the truth of philosophies. Now from all these systems of the Greek and their ramifications through particular sciences there can hardly after the lapse of so many years be adduced a single experiment which tends to relieve and benefit the conditions of man.

### **Bacon - The Great Instauration (1620)**

For the end which this science of mine proposes is the invention not of arguments but of arts...the effects of one being to overcome an opponent in argument or the other to command nature in action.

Human knowledge and human power do really meet in one.

**Alexander Pope - An Essay on Man (1732)**

Know then thyself, presume not God to scan,  
The proper study of mankind is Man.

Go, wondrous creature! Mount where science guides;  
Go, measure earth, weigh air, and state the tides;  
Instruct the planets in which orbs to run,  
Correct old Time, and regulate sun.

**Marquis de Condorcet - The Progress of the Human Mind (1790)**

Organic perfectibility or deterioration amongst the various strains in the vegetable and animal kingdoms can be regarded as one of the general laws of nature. This law also applies to the human race. No one can doubt that, as preventive medicine improves and food and housing become healthier, as a way of life is established that develops our physical powers by exercise without ruining them by excess, as the two most virulent causes of deterioration, misery and excessive wealth are eliminated, the average length of human life will be increased and a better health and a stronger physical constitution will be ensured. The improvement of medical practice, which will become more efficacious with the progress of reason and the social order, will mean the end of infectious and hereditary diseases and illnesses brought on by climate, food, or working conditions. It is reasonable to hope that all other diseases may likewise disappear as their distant causes are discovered. Would it be absurd then to suppose that this perfection of the human species might be capable of indefinite progress; that the day will come when death will be due only to extraordinary accidents or to the decay of the vital forces, and that ultimately the average span between birth and decay will have no assignable value?

Finally may we not extend such hopes to the intellectual and moral faculties? May not our parents, who transmit to us the benefits or disadvantages of their constitution, and from whom we receive our shape and features, as well as our tendencies to certain physical affections, hand on to us also that part of our physical organization which determines the intellect, the power of the brain, the ardor of the soul or the moral sensibility? Is it not probable that education, in perfecting the qualities, will at the same time influence, modify and perfect the organization itself? Analogy, investigation of the human faculties, and the study of certain facts, all seem to give substance to such conjecture which would further push back the boundaries of our hopes.

**Lord Kelvin - Cambridge Lectures (1891)**

When you can measure what you are speaking about, and express it in numbers, you know something about it; but when you cannot measure it, when you cannot express it in numbers, your knowledge is of a meager and unsatisfactory kind: it may be the beginning of knowledge, but you have scarcely, in your thoughts, advanced to the state of science.

### **John Dewey - The Source of a Science in Education (1928)**

There is no way to discover what is 'more truly educational' except by the continuation of the educational act itself. The discovery is never made, it is always in the making. It may conduce to immediate use or momentary efficiency to seek an answer for questions outside of education, in some material which already has scientific prestige. But such a seeking is an abdication, a surrender. In the end, it only lessens the chances that education in actual operation will provide the materials for an improved science. It arrests growth; it prevents the thinking that is the final source of all progress

### **Jurgen Habermas – A Postscript to Knowledge and Human Interests (1973)**

The meaning of truth or untruth of a statement does not consist in the conditions guaranteeing the objectivity of our experience but in the possibility of argumentative corroboration of a truth claim which is falsifiable in principle.

### **Richard Rorty - Solidarity of Objectivity (1985)**

The question is not about how to define words like truth or rationality or knowledge or philosophy, but about what self-image our society should have of itself.

### **Linda Nicholson and Nancy Fraser – Social Criticism Without Philosophy (1990)**

In recent years, poor and working class women, women of color and lesbians have finally won a wider hearing for their objections to feminist theories which fail to illuminate their lives and address their problems. They have exposed the earlier quasi-metanarratives with their assumptions of universal female dependence and confinement to the domestic sphere as false extrapolations from the experience of the white middle class heterosexual women who dominate the beginnings of the second wave.

### **Michel Foucault – On a Genealogy of Ethics (1983)**

My point is not that everything (constructs, categories, taxonomies, priorities, hierarchies, measurements, practices and discourses) is bad, but that everything is dangerous, which is not exactly the same as bad. If everything is dangerous, then we always have something to do. So my position leads not to apathy, but to a hyper and pessimistic activism. I think that the ethico-political choice we have to make every day is to determine which is the main danger.

### **Allan Megill – Prophets of Extremity (1985)**

The world, in Nietzsche's view, is made up of absolutely individualized fragments: no thing, no occurrence, is exactly the same as any other thing or occurrence. Take, for example, a leaf. Every leaf differs, however, slightly, from every other leaf. It follows that the concept of leaf can only be formed through omission of these differences – an omission that Nietzsche holds to be entirely arbitrary. Thus, the concept of leaf is a falsification of the reality of leaves.