

EQ112-15 Introduction to the Philosophy of Education

20/21

Department

Education Studies

Level

Undergraduate Level 1

Module leader

Emma Williams

Credit value

15

Module duration

10 weeks

Assessment

100% coursework

Study location

University of Warwick main campus, Coventry

Description

Introductory description

What is philosophy? What does a philosophical question about education look like? What role has philosophy historically played in education and what role should it have in education today? Can teaching and learning be effective if there is not a philosophical element to it? This module considers these questions, in the context of exploring the relationship between the discipline of philosophy and the field of education. The module will provide an introductory starting point into philosophy for first year undergraduate students.

[Module web page](#)

Module aims

1. To explore the relationship between philosophy and education.
2. To establish how philosophical practices can be applied as a tool for critiquing educational theory and practice.
3. To examine examples of philosophical questions about education.
4. To investigate the role philosophy has played in education historically and can play in the present day.

5. To investigate the possibilities of philosophy in improving teaching and learning in contemporary education.
6. To analyse key examples of philosophical texts about education.
7. To critically explore philosophical practice as a pedagogical tool.

Outline syllabus

This is an indicative module outline only to give an indication of the sort of topics that may be covered. Actual sessions held may differ.

The module will lay the groundwork for existing honours level modules in philosophy of education modules (especially the CES module in Philosophy in Education). It will encourage students to understand the value of philosophical ideas for education.

The module will explore its questions and themes in relation to a seminal work of philosophy: Plato's Republic. Republic presents the philosopher Plato's vision of the ideal society and the sort of education and educational system that would exist within it. Plato's philosophical visions of education are both implicit and explicit within Republic. The course will examine examples of them, perhaps the most famous of which is the Allegory of the Cave. Is the cave allegory representative of what education should look like today? Plato's exploration of this theme will be explored in 'bite-size' chunks throughout the module.

Therefore, the module will involve close reading of carefully selected extracts from Republic. This will be for the purpose of developing students' reading skills. Students will be given the chance to study the Republic in ways that are particularly attentive to its specific textual form. Republic is unlike many other philosophical texts in that it is written as a dialogue. Plato presents his ideas through the mouthpiece of Socrates: the 'gadfly' who famously declares that the only thing he knows is that he knows nothing.

The module will include a focus on the development of critical thinking skills. It will examine the particular way in which the philosopher Plato justifies and supports his ideas about education in Republic. Students will be given the chance to reflect on how the dialogue form and Socrates distinctive style of questioning might be an example of good critical thinking. Students will be given the opportunity to develop their own critical thinking skills by practising the techniques employed by Socrates, as well as other forms of critical thinking, in order to evaluate the visions of education presented in Republic.

The module will also involve a practical component that allows students to understand the role of philosophy from an applied perspective. The practical sessions will give students the chance to link philosophical ideas to the actual world of teaching and learning. In the first half of the module students will go on a school visit to a local school. The purpose of the first school visit will be to explore where philosophy might be already found in schools today. In the second half of the module, students will work towards designing their own teaching activity, which they will run at the school they visited earlier in the module. The teaching activity will position students as a philosophical facilitator, and they run their own activity aimed at getting children to design their ideal school for the future: their own Republic.

The practical element of the course is underwritten in the assessment methods. The students will be assessed on their plan of the teaching activity (20%), a reflective assignment written following the activity (30%) and a critical essay (50%) with the provisional title: 'Is Plato's vision of education convincing?'

Learning outcomes

By the end of the module, students should be able to:

- 1. To understand the relationship between philosophy and education.
- 2. To be able to comprehend what is involved in asking a philosophical question about education.
- 3. To be able to articulate the role philosophy has played historically in education and can play in the present day
- 4. To have critical awareness of the possibilities of philosophy for addressing matters of teaching and learning in education today.
- 5. To be able to critically engage with key philosophical texts about education.

Indicative reading list

Primary text:

Plato (2007). Republic. (Translated by H.D.P. Lee). Penguin Classics

Secondary Literature:

Blankenship, D (1996). "Education and the Arts in Plato's 'Republic'" in Journal of Education pp. 67-98

Heckel M. (2017). "Plato and the role of contradiction in education" in British Journal for the History of Philosophy pp. 3-21

Fine, G. (ed.), Plato 2: Ethics, Politics, Religion and the Soul (Oxford Readings in Philosophy), (Oxford University Press, 2000)

Fine, G. (ed). The Oxford Handbook of Plato. Oxford University Press

McPherran, M. (ed.) (2010). Plato's Republic: A Critical Guide Cambridge Critical Guides Pappas, N. (2003). Routledge Guidebook to Plato and the Republic. Routledge.

Saracco, S (2017). Plato and Intellectual Development Palgrave

Rowe, C. (2015) 'Methodologies for Reading Plato' Oxford Handbooks Online.

Smith, R.D. (2012). "The play of Socratic dialogue." In Philosophy for Children in Transition.

Vansielegheem, N. & Kennedy, D. Wiley-Blackwell. 52-65.

Smith, R.D. (2008). "To school with the poets: philosophy, method and clarity." Paedagogica Historica: International Journal of the History of Education 44(6): 635-645.

Vlastos, G. Studies in Greek Philosophy Vol. II: Socrates, Plato and their Tradition, (Princeton University Press, 1996)

Pedagogical Literature:

Worley, P. (ed). (2016). The Philosophy Shop: Ideas, Activities and Questions to Get People, Young and Old, Thinking Philosophically. Independent Thinking Press. Select articles from Journal of Philosophy in Schools.

[View reading list on Talis Aspire](#)

Interdisciplinary

This module is interdisciplinary in that it introduces Education students to Philosophy, both as a subject in its own right and also exploring how and why philosophy might be taught to children.

Subject specific skills

- describe what is philosophy and philosophy of education
- critique a rationale for teaching philosophy to children
- the underlying values, theories and concepts of philosophy in general and Plato in particular relevant to education
- the diversity of learners and the complexities of the education process
- the complexity of the interaction between learning and local and global contexts, and the extent to which participants (including learners and teachers) can influence the learning process
- the societal and organisational structures and purposes of educational systems, and the possible implications for learners and the learning process
- constructively critique theories, practice and research in the area of education.

Transferable skills

- Active listening
- Analysis and decision making
- Character/personality
- Cognitive flexibility
- Communication skills
- Confidence
- Coordinating with others
- Creativity
- Critical thinking
- Emotional intelligence
- Initiative and also follow instructions
- Intellectual ability
- Interpersonal and communication
- Judgement and decision making
- Knowledge of chosen job/career
- Literacy
- Management of learning
- Motivation, tenacity, commitment
- Personal development skills
- Persuading/influencing
- Planning and organisational skills
- Problem solving
- Reasoning
- Self-management/resilience
- Team working

Study

Study time

Type	Required	Optional
Lectures	8 sessions of 1 hour (5%)	
Seminars	8 sessions of 2 hours (11%)	
Tutorials	(0%)	1 session of 15 minutes
Project supervision	6 sessions of 1 hour (4%)	
Private study	120 hours (80%)	
Total	150 hours	

Private study description

Independent study hours include background reading, completing reading/other tasks in preparation for timetabled teaching sessions, undertaking research using the library resources, follow-up reading work, working on individual and group projects, the completion of formative and summative assignments, revision.

Costs

No further costs have been identified for this module.

Assessment

You do not need to pass all assessment components to pass the module.

Assessment group A

	Weighting	Study time
Activity Plan	20%	
Reflective Assignment	30%	
Critical Essay	50%	

Feedback on assessment

Tutorials\r\nWhole group feedback\r\nAssessment feedback sheet\r\n

Availability

Courses

This module is Core for:

- Year 1 of UEQA-X35B Undergraduate Education Studies