

EDUCATION STUDIES PROGRAM COURSES

AMST-120/EDST-120 / ENGL-120

Reading/Writing/Teaching

This course considers from many perspectives what it means to read and write and learn and teach both for ourselves and for others. As part of the work of this course, in addition to the usual class hours, students will serve as weekly tutors and classroom assistants in adult basic education centers in nearby towns. Thus, this course consciously engages with the obstacles to and the power of education through course readings, through self-reflexive writing about our own varied educational experiences, and through weekly work in the community. As an Intensive Writing course, this class further supports students as they hone deep reading strategies and multi-step writing processes themselves.

Although this course presses participants to reflect a great deal about teaching, this course does not teach how to teach. Instead it offers an exploration of the contexts and processes of education, and of the politics and desires that suffuse learning. Course readings range across literary genres (ex: essays, poems, autobiographies, and novels) in which education and teaching figure centrally, as well as readings from other disciplines, which may include ethnography, sociology, psychology, and philosophy. As part of the work of Intensive Writing, students will examine not only the content of these readings but also how they are constructed. Specifically, they will study rhetorical features (ex: audience awareness and genre expectations), as well as the structures of argument and analysis, with an eye on developing reading and writing skills they can use in other courses across the College.

Ultimately, students will come together as a community of writers who support one another as they reflect on their experiences as tutors and develop their own academic writing voices.

Preference given to first-year Amherst College students. Writing Intensive. Admission with consent of the instructor. Limited to 15 students.

EDST-121 / ENGL-121

Writing the College Experience

What does equity and access look like in college? What should it look like? In this course, students will learn to critique power structures that have created boundaries around higher education, and they will build their critical reading and writing skills through short, low-stakes weekly writing and three major papers that will be revised many times. We will consider how students' intersectional identities (i.e., how class, race, gender, and disability, among others) help them navigate college or create barriers to equity and access. We'll learn how learning is shaped by cultural and rhetorical contexts. As we read, we will pay close attention to the way that writers build arguments to levy their own critiques with evidence, as well as how they organize texts and edit their own work, with an eye on developing our own strategies for using these skills in this course and others. We will work together to develop a community of writers who can mutually support each other through their own multifaceted college experiences.

Preference given to first-year Amherst College students. Admission with consent of the instructor. Limited to 12 students.

EDST-128 / ENGL-128

Introduction to Academic Writing: The Right to Read and Write

This course functions as an introduction to academic writing at Amherst College. As an intensive writing course, the main topic of the course is writing itself. Students will consider how basic literacy serves as a foundation for accessing rights, such as freedom of expression, and how it is instrumental in advocating for other rights, such as equitable participation in government, education, and culture. Students will engage with a range of sources that consider issues of access to literacy instruction as well as linguistic justice. Sources may include scholarly articles, short stories, and digital forms (such as podcasts, videos, and web texts). As they write about the right to read and write, students can expect to learn about: developing and strengthening ideas; paragraphing; building and sustaining arguments; using and citing evidence; and offering and responding to feedback. Students will explore pre-writing, drafting, and revision practices. They will have the opportunity to write low-stakes, informal assignments like journals as well as three formal papers. Students should expect a mixture of class discussion, writing exercises, and peer review during class time. They should also expect to attend one-on-one writing consultations with the professor outside of class. Ultimately, students will come together as a community of writers who support one another as they develop their own academic writing voices.

Limited to 15 students. Instructor consent required.

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EDST-135 / POSC-135

Justice

This course will explore the meaning of justice and its realization in everyday life. We will consider individuals' perceptions of justice and the significance of the concept in the relationship between citizens and government. We will examine how social movements attempt to seek justice and how this quest for justice defines their strategies and goals. And finally we consider how efforts to seek justice are realized, delayed, or blocked in institutional settings, such as in workplace organizations, prisons, state bureaucracies, and the courts. The course will be taught in an "Inside-Out Prison Exchange Program" format, enrolling equal numbers of students from Amherst College and a prison. This course will be taught at a local jail.

Admission with consent of the instructor. Limited to 12 students.

STAT-136

Exploring Mental Health Inequities via Statistics: Happy Intro Stats

This is an interactive course designed to help students understand inequities in mental health issues via statistics. We will begin the course by examining mental health stigmas and practice self-care exercises to train our "happy muscles" together. We will discover the scientific evidence behind those self-care practices and explore existing racial disparities in mental health care systems, while learning about important statistical concepts and mastering our data analysis skills using R (a popular statistical software package). Statistical topics covered include descriptive statistics, visualization, study design, simulation-based inferences, and multiple regression. Students are expected to play an active role in co-creating the course and co-building an inclusive learning community with their peers and the professor. Course components include weekly reading and discussion, regular self-reflections and problem sets, and collaborative work in groups. We will use an OER (Open-Educational-Resources) textbook in this course. No prior experience with statistical software is expected.

This course is an alternative to STAT 135 (Introduction to Statistics via Modeling) with a special focus on mental health issues. Students may not receive credit for both this course and STAT 111 or STAT 135. Limited to 24 students.

EDST-145 / POSC-145

Work

This course will explore the role of work in the context of American politics and society. We will study how work has been understood in political and social theory. We will also consider ethnographic studies that explore how workers experience their lives inside organizations and how workplaces transform in response to changing legal regulations. These theoretical and empirical explorations will provide a foundation for reflections about how work structures opportunities in democratic societies and how re-imagining work might unleash human potential. The course will ground these questions about the role of work in the context of American politics and society. At the broadest level we will ask: Do citizens in a liberal society have a right to engage in meaningful work and earn a living wage? What is the changing nature of work in a neoliberal society? What are the goals of the state in regards to the production of a future workforce? What are the impacts of employment discrimination, occupational segregation, and wage disparity based on race or gender?

Limited to 18 students.

EDST-182 / ENGL-182

Constructing Childhood: From Page to Screen

How has childhood been imagined across the twentieth century and into our own present? Since the Victorian era, childhood and the experience of being a child have been associated with innocence (and experience), nostalgia (and regret), and a simpler (while deeply complex) time of life. Yet across literature and media, childhood is constructed after the fact, by adults whose perceptions are shaped by their understanding of childhood as a distinct and discrete set of experiences. In this course, we will explore constructions of British and American childhoods on page, stage, and screen, exploring two foundational late Victorian/Edwardian intermedial texts (*Alice's*

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Adventures in Wonderland and *Peter Pan*), before venturing on a journey exploring cinematic depictions of childhood over the course of the twentieth century. We will examine twentieth-century films depicting children and popular genres designed to appeal to child audiences; how media texts represent children as they navigate conceptions of gender, sexuality, race, and class; and children as both consumers and producers of media in the twenty-first century. Students will explore different genres and modes of expository writing, including personal essay and close textual analysis and do an independent, guided research project. Students will gain a familiarity with key terms and methodologies in English and Film & Media Studies; an ability to think and write critically about literary and cinematic texts; an awareness of historical, social and cultural perceptions of childhood in Britain and the United States; confidence in reading primary and secondary sources; and proficiency in analytical writing, including sentence-level clarity, building arguments, using evidence, and working with and appropriately citing a variety of sources.

This course is designed for entering first-year students. Non-English/FAMS majors and Five College students are welcome. Limited to 18 students. Eighteen seats reserved for first-year students.

AMST-200 / EDST-200 / SOCI-200

Race, Education, and Belonging

Disproportionate numbers of students of color drop out or disengage from schools in America each year. Responding to the framework of “drop out,” critical educational scholars have argued that many school practices, policies, and cultures “push out” already marginalized students, or at the very least, do not take sufficient steps to create an inclusive culture that supports all students’ participation and sense of belonging. This course examines the ways in which race and racism influence political, social, cultural, and institutional belonging. This interdisciplinary course will draw on theory and research from the fields of education, sociology, and ethnic studies to examine the conditions of schooling that prompt students’ formal and less formal forms of school disengagement. We will explore how educational institutions, educators, and their community partners support students’ access to and engagement with education. We will examine educational reform practices that strive to cultivate a culture of belonging and community in schools. In particular, we will examine programs and schools that forefront anti-racist education, community engagement, student participation, critical multicultural education, and restorative justice.

Limited to 25 students.

AMST-201 / EDST-201

Social Construction of American Society

The goal of this course is to explain how our daily, social environment in the United States is constructed and shapes our lives. We will address such questions as why some succeed at school while others fail; what effect culture has on our behavior; why there are class, gender, and racial inequalities; how socialization takes place; and what role politics plays in our society. This course introduces students to these and other sociological topics as well as to dominant theories and methods used to make sense of such social phenomena. Students are encouraged to bring their own insights to class as we challenge common assumptions of these major issues that refer to all of us.

AMST-203 / EDST-203 / SOCI-203

Youth, Schooling, and Popular Culture

What do we understand about schools, teachers, and students through our engagement with popular culture? How do we interrogate youth clothing as a site of cultural expression and school-based control? How do race, class, and gender shape how youth make sense of and navigate cultural events such as the prom? Contemporary educational debates often position schools and popular culture as oppositional and as vying for youth's allegiance. Yet schools and popular culture overlap as educational sites in the lives of youth. In this course, we will employ feminist, critical race, and cultural studies perspectives to analyze representations of schooling and youth in popular culture. By doing so, we will consider the historically shifting meaning of youth, interrogate an oppositional stance to school and popular culture, and examine relationships of power and representation in educational sites. Readings, class discussions, and frequent film screenings will support our examination.

Limited to 25 students.

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EDST-208 / POSC-208

Power and Politics in Contemporary China

This course provides an introduction to the major institutions, actors, and ideas that shape contemporary Chinese politics. Through an examination of texts from the social sciences as well as historical narratives and film, we will analyze the development of the current party-state, the relationship between the state and society, policy challenges, and prospects for further reform. First, we examine the political history of the People's Republic, including the Maoist period and the transition to market reforms. Next, we will interrogate the relations between various social groups and the state, through an analysis of contentious politics in China including the ways in which the party-state seeks to maintain social and political stability. Finally, we will examine the major policy challenges in contemporary China including growing inequality, environmental degradation, waning economic growth, and foreign policy conflicts.

Limited to 25 students.

STAT-210

Mining the History of Holyoke

This course will focus on the use of text analytics to explore the rich history of Holyoke, MA. Holyoke has been a site of rapid industrialization, multiple waves of immigration and migration, urban development, rapid changes in its workforce, and ongoing creativity, activism, and innovation. Students will develop the skills to mine textual data from archives at the Wistariahurst Museum, the Holyoke Public Library, Holyoke Community College, and other repositories to address important questions regarding the development and history of this planned community.

Topics include sentiment analysis, regular expressions, document-term-matrices, named entity recognition, and Latent Dirichlet analysis.

Requisite: student has completed or is in the process of completing STAT 111 or MATH/STAT 135 or STAT136 or PSYC 122 or has a placement of STAT 230. Recommended requisite: HIST 351 or COSC 111.

ECON-218

The Economics of Inequality in the US

The United States is in an unprecedented period of rising inequality. This course begins by examining the history of inequality in the U.S. since the start of the twentieth century. It then uses cutting-edge and detailed national data to document and explore the current state of inequality and intergenerational mobility in the U.S. We consider inequality by various metrics, such as race, gender, and geography, and in various outcomes, such as income, wealth, health, educational attainment, and incarceration. The course then examines determinants of inequality, and finally, investigates policy solutions to inequality. Throughout the course, economic models related to inequality are both presented and critiqued. Finally, special attention is paid throughout the course to causal inference, and to students honing their skills at understanding the intuition behind commonly used research methods to estimate causal effects.

Requisites: ECON 111/ECON 111E. Limited to 30 students.

EDST-224 / PSYC-224

Intergroup Dialogue on Race (Soph. Seminar)

This highly interactive course brings together students to examine the roles race and other intersecting identities play in their lives. Course work includes an interdisciplinary blend of scholarly readings, in-class dialogue, experiential learning activities, reflective writing, and an intergroup collaborative research project. Students in this course bring their own experiences with race into the classroom as a legitimate and valued source for learning. The course readings link students' personal experiences around race to a socio-historical understanding of individual, institutional, and structural discrimination--to the ways social inequality is embedded in social institutions and individual consciousness, constraining life chances. Early in the course students engage in structured activities that develop trust among participants, and learn skills at intergroup dialogue—suspending judgment and listening for

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understanding – in order to create respectful, sustained dialogues around racial divisions. Students engage in small mixed-race teams to research a racial inequality/inequity on campus. Students do reflective writing weekly linking their in-class experiences to the readings, as well as reflective writing at the end about their learning throughout the semester. The course exposes participants in a very intimate way to how classmates of different races see and experience the world, to the pain and trauma students of color may have undergone due to race, and to the privilege White students possess, whether or not they are aware of it.

Requisite: consent of the instructor. Limited to 15 students.

EDST-227 / PSYC-227

Developmental Psychology

A study of human development across the lifespan with an emphasis on the general characteristics of various stages of development from birth to adolescence and on the determinants of the developmental process. The class will explore: 1) prenatal development, 2) the development of motor skills, cognitive skills, language, emotional understanding, attachments, and morality, and 3) the role of family systems in development. Students will engage with this content using contemporary research and real-world applications.

Requisite: PSYC 100 or 212 or consent of the instructor. Limited to 40 students per section.

BIOL-250 / CHEM-250

Being Human in Stem

This is an interactive course that combines academic inquiry and community engagement to investigate identity, inequality and representation within Science Technology Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) fields – at Amherst and beyond. We begin the course by grounding our understanding of the STEM experience at Amherst in national and global contexts. We will survey the interdisciplinary literature on the ways in which identity – race, gender, class, ability, sexuality – and geographic context shape STEM persistence and belonging. We will bring this literature into conversation with our own Amherst experiences. These challenging conversations require vulnerability, openness and the ability to tolerate discomfort. We will work from day one to build a brave space whose foundation is trust, accountability and growth. Students will design group projects that apply themes from the literature and our seminar discussions to develop resources and engage the STEM community, whether at the college, local, or national level. Course work includes critical reading and discussion, reflective writing, and collaborative work culminating in community engagement proposals which students will share with the campus and the broader public.

Open to sophomores, juniors and seniors. This course will be taught in two sections.

AMST-265 / EDST-265 / SOCI-265

Unequal Childhoods: Race, Class and Gender in the US

This class explores the ways in which social position – race, class, gender – and social context intersect to shape the lives of children, adolescents and young adults in the United States. We begin by conceptualizing childhood as a social construction whose meaning has changed over time and that varies across context. For class-privileged individuals, for example, childhood and adolescence may extend into a third decade of life, whereas for others, poverty and/or family responsibilities and community struggles may mean it scarcely exists at all. Utilizing ethnography, memoir, critical journalistic accounts and analyses of sociological data, we will critically examine the ways in which inequalities among and between groups of children and adolescents shape their daily life experiences, aspirations and opportunities, and what this means for overall trends of inequality in the United States. We will also strive to place our own biographies in dialogue with the course materials, and to gain a deeper and more critical understanding of the diverse backgrounds that comprise our class and campus communities.

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Some of the content in this course may prove emotionally as well as intellectually difficult for some students. Inequality is often accompanied by struggle, hardship and different forms of violence, all of which are present in this course material.

Limited to 25 students.

EDST-301 / PHIL-301

Education for Liberal Democracy

In the past decade or so, public support for liberal democratic institutions has waned significantly all over the world. The solution, some argue, is to educate our citizens better so that they understand the value of liberalism and democracy and so that they develop the knowledge and character required to exercise the rights of a citizen in a liberal democracy responsibly and well. In this class, we will consider and assess philosophical arguments for and against both liberalism and democracy. In light of this inquiry, we will consider what it would mean to educate for citizenship in a liberal democracy. Readings will be drawn from the works of Plato, John Locke, John Stuart Mill, Horace Mann, John Dewey, Alexander Meiklejohn, John Rawls, Amy Guttmann, David Estlund, Thomas Christiano, Elizabeth Anderson, Danielle Allen and Martha Nussbaum, among others.

Limited to 25 students.

AMST-308 / EDST-308 / SOCI-308

Gender, Feminisms, and Education

The relationship between girls' empowerment and education has been and continues to be a key feminist issue. For instance, second wave liberal feminist approaches sought to make schools more equitable through equal access to educational resources for girls and the elimination of gender discrimination. Yet the relationship between gender and schooling remains a complex site of research and policy.

In this course we will examine how various feminist perspectives have defined and addressed the existence of gender inequality in American schools. We will begin by examining theories that address the production of gendered experiences within the context of U.S. schools and classrooms. Utilizing an intersectional approach, we will explore how the production of gender identities in educational contexts is shaped by the realities of our race, class, ethnic, and sexual identities. We will draw on empirical research and theory to analyze pedagogies, policies, and programs that have been developed to address gender inequality and schooling, including those that address fluid notions of gender. Students will complete the course with a complex view of feminism and an understanding of how feminist approaches have shaped the debates within gender and educational reform.

Limited to 15 students.

BLST-314 / EDST-314 / HIST-314

Student Activism in the US: Past and Present

What are the limits and possibilities of students engaging in social justice movements within a college campus? Which political issues have sparked student movements in the U.S. and why? Why do some student movements succeed, why do others fail, and how might one define and evaluate the meaning of success? How have student movements in higher education changed over time? This course surveys the history of collegiate student activism for freedom and racial equality during the abolition movement; Reconstruction and Jim Crow; The Long Civil Rights Movement; and Black Lives Matter. In particular, this course will explore how students have fought to secure freedom, equality, and citizenship through higher education. Students will also critically engage with how other social movements have impacted college campuses. Readings include historical monographs and student writings. Assignments include two papers based on primary and secondary sources and a presentation. Two class meetings per week.

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ANTH-318 / ASLC-318

Chinese Childrearing

This course examines Chinese childrearing, focusing primarily on childrearing in mainland China. We will look at differences as well as similarities between childrearing in Chinese families of different socioeconomic status within China, as well as between childrearing in mainland China and in childrearing in Chinese and non-Chinese families worldwide. We will also look at dominant discourses within and outside of China about the nature of Chinese childrearing and ask about relationships between those discourses and the experiences of Chinese families. Students will work together to conduct original research about childrearing in China, drawing on data from the instructor's research projects. Course assignments will be tailored to the interests, skills, and academic background of each student, so first-years, sophomores, and students with no Chinese language skills are welcome and just as likely to succeed as juniors, seniors, and students with Chinese language skills.

Chinese language skills or ANTH 112, 115, 288, 318, 323, or 332, or a similar course. Limited to 20 students. Admission with consent of the instructor.

AMST-328 / EDST-328 / HIST-328

Indigenous Narratives: Creating Children's Stories about Native American History

Children's literature has a diversity problem. A 2018 study by the Cooperative Children's Book Center at the University of Wisconsin-Madison found that of more than 3000 children's books published that year, roughly 50% featured main characters who were White. Only 10% featured Black characters, 7% featured Asian / Pacific Islander characters, and 5% featured Latinx characters. (27% of the books surveyed featured animal characters.) By far the least represented group in children's literature were Native Americans, who appeared in fewer than 1% of the books surveyed.

This course explores the ethics and impact of inclusive representation in children's media. It focuses on the challenge of teaching young people under-represented histories, particularly when those histories engage with raw, difficult, and often still painful subjects. How can we tell historically accurate stories to children without whitewashing or sugarcoating the past? Why is the drive to make children's media more inclusive critically important?

A major component of this course involves experiential learning. Working together in small groups, and with guidance from experts in children's publishing (editors, authors, illustrators, librarians), students will research, write, and publish a book for children on a topic related to Native American history. Readings will combine scholarship about children's literature and publishing, the importance of historical representation and storytelling, and Native American history. Students will engage directly with the local community through focus groups, discussions with Native American knowledge keepers and cultural consultants, as well as visits to local libraries and the Eric Carle Museum of Picture Book Art. This course is open to all and no prior experience is necessary, however students must be willing to work collaboratively, and will be required to attend one out-of-class field trip.

Limited to 30 students.

EDST-335 / PHIL-335

Theory of Knowledge

This is a course on epistemology, the branch of philosophy concerned with knowledge. Consider two parallel scenarios. In both cases you ask a passer-by for directions to the store. In the Good Case, the passer-by happens to be an employee of the store. In the Bad Case, they simply take a confident guess. In either case the passer-by gives you identical directions. From your perspective, the testimonies are indistinguishable, and in both cases you form a true belief.

Are you better off in one case than the other? One thought might be that in the Good Case, you acquire knowledge, whereas in the Bad Case you acquire a (fortuitously) true belief. Is there a difference between knowledge and true belief? What is the relationship between our reasons for belief and the status of our beliefs (like whether a belief is somehow justified, or counts as knowledge)? Can we know anything at all? Or does the arguably pervasive possibility of being in a near-miss situation, like the Bad Case, undermine our claim to truly knowing much of anything?

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This course will address why we should care about what knowledge is, and what it requires; the relationship between our reasons for belief and the biases that we have and their impact on the credibility we afford to members of marginalized groups; ways that our identities intersect with our ability to both acquire and to disseminate knowledge; and whether we have an obligation to speak out against what is false, or unjustified.

Requisite: one course in PHIL or consent of the instructor. Limited to 25 students.

EDST-337 / SOCI-337

Dilemmas of Diversity: The Case of Higher Education

In this course, we will focus on the diversification of higher education. We will pay particular attention to efforts made by selective liberal arts colleges and universities to open their doors to students disadvantaged by barriers of racial discrimination and excluded by the means of class privilege. We will critically interrogate the concept of diversity and its implementation, paying attention to both successes and problems. Among these problems is the gap between a diversity promised and a diversity delivered.

We will employ sociological theories and concepts to explore this gap, the dilemmas it presents, and the cultural strategies that have emerged in response to them. Situating contemporary efforts of selective colleges and universities to diversify in historical context, we will pay particular attention to broader transformation of racial and class discourse in the United States in the post-Civil Rights era, including federal efforts to address discrimination, Supreme Court decisions regarding race-based admissions policy, changes in corporate personnel policies, the rise of “colorblind” rhetoric, growing economic inequality, and the expansion of neoliberal policies and practices in higher education today. Drawing on this context, we will assess the strengths and weaknesses of diversity initiatives that have been put into place, the patterns of cultural change occurring on campuses, and the role social difference can play in constructing alternatives to inclusive communities as we presently envision them.

Students will be encouraged to work collaboratively and will employ a variety of methods to document systematically the current state of diversity on their respective campuses.

Requisite: SOCI 112 or equivalent. Limited to 15 students. Admission with consent of the instructor.

AMST-345 / EDST-345 / SOCI-345

Model Minorities: Jewish and Asian Americans

The United States has long struggled with challenges created by the need to absorb ethnic and racial minorities. In the face of seemingly intractable problems, one solution has been to designate a “model minority,” which then appears to divert attention from the society at large. Earlier in the twentieth century, Jewish Americans played this role; today, Asian Americans are the focus. This course examines specific instances in which Jewish Americans and Asian Americans both embraced and rejected the model minority stereotype. Course units will also examine the underside of the model minority stereotype, quotas imposed to limit access to education and employment as well as social and legal actions taken in response to such restrictions. The course will feature a range of materials, including plays, fiction, journalism, and visual works. Students will read scholarship in the fields of American Studies, Sociology, History, and Critical Race Studies. The course will include a number of guest speakers.

Limited to 15 students.

EDST-346 / FREN-346

Enfants Terribles: Childhood in Eighteenth- and Nineteenth-Century French Literature, Culture, and Art

Images of childhood have become omnipresent in our culture. We fetishize childhood as an idyllic time, preserved from the difficulties and compromises of adult life; but the notion that children’s individual lives are worth recording is a relatively modern one. Drawing from literature, children’s literature, history, and art, we will try to map out the journey from the idea of childhood as a phase to be outgrown to the modern conception of childhood as a crucial moment of self-definition. We will pay particular attention to the nature

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against nurture debate and to gender biases in education. We will discuss theories of child-rearing, the emergence of children's literature, and the material culture of childhood (e.g., clothes, toys, children's books).

Readings may include essays by historians of childhood such as Philippe Ariès, Elisabeth Badinter, Martine Sonnet and Colin Heywood; selections from Jean-Jacques Rousseau's treatise, *Émile, ou de l'Éducation*, as well as excerpts from Félicité de Genlis's *Adèle et Théodore, ou Lettres sur l'éducation*. We will also read a physician's account of the "wild child" known as Victor, Dr. Jean Itard's *Mémoire sur l'enfant sauvage de l'Aveyron*; *La petite Fadette* by George Sand [Aurore Dupin]; *Les Malheurs de Sophie* by the Comtesse de Ségur; and Jules Renard's autobiographical *Poil de Carotte*. This course will also closely examine eighteenth- and nineteenth-century artists' visions of childhood, with a particular emphasis on female artists such as Elisabeth Vigée-Lebrun, Marguerite Gérard, and Berthe Morisot. Conducted in French.

Requisite: One of the following—FREN 207, 208 or the equivalent.

AMST-352 / EDST-352 / HIST-352 / SOCI-352

The Purpose and Politics of Education

Focusing on the United States, this course introduces students to foundational questions and texts central to Education Studies. We will explore the competing goals and priorities Americans have held for primary, secondary and post-secondary education and ask how and why these visions have influenced—or failed to influence—classrooms, schools, and educational policy. We will pay particular attention to sources of educational stratification; the tensions between the public and private purposes of schooling; and the relationship between schooling and equality.

In the first part of the course, students will reflect on how Americans have imagined the purpose of self-education, literacy, public schooling, and the liberal arts. Among the questions we will consider: What do Americans want from public schools? Does education promote liberation? Has a liberal arts education outlived its usefulness? How has the organization of schools and school systems promoted some educational objectives in lieu of others? In the second section of the course, we will concentrate on the politics of schooling. Here, we will pay particular attention to several issues central to understanding educational inequality and its relationship to American politics, culture, and society: localism; state and federal authority; desegregation; and the complicated relationship between schooling and racial, linguistic, class-based, gender, and ethnic hierarchies. Finally, we will explore how competing ideas about the purpose and politics of education manifest themselves in current policy debates about privatization, charters, testing, and school discipline. Throughout the course, students will reflect on both the limits and possibilities of American schools to challenge and reconfigure the social order.

Limited to 20 students.

ECON-360

Econometrics

A study of the analysis of quantitative data, with special emphasis on the application of statistical methods to economic problems. A student may not receive credit for both ECON 360 and ECON 361.

Requisite: MATH 111, or equivalent and at least a "B" grade in ECON 111/111E or a "B-" in ECON 200–290, or equivalent. Fall and spring semesters.

Fall semester: Two sections limited to 25 students each.

EDST-374 / LJST-374 / POSC-374

Rights

This seminar explores the role of rights in addressing inequality, discrimination, and violence. This course will trace the evolution of rights focused legal strategies aimed at addressing injustice coupled with race, gender, disability, and citizenship status. We will

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evaluate how rights-based activism often creates a gap between expectation and realization. This evaluation will consider when and how rights are most efficacious in producing social change and the possibility of unintended consequences.

This course fulfills a requirement for the Five College Reproductive Health, Rights and Justice (RHRJ) certificate.

Requisite: One introductory POSC course or its equivalent. Limited to 15 students.

EDST-390

Special Topics

Independent reading course.

EDST-410 / PHIL-410

Seminar: Epistemic Agency

What does it mean to be responsible for your beliefs? Here's one idea: when we think about responsibility, we think about choice. For example, we might say that you are responsible for your misdeeds because you could have chosen otherwise; you chose to act as you did. What is the analog to this way of explaining responsibility when it comes to our mental lives? In what sense could we have *believed* otherwise? And in what sense *ought* we to know certain things? Some epistemologists – philosophers who study knowledge and belief – have argued that epistemic agency is an empty concept. Belief, as they say, “aims at the truth.” The idea is that I do not choose to believe that *Milo is the best dog* because I prefer to believe it, or because I have decided that the evidence is in his favor (it is!). Instead, I believe it because its truth compels me: it is evident, and in virtue of recognizing the evidence for what it is, the belief arises in me unbidden. Your beliefs smack you in the face; they happen to you, not because of you. But what, then, do we make of our widespread – and, arguably, deeply meaningful – practice of evaluating one another on the basis of our beliefs? Why do we admire one another for our good ideas, or repudiate one another for reactionary, dogmatic, or bigoted beliefs? If these practices of evaluation – which seem to presuppose that we are responsible for our beliefs – are legitimate, why are they? In what sense are our beliefs under our control? Are we free to know, and believe?

Requisite: two courses in Philosophy or consent of the instructor. Limited to 15 students.

ECON-419

Education and Inequality in the US

Education is one of the most promising ways to fight inequality, yet inequality in educational attainment is rising in the United States. This course focuses on understanding inequality in education in the U.S., and whether and how education reform can reduce it. The course begins with a brief overview of the historical and current relationship between educational attainment and inequality in the U.S. We then study the empirical economics literature examining whether prominent education policies and reforms reduce inequality in educational attainment. We examine topics in: 1) early childhood education, such as Head Start and universal preschool; 2) K-12 education, such as school finance reform, desegregation, and student-teacher race match; and 3) postsecondary education, such as affirmative action in college admissions, simplifying the college and financial aid application process, and financial aid during college. Throughout the semester, students learn commonly used empirical microeconomic research methods to identify causal impacts, and then employ these tools in their own empirical research paper.

Requisites: ECON 360/361.

Limited to 15 students.

ECON-421

Education and Human Capital in Developing Countries

In this course, we will explore the determinants of educational acquisition in developing countries. We will begin by discussing human capital theory. We will then explore a number of key determinants of educational outcomes in developing countries, such as educational infrastructure, teacher quality, conditional cash transfers, anti-child labor programs, and peer effects. The course will also

EDUCATION STUDIES PROGRAM COURSES

include a module comparing the key questions in the economics of education facing developed versus developing countries. The purposes of this course are to deepen understanding of the determinants of educational investments and to build experience with using empirical research to expand knowledge in this area. To that end, much of the course will focus on careful reading of empirical journal articles, discussion of the various econometric techniques used, and causal identification. The course is built around student development of an original paper that expands our empirical understanding of the determinants of educational investments in a low-income economy context.

Requisites: ECON 300/301 and ECON 360/361. Limited to 15 students.

HIST-431

Colonial and Decolonial Archives: Historical Research Methods

This course is a hands-on archival studies course as well as a methods-course that introduces students to a variety of theoretical frameworks relevant for historical inquiry. Students will pursue their own primary research in various colonial and de-colonial archives at Amherst College, Hampshire College, Mount Holyoke College, and Smith College. These archives contain, among others, the reports of female missionaries in Armenia running schools for girls (MHC); journals and letters of British governors in India and their wives (AC); the archives of the Bliss family, founders of the American University in Beirut (AC); but also the papers of Equal Ahmad, post-colonial Pakistani activist and professor at HC; the archives of the Third World Women's Alliance and other late twentieth century feminist and intersectional activists (SC); the living archive of Loretta Ross, Atlanta-based activist for reproductive justice (SC); and the Pablo Eisenberg Native American Literature Collection (AC). We will frame our archival studies by readings in post- and decolonial theory as well as indigeneity studies, in addition to relevant historical scholarship. Numerous guest lecturers will present their perspectives on the materials. The aim is to produce a substantial original research paper of 15 pages. One meeting weekly.

AMST-468/EDST-468

Research Methods in American Culture

This course is designed to provide American Studies majors, as well as Education Studies majors and others, with a methodological grounding to conduct interdisciplinary research. Students will have the opportunity to conduct research on a topic of their own choosing and develop a research prospectus. Students will be exposed to and experiment with a wide range of theoretical and methodological approaches, gain familiarity with methods such as participant observation, interview and oral history practice, and study a range of materials—visual, literary, print, digital, audio—via a traditionally interdisciplinary American Studies praxis. Students will gauge the utility of various theoretical and methodological approaches to determine which are most useful for their own independent work. A major requirement of this course is participation in a "work-in-progress" presentation as part of a public mini-conference at the end of the semester.

Limited to 18 students. Open to juniors and seniors as a research seminar; or with consent of the instructor.

EDST-470

Advanced Writing and Research in Education Studies

Luschen

T 2:30 - 5:30

This course is designed for Education Studies majors (and prospective Education Studies majors) working on theses and other intensive research projects that examine the history, purpose, politics, and consequences of education. The course is intended to provide guidance and scholarly community for majors as they complete the requirement to produce a significant research project. Research may take a variety of forms, including but not limited to writing and research associated with a community-based project in an educational setting. Students will engage in the pre-writing, drafting, and revision of writing associated with an advanced research project in the field of Education Studies. Beyond writing skills, the course will (a) teach students how to identify, examine, and integrate primary and secondary research materials; (b) review protocols for ethical research; (c) when appropriate, connect students with community research sites; and (d) workshop students' work in progress.

Students will engage in several research and writing exercises throughout the semester, submit a significant research paper at the end of the semester, and participate in a "works in progress" presentation for the Education Studies community.

One class meeting per week. Requisite: one Education Studies course. Limited to 15 students.

EDUCATION STUDIES PROGRAM COURSES

EDST-490

Special Topics

Independent reading course.

EDST-498/498D, EDST-499/499D

Senior Honors

Independent work on an extended academic, creative, or pedagogical project on a topic relevant to the field. Thesis progress will be assessed by the department at the end of the first semester as a precondition for entrance to the next semester of thesis work. EDST-498D and 499D are double courses.