University of British Columbia  
Faculty of Education  
Department of Curriculum Studies  

INTRODUCTION TO CURRICULUM STUDIES  
CUST 562 (033)  
Winter Term 2, January 2009

3 credits  
Thursday 4:30 - 7:30 p.m.  
Classroom: Scarfe 203

Instructor: E. Wayne Ross, Ph.D.  
Office: Scarfe 2301  
Office Hours: by appointment  
Telephone: 604-822-2830  
E-mail: wayne.ross@ubc.ca  
Web site: http://www.ewayneross.net  
Course weblog: http://weblogs.elearning.ubc.ca/ewayne/

University Catalog Description  
History and development of the curriculum emphasizing the underlying perspectives that inform curricular choices and activities; principles and issues related to organization, development and evaluation.

Texts, Readings, and Activities  
Selected handouts, articles, and in-class activities as assigned. This course is text and project-based. Readings as well as some projects will be concurrent. Individual and collaborative work are required.


Purpose of the Course--Guiding Questions  
"What is curriculum?"

This will be the motivating question for the course. While on the surface, it may seem a simple question with a simple answer; this reading of the question belies the complexity of the concept of curriculum. The emphasis in this course is on the advance of knowledge and skills for the development of curriculum that facilitates student and teacher empowerment. With this idea as a backdrop, this course will consider curriculum as a contested construct set in a context of competing agendas. Beginning with the question above, we will explore how curriculum has been defined, who has defined it and why. We will also explore how teachers and schools in North America have been “doing” curriculum. Finally, we will explore how scholars in education are conceptualizing curriculum in light of feminism, multiculturalism
and post-structuralism. Throughout the course, there will be an emphasis on blending the theoretical and the practical aspects of curriculum study.

It is an assumption in this course that as an educator you must play a role in making decisions that best facilitate optimal educational experiences and growth for your students. To do this, an educator must be committed to a process of discovering what knowledge is, what knowledge is valuable, why it is valuable, and how it is manipulated in schools and society for accessibility or lack thereof.

"What knowledge is most worthwhile? Why is it worthwhile? How is it acquired or created?"

The course will provide opportunities to consider and apply answers to these questions, both in theory and in practice. Each of us has undoubtedly engaged in curriculum theorizing, curriculum planning, and curriculum design. We think through and act out ideas about what and how students should learn and what they should do in school. This, as both John Dewey and Kurt Lewin have claimed, are very practical things. They help us understand and plan for lives in schools. Good theories are both accurate reflections of the realities we experience and coherent visions of those we wish to create. Seen in this light, study of curriculum is both theorizing and acting on those theories as an integral part of the day-to-day work of educational practitioners. In this course, we will examine together, in our work and in our discourse, the above three basic curriculum questions. These are the "bottom line" of all activities commonly associated with educational theory and practice.

Summary of Course Goals

This course has been designed to provide students with an orientation to the field of curriculum that emphasizes a conceptual analysis of curriculum and other educational program elements. We will deal with a wide range of curriculum-related topics and issues including:

- analyzing the social, economic, and political forces affecting the curriculum;
- investigating theoretical perspectives of curriculum work and the implications for the form and content of curriculum deliberation, design, and evaluation;
- exploring the historical roots of the curriculum field; and
- examining current issues in curriculum studies.

The purpose of this course is fivefold:

1. To provide a background of curriculum knowledge, that is, to examine the perspectives, paradigms and possibilities of the curriculum field. The guiding questions are: What is the context of curriculum studies? What are the conceptual lenses through which curriculum problems are perceived? What is the range of responses to curriculum problems?

2. To prepare for professional roles as curriculum workers. The guiding questions are: What are the discourses of curriculum? What are the dominant and alternative modes of understanding curriculum phenomena? How have curriculum issues and problems been addressed in the past?

3. To convey the importance of curriculum study. The guiding question is: Why is it the case that curriculum problems are at the heart of the educational process?
4. **To encourage educators to ask basic curriculum questions.** The guiding questions are: What is learned and what should be learned in educational situations? What are the experiences that produce certain attitudes, knowledge, and behaviors in individuals? What do students need? Why do they need it? Through what kinds of content and activities can students acquire experiences that result in meaningful understandings of the world and the ability to how to act on that world?

5. **To convey the problematic character of curriculum knowledge.** The guiding questions are: What are the alternative perspectives on curriculum phenomena? What are the historical, social, and political contexts from which these perspectives emerge? What are the possible courses of action? What are the intents and criticism of such possibilities?

The above considerations pertain to but move beyond concerns about textbooks, curriculum guides, courses of study, daily lesson plans, and tests. At best, such artifacts reflect the shadows of ideas, attitudes, knowledge and interrelationships learned and prescribed for learning. These five domains are the fundamental foci of curriculum studies.

**Course Requirements**

To successfully complete this course, students will be expected to do the following:

**Attendance/Participation.** Everyone is expected to attend class each week, in prompt fashion; to actively participate in discussions, complete in-class activities and assignments as requested, and act in collegial collaboration with colleagues. The success of this class depends upon each individual’s preparation and input. (10% of course grade.)

*Weekly* one-pagers. Each week students will be expected to prepare a one page, typed analytic response to the assigned readings (*one-pagers are not summaries*). Use the “one-pagers” as an opportunity to further develop your understanding of the readings through analysis and synthesis of concepts, ideas, and perspectives. *One-pagers will be prepared for eight class sessions* (see course schedule); given a substantive title; and be limited, of course, to one page. (30% of course grade; due on January 14, 21; February 4, 11; March 3, 10, 31)

A curriculum/pedagogical autobiography. This is a short reflective account of your journey as an educator. A detailed description of this assignment will be distributed. (Approximately 1,500 words in length; 20% of course grade; due on January 28.)

Workbooks. Workbooks are like take-home exams and will require you to draw upon readings and class lectures/discussion in short essay format. There will be two workbooks for this course. (40% of course grade; due February 25 and April 7.)

**NOTE ON WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS:** All papers submitted for the course should be word-processed; have a substantive title and page numbers. Use the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* as the style guide for all papers (see the course weblog for links to APA style guidelines. Please do not use report covers or folders, simply staple pages in the upper left-hand corner. Note that I will accept all assignments as email attachments (if you submit assignments via email please do not submit hard copy).

**LATE WORK AND INCOMPLETES:** Late work will be accepted at my discretion. If you are unable to meet a deadline you should discuss the situation with me as soon as possible.

**Policy on Instructional Modifications**

Students with disabilities, who need reasonable modifications to complete assignments successfully and other wise satisfy course criteria, are encouraged to meet with the instructor as early in the course as possible to identify and plan specific accommodations.
Technology Expectations
All assignments are to be word-processed unless otherwise noted by the instructor. Continuing and regular use of e-mail is expected as is regular use of the internet as a curricular and instructional resource for this course, this particularly applies to using the course weblog. E-mail communication with the instructor is recommended; assignments are accepted via email.

Grading

Department of Curriculum Studies Grading Guidelines (May 2006)

A level - Good to Excellent Work
A+ (90-100%) A very high level of quality throughout every aspect of the work. It shows the individual (or group) has gone well beyond what has been provided and has extended the usual ways of thinking and/or performing. Outstanding comprehension of subject matter and use of existing literature and research. Consistently integrates critical and creative perspectives in relation to the subject material. The work shows a very high degree of engagement with the topic.

A (85-89%) Generally a high quality throughout the work. No problems of any significance, and evidence of attention given to each and every detail. Very good comprehension of subject and use of existing literature and research. For the most part, integrates critical and creative perspectives in relation to the subject material. Shows a high degree of engagement with the topic.

A- (80-84%) Generally a good quality throughout the work. A few problems of significance. Good comprehension of subject matter and use of existing literature and research. Work demonstrates an ability to integrate critical and creative perspectives on most occasions. The work demonstrates a reasonable degree of engagement with the topic.

B level - Adequate Work
B+ (76-79%) Some aspects of good quality to the work. Some problems of minor significance. There are examples of integrating critical and creative perspectives in relation to the subject material. A degree of engagement with the topic.

B (72-75%) Adequate quality. A number of problems of some significance. Difficulty evident in the comprehension of the subject material and use of existing literature and research. Only a few examples of integrating critical and creative perspectives in relation to the subject material. Some engagement with the topic.

B- (68-71%) Barely adequate work at the graduate level.

C level - Seriously Flawed Work
C (55-67%) Serious flaws in understanding of the subject material. Minimal integration of critical and creative perspectives in relation to the subject material. Inadequate engagement with the topic. Inadequate work at the graduate level.

D level
D (50-54%)

F level - Failing Work
F (0-49%)
# Marking Guide for Class Attendance, Participation & Leadership

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A+ —&gt; A</th>
<th>A- —&gt; B+</th>
<th>B —&gt; B-</th>
<th>C or less</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Comes to class prepared, having read and thought about the material (brings questions or worthwhile additions to the conversation from the reader’s log), having spent considerable time with the written and reflective work</td>
<td>Comes to class prepared, having read, written and thought about the material</td>
<td>Comes to class generally prepared, having read and thought about the material</td>
<td>Comes to class with some of the assignments prepared or is not prepared</td>
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<tr>
<td>Participates with enthusiasm, listening to others and helping to advance the understanding of the large or small group with interesting comments, examples, and insights</td>
<td>Participates with interest in large and small group activities, listens to others, asks and responds to questions</td>
<td>Participates with interest, talks occasionally or dominates the conversation without consideration of others, asks few questions</td>
<td>Reticent to participate or does not enter into collaborative, group activities, asks no questions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Component</td>
<td>A+ → A</td>
<td>A- → B+</td>
<td>B</td>
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<tr>
<td>Level of thought</td>
<td>Reflective (considers alternatives, how lessons learned might influence future actions), thoughtful, integrates course readings with personal experience.</td>
<td>Analytic (attempts to make sense of incidents described or patterns observed), thoughtful.</td>
<td>Descriptive (tells what is going on).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expression</td>
<td>Excellent, exemplary work that has pushed you to a new level of understanding</td>
<td>Clear, focused, complex, well-organized, precise, rich, distinctive or creative, well written/produced</td>
<td>Clear, focused, logical, and acceptable.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evidence</td>
<td>Well supported with examples and/or connections to previous experiences or readings.</td>
<td>Mostly well supported</td>
<td>Adequately supported</td>
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<td>Mechanics</td>
<td>Meets deadline.</td>
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<td>Word processed</td>
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<td>Some mechanical errors</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Free of mechanical errors.</td>
<td>Minimal mechanical errors</td>
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TENTATIVE COURSE OUTLINE AND READING SCHEDULE

Note: There will be some on-your-own articles and readings for your professional development and knowledge growth this semester in this course. The instructor will inform you regarding distinctions between required and FYI article readings that are shared with you in the course by the instructor or colleagues in the class.

The following schedule outlines due dates for assignments and provides an overview of themes and activities for each class session. Readings and assignments are due the on the dates listed.

January 8  
What is the study of curriculum? Overview of definitions/concepts  
Introductory Activities  
Syllabus Overview  
Introduce Curriculum/Pedagogical Autobiography

January 15  
Curriculum and its Ideological Conceptions  
Read: McKernan, Chapter 1  
   Schiro, Chapter 1  
   Ross, “Teacher Personal Theorizing…” (weblog)  
Suggested Reading: Chambers, “As Canadian as Possible…” (weblog)  
One-pager #1 due

January 22  
Curriculum and the “Scholar Academic Ideology”  
Read: Schiro, Chapter 2  
   Adler, “The Paideia Proposal” (weblog)  
   Ruby, “Anthropology as Subversive Art: A Review of Through These Eyes” (weblog)  
Video: “Through These Eyes”  
One-pager #2 due

January 29  
Curriculum and the “Social Efficiency Ideology”  
Read: Schiro, Chapter 3  
   Mathison & Ross, Introduction, Chapter 1  
   Bobbitt, “Scientific Method in Curriculum-Making” (weblog)  
   Tyler, “Principles of Curriculum and Instruction” (weblog)  
   McKernan, Chapter 4  
Suggested Reading: Petrina, “The Politics of Curriculum and Instructional Design/Theory/Form” (weblog)  
Video: “Clockwork”  
Curriculum/Pedagogical Autobiography due

February 5  
Curriculum and “Learner Centered Ideology”  
Read: Schiro, Chapter 4  
   Dewey, “My Pedagogic Creed” (weblog)  
   Addams, “The Public School and the Immigrant Child” (weblog)  
Video: “John Dewey and American Education”  
One-pager #3 due
February 12  
**Curriculum and “Social Reconstruction Ideology”**

*Read:* Schiro, Chapter 5  
Counts, “Dare the School Build a New Social Order” (weblog)  
Freire, “Pedagogy of the Oppressed” (weblog)  
Apple, “Controlling the Work of Teachers” (weblog)  

*Suggested Reading:* Smith, “Curriculum and Teaching Face Globalization” (weblog)  

*Video:* “Manufacturing Consent”  

One-pager # 4 due

February 19  
**NO CLASS—UBC Mid-term Break**

February 26  
**Comparative overview of curriculum ideologies**

*Read:* Schiro, Chapters 6, 7  

Workbook #1 due

March 5  
**Curriculum and Process Theory**

*Read:* McKernan, Chapters 2, 3, 5  

One-pager #5 due

March 12  
**Democratic Pedagogy (part 1)**

*Read:* McKernan, Chapters 6, 7, 8  

One-pager #6 due

March 19  
**Flex week**

March 26  
**Democratic Pedagogy (part 2)**

*Read:* McKernan, Chapters 9, 10, 12  

One-pager #7 due

April 2  
**Context and Future of Educational Standards and Assessment**

*Read:* Mathison & Ross, Chapters 2-7  

One-pager #8 due

April 9  
**Perspectives on Standards and Assessment**

*Read:* Mathison & Ross, Chapters 8-13  
Vinson & Ross, “Controlling Images” (weblog)

Wrap it up: What have we learned about curriculum?  

Course evaluations  
Workbook #2 due

*NOTE* The instructor reserves the right to modify the course schedule based on the rate of progress in covering course content, student needs, or other unforeseen occurrences or events.