Course Description

This course will examine forms of education outside the formal school system—known generally as non-formal education (NFE) and including popular education—and identify how these forms can assist marginalized groups in both Third World and industrialized countries to improve their quality of life and undertake collective action. The course will look at NFE in a systemic way and probe the characteristics and performance of each of the major elements within the NFE system. Because of the growing importance of informal learning, especially within social movements, this modality of knowledge acquisition will be also considered in the course.

The theoretical perspectives of equilibrium, conflict, and resistance will be applied to account for the existence, attributes, and outcomes of non-formal education programs. Particular attention will be given to the thought of Paulo Freire and Antonio Gramsci, whose critical perspectives open emancipatory possibilities through popular education. Case studies will be analyzed to identify the pedagogical and political assumptions upon which NFE programs have been designed and to see how the intended beneficiaries of these programs have benefited from them. These case studies cover the developing regions of Latin America, Asia, and Africa.

Special consideration will be given to new organizational modes of conducting NFE, particularly the roles of nongovernmental organizations, media, and adult educators, and to the current drive to promote multisectoral, integrated development schemes.

Course Objectives

This course seeks to enable students to: (a) acquire an understanding of the diversity of forms and objectives pursued by alternative educational programs for marginalized and excluded adults, (b) become familiar with the theoretical perspectives of equilibrium, conflict, and resistance and understand how they relate to various non-formal education programs, (c) learn about the evolution and trends in non-formal and popular education initiatives taking place in the three main developing regions, (d) recognize the contributions of informal learning, and (e) increase their ability to analyze and evaluate educational initiatives addressed to subordinate populations, such as women, small and landless farmers, and urban low-income groups.

Readings
Required books:


In addition, students will read various articles available through Elms, which are identified below. Textbook reading assignments are identified under “Textbook.” Documents identified as “reserve material” are located in my office and can be borrowed for two hours at a time or overnight.

Recommended books:


Course Structure

The course will be conducted as a seminar, with group discussions of the readings selected for the class. This will be followed by a PowerPoint presentation by the instructor to bring the readings into greater coherence and to complement (i.e., present new material) or amplify the assigned readings as needed. All students are expected to read the required readings and to participate in these discussions.

The students will develop three research papers. The first paper (about 8-10 pages) will be a reflective paper that probes into specific features of nonformal education or informal learning that make these modalities potential tools for social change. The second or mid-term paper (about 15 pages) should describe and assess an NFE program existing in the nearby community. The third paper (about 25 pages) should present a detailed analysis and critique of a country’s policy or program dealing with non-formal education. Guidelines for all three papers are available under “Guidelines for all course assignments” in the files section of the course in Elms. Papers should be e-mailed to the instructor on or before the appointed date and time.

Papers will be graded on the following criteria:
- clarity and precision of writing,
- explicit use of a conceptual/analytical framework,
- coherence of paper organization and development,
- depth of description and analysis,
- incorporation of coursework knowledge, and
- use of pertinent bibliography (complete and up-to-date).

All papers should comply with standards of academic paper presentation (i.e., either APA or Chicago style).

**Student Evaluation**

Students will be evaluated on the basis of five outputs: their informed participation based on reading assignments in seminar discussions (15 percent of the grade), their performance in the first research paper (15 percent), their performance in a second research paper (20 percent); their performance in the course research paper (45 percent), and their research paper presentations during the final class of the course (5%).

A critical understanding of the assigned readings calls for: discussing the key points of the article under consideration, its strengths and weaknesses, an assessment of the importance of the topic, and an identification of new issues or questions for further debate. Guidelines for the written assignments and the opponent role will be provided in advance.

**Honor Code**

All students are expected to abide by the Code of Academic Integrity throughout this course. Academic dishonesty, including cheating and facilitating academic dishonesty, will not be tolerated and will be reported to the Student Honor Council. The full text of the code is available on the web at: http://www.president.umd.edu/sites/president.umd.edu/files/documents/policies/III-100A.pdf.

**Students with Disabilities**

A student with a documented disability or any other special needs who wishes to discuss academic accommodations should contact the instructor as soon as possible.

**Religious Observances**

Students will not be penalized because of observances of their religious beliefs. Whenever possible, students will be given reasonable time to make up any academic assignment that is missed due to participation in a religious observance. It is the student’s responsibility to inform the instructor of any intended absences for religious observances in advance. Notice should be provided as soon as possible, but no later than the end of the schedule adjustment period. Prior notification is especially important in connection with final examinations, since failure to reschedule a final examination before the conclusion of the final examination period may result in loss of credits during the semester.

**Course Evaluation**

Your participation in the evaluation of courses <courseevalUM.umd.edu> is a responsibility you hold as a student member of our academic community. Your feedback is confidential and important to the improvement of my own teaching and learning.
Class Schedule

**August 30—Introduction to the Course. Overview of Alternative Forms of Education. Recent Initiatives. Main theoretical approaches.**


**Assignment:** Students will search for a potential non-governmental organization to study in the Washington, D.C. area.

**September 6—Non-formal Education and National Development.**


**September 13—Who Is to be Served through NFE? Who Decides? The State and NGOs in NFE.**


September 20—Varieties of NGO Objectives and Work Modalities in NFE.


September 27—The Role of Women-led NGOs.

Textbook: Stromquist. All chapters.

October 4—The Acquisition and Contribution of Informal Learning.


WALL Questionnaire. (n.d.). Center for the Study of Education and Work, OISE, University of Toronto.

October 11—Methodologies for Adults. Who Teaches? How Are the Teachers Trained?


Due: Reflexive paper. To be e-mailed by 4 p.m.

October 18—Literacy: Philosophies, Measurement, Assumptions.

Textbook: Freire, Chapters 12.


October 25—Women and Empowerment Approaches.


Textbook: Mayo, Chapter 5 to 7.

November 1—Transformational Learning.


**Due:** Mid-term assignment. To be e-mailed by 4 p.m.

**November 8**—The Role of Literacy in Transformative Learning. Efforts at project, community, and national levels.

Textbook: Mayo, Chapters 1 to 4.
Textbook: Freire, Chapters 3 and 4.

**November 15**—Campaign and Incremental Literacy Efforts. Experiences from Asia, Africa, and Latin America.


**November 22**—NFE in Basic Education for Children.

Reserve material: Manzoor Ahmed et al. (1993). *Primary Education for All: Learning from the BRAC Experience*. Washington DC: ABEL.


**November 30**—Income Generation, Disability, and Environmental Projects.


14. **December 6—Popular Education for Self-fulfillment and Social Change.**


**Course evaluation:** Please participate in the online course evaluation. Instructions appear on p. 4 of this syllabus.

**Due:** Third and final research paper e-mailed by Friday, December 9, 10 p.m. No exceptions, please.

**December 13—Student presentations of course research papers.**

Identification of new areas for research and action.

**Happy Winter Break!**