

EDUCATION 341-3

Literacy, Education and Culture

SPRING SEMESTER 1995

S. de Castell

PREREQUISITE: 60 Hours of credit.

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course provides an introduction to the study of literacy from an interdisciplinary perspective. We shall explore the origins of western literacy, the conditions which favored its development and the role of literacy in social evolution, the economic and cultural values of literacy, and the effects of literacy on cognitive processes. Of particular interest is the reliance on formal educational institutions for the mass transmission of literacy. We will be looking in some detail at the varying conceptions of literacy that educators have traditionally valued, and we will be looking at some of the current research and scholarship that attempts to explain, justify and prescribe educational practices intended to increase literacy.

PURPOSE:

By the end of the course, students should be able to identify, analyze, and justify or criticize the aesthetic, communicative, cognitive and socially-transformative consequences attributed to or associated with the acquisition of literacy. They should know something of its history and be aware of the range of definitions traditionally currently given to literacy. They should have some understanding of the distinctive contributions of conceptual study and empirical research into literacy, and understand both the capacities and limitations of each of these approaches to literacy, research and practice.

EVALUATION:

Grades are based upon four components: (alternative means of evaluation negotiable!)

1. consistent and active participation in seminars, including presentations of assigned course readings 20%
2. a book review of one of the supplementary texts 30%
3. mid-term exam 20%
4. a final exam, for which study questions will be provided in advance 30%

REQUIRED TEXT:

Perspectives on Literacy. Kintgen, E. Kroll, B. and Rose, M. Southern Illinois University Press.

RECOMMENDED TEXT:

Literacy, Society and Schooling. A Reader (eds. S. deCastell, A. Luke and K. Egan).
Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1986.

SUPPLEMENTARY TEXTS:

Literacy. D. Barton. Blackwell, 1994.

Something on my Mind . . . J. Horseman. The Womens Press.

Talking about Literacy. J. Mace. Routledge, 1992.

Additional readings will be made available to students at cost.

A detailed outline of topics and schedule of readings will be made available at the first class, along with a list of recommended readings.