

Summer Semester 2000

EDUC 341 - 3
Literacy, Education and Culture

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Office Hours: Mondays 3-5pm

Mondays 17:30-21:20 in MPX 7600

E01.00

PREREQUISITE

60 credit hours

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course provides an introduction to the study of literacy (and illiteracy) from an interdisciplinary perspective. Since the beginning of recorded history, literacy has been our most basic tool for the (trans)formation and preservation of culture. It has been, and continues to be, the main vehicle for education. This course examines the origins, development, and consequences of literacy for society and for individuals from the earliest days of writing to the present. EDUC 341 intends to engage you in thinking critically about what people mean by, and what they do with, literacy. Is the possession of literacy an unquestionable 'good thing'? What 'levels' of literacy does one need to succeed in society? How does illiteracy contribute to poverty, immorality, accidents, and disease? These and other controversial questions will be examined.

OBJECTIVES

By the end of this course, you should have acquired an overview and understanding of literacy, its beginnings and its development, the conditions of its use, and its impacts upon us. You will have developed an awareness of the varied functions and uses of literacy for individuals, institutions, and social groups as well as awareness of the most significant definitions traditionally and currently given to literacy.

REQUIREMENTS

- Course reader response log - 20%
- 3 short essays - 30%
- Final essay project - 30%
- Participation in class activities, discussion, and presentation - 20%

Response logs will be peer-reviewed, essays and project will be evaluated by the instructor, and participation will be self-evaluated. Students are invited to contribute to class activities by suggesting or supplying relevant articles or audiovisual material, etc. Project may involve forms other than traditional written essays (e.g. hypertext) and use of computer-based tools is encouraged.

REQUIRED READINGS

Lankshear, C. (1997). Changing Literacies. Philadelphia: Open University Press.

Manguel, A. (1996). A History of Reading. Toronto: A.A. Knopf.

Selected reading material will be placed in a course box in the Centre for Educational Technology (CET).

RECOMMENDED TEXTS

Freire, P. & D. Macedo. (1987). Literacy: Reading the word and the world. Massachusetts: Bergin & Garvey Publishers, Inc.

Olson, D.R., Torrance, N., & Hildyard, A. (1985). Literacy, Language, and Learning: The nature and consequences of reading and writing. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

de Castell, S., Luke, A. & Egan, K. (1986). Literacy, Society, and Schooling. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.