Popular Education for Social Change

PART I: THEORY / PRACTICE

Decolonizing And Re:Visioning Education

York University
Faculty of Environmental Studies
Fall 2007
Popular Education for Social Change: Part the First: Theory / Practice

Tuesdays 2:30 – 5:30

ENVS 6150: Examination of individual and social learning from a critical perspective. Based on a theoretical & practical examination of knowledge production and power relations, several streams of critical education are explored: popular education, critical pedagogy, native education, labour education, feminist pedagogy, queer pedagogy, anti-racist education, global/development education, direct action and activist education. Applied work will focus on the role of these education, critical pedagogy, queer education, global/development education, and power relations. Several streams of critical education are explored: popular education. Based on theoretical & practical examination of knowledge production and power relations.

STRUCTURED CRITICISMS

1. What did you connect with?
   - Easy: I observed that it was easier to remember a lot of the names in this class when we associated something with our names.
   - Faces: I noticed that I could listen better today, and I think this association helped me remember.
   - Easier: I observed that it was easier to remember a lot of things that helped me associate something with our names. I think the association process helped me remember.

2. What did you learn about the way you learn?
   - Social: I found that I learn best when some discussion is involved.
   - Lecture: I noticed that I could better listen carefully to the conversational happenings.
   - Conventions: I noticed that it was easier to keep track of those who spoke up.
   - Something that helped was sitting in a circle so I could see those around me.

3. What would you like to change?
   - Speaking to be heard: Something that I would like to change or have a concern about is that some people in the class spoke so softly that I did not hear everything they said.
   - How about if I suggest that they speak up the next time this happens?

AN EXAMPLE:

NOTE: HEADLINES CAN MAKE IT EASIER.

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EXPECTED FROM: A BOLTZMANN'S BRAIN EXCISION PRODUCTION
Vientos del Pueblo — Victor Jara

De nuevo quiero manchar mi tierra con sangre obrera
los que hablan de libertad y tienen las manos negras

Los que quieren dividir a la madre de sus hijos
y quieren reconstruir la cruz que arrastrará Cristo

Quieren ocultar la infamia que legaron desde siglos,
pero el color de asesinos no borrará de su cara

Ya fueron miles y miles
los que entregaron su sangre y en caudales generosos multiplicaron los panes

Ahora quiero vivir junto a mi hijo y mi hermano
la primavera que todos vamos construyendo a diario

No me asusta la amenaza, patrones de la miseria,
la estrella de la esperanza continuará siendo nuestra

Vientos del pueblo me llaman, vientos del pueblo me llevan,
me esparcen el corazón y me aventan la garganta

Así cantará el poeta mientras el alma me suene por los caminos del pueblo
desde ahora y para siempre

WINDS OF THE PEOPLE — Victor Jara

Once more they want to stain my country with workers’ blood
whose hands are blackened

those who wish to separate
the mother from her sons
and want to reconstruct the cross that Christ dragged

They want to hide their infamy
their legacy from the centuries,
but the color of murders cannot be wiped from their faces

Already thousands and thousands
have sacrificed their blood,
and its generous streams
have multiplied the loaves of bread

Now I want to live beside my son and my brother,
daily working together on
a new springtime for all of us

You can’t scare me with your threats
you masters of misery;
the star of hope continues to be ours.

Winds of the people are calling me
the winds of the people carry me
they scatter my heart and take the breath from my throat

so the poet will sing
as long as my soul sounds from the roads of my people
now and forever.


Winds of the people: Victor Jara, Vientos del Pueblo


Before the Balance, Tomorrow: Otta René Castillo, Al frente la balance, mañana.

The theme of this year’s class is Decolonizing and Re:Visioning Education.

We hope to collectively rethink popular education, in the Americas and elsewhere, by analyzing its theory and practice in the context of colonial legacies and postcolonial reconstructions. We will do this by entering into dialogue with the key theorist of popular education (Paulo Freire) as well as popular education practitioners in Latin America (e.g., the MST movement in Brazil and IMDEP in Mexico). Popular education praxis will be challenged and enriched by Aboriginal knowledges and educational practices (Marie Battiste and others) as well post-colonial theory (Ania Loomba) and black radical thought and social movement practice (Robin Kelley). We are asking you to join us in this process of decolonizing our own thinking and acting, while drawing from a wide range of visions that could contribute to more diverse, dynamic, and relevant understandings and practices of popular education for social change.

This course is also an opportunity to reflect on one’s own relationship to colonial history and ways of knowing, learning, and acting. Together throughout the course we will construct a time/space path tracing critical moments of personal and social transformation, learning and collective action. As much as a classroom environment permits we will use popular education and various forms of storytelling (images, music, theatre) in our explorations of theory and practice.

READING: Students are asked to acquire:

Kane, Liam 2001 Popular Education & Social Change in Latin America. Ldn: Latin America Bureau.

PHOTO CAPTIONS:

Photos by Deborah Barndt
Cv. Uruguayan singer
p.4. Latin American activists at Toronto City Hall
p.9. Statue of Columbus & Indigenous woman, Peru
p.10. Chiapas, Mexico, Chinese railway workers monument, Toronto
p.11. Native rights activists in Toronto
p.12. Cultural worker/activist
p.15. Literacy class in Lima, Peru
p.16. Mural in San Francisco
p.17. Workshop in Manitoulin
p.21. Native activists at Queen’s Park
Bk cvr. Anti-poverty activists

SESSION TITLE SOURCES:
(see course texts p.3 for complete references)

“I have a map in my head”: Indigenous elder quoted by Vine Deloria in Battiste, 2000, p.188.

“Don’t Just Do Something, Stand There”: Fr. Daniel Berrigan, anti-war activist.

*.. a world made of stories.*: Leslie Marmon Silko quoted in Battiste, 2000, p.266.

*...to change the order of the world.*: Frantz Fanon, The Wretched of the Earth.

The bread that lasts: Derek Walcott, Forest of Europe quoted in Battiste, 2000, p.126.

*...where barefoot has no name.*: Mariahdessa Ekere Tallie quoted in Kelley, 2003, p.35.


Winds of the people: Victor Jara, Vientos del Pueblo


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ENVS 6150

Popular Education for Social Change: Part the First: Theory / Practice

COURSE OBJECTIVES INCLUDE:

• Participating, active listening and willingness to learn with and from peers, and contribute throughout the course, questions and insights from our professional and personal experiences.

• Challenging ourselves as learners/educators within the class and beyond.

• Grounding ourselves in the key concepts of popular education theory (power, hegemony, dialogue, praxis).

• Analyzing the colonial legacies of popular education and revisioning its theory and practice in diasporic and Indigenous contexts.

• Critically examining underlying assumptions of popular education for social change (e.g. regarding race, class, gender, sexual orientation, human/environment relationships, etc.).

• Experimenting with different pedagogical practices (including an emphasis on storytelling).

REQUIREMENTS:

This is a 3 credit course. Students are expected to participate in weekly sessions to facilitate in-depth discussion and shared reflection.

Other requirements include:

1. Written completion of a short essay on why you are here, due the second week of class.
2. A final paper on an area of popular education that engages some of the theories covered in the class.
3. Engaging in critical self-reflection and self-assessment in weekly sessions. To facilitate this process, there will be three weekly assignments:

Other requirements include:

1. Short-hand-written "structured criticisms" completed in class or participation in other forms of in-class evaluation.
2. A critical self-writing and praxis assignment to reflect on the weekly readings.
3. A final paper on an area of popular education that engages some of the theories covered in the course.

Please note:

Students who feel that there are extenuating circumstances which may interfere with their successful completion of the course requirements are strongly encouraged to discuss the matter with the Course Director early in the term. Students with disabilities who require reasonable accommodation in teaching style or evaluation method should discuss this with the Course Director early in the term so that appropriate arrangements can be made.

ENVS 6150 Popular Education for Social Change (Part I: Theory/Practice) is a prerequisite for: ENVS 6151 Popular Education for Social Change (Part II: Practice/Theory); ENVS 6140 Environmental Education. This course particularly complements the following: 5180 Interdisciplinary Social Analysis; 5073 New Social Movements; 6101 Feminist Practices; 6144 Action Learning; 6147 Environmental Studies and Postmodernity; 6143 Communication and Environmental Issues.

PREREQUISITES:

There are no prerequisites, but the course is limited to 20 students per section to facilitate in-depth discussion and shared facilitation.

There are no credit implications that the course is limited to 20 students per section to facilitate in-depth discussion.

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RELATION TO OTHER COURSES:

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PLEASE NOTE:

Experienced with different pedagogical practices (including an emphasis on storytelling).

Grounded in the key concepts of popular education theory (power, hegemony, dialogue, praxis).

Challenging assumptions as Kraus/Knorr/educators within the class and beyond.

Experiments in....
Thinking ahead to 6151

Popular Education for Social Change Part II: Practice / Theory

For those of you who would like to continue the work you do in 6150 you may wish to consider enrolling in 6151. In which case you are encouraged to integrate 6150 with your plans for 6151. We are exploring the possibility of designing 6151 as a “Naming the Moment” process that will examine climate change. If successful, this will entail organizing and research work that will need to be done during the Fall semester. If you are interested in being involved in the organizing effort please speak with the course instructor.

Course at a Glance

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<td>What would a decolonizing education look like?</td>
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<td>November 22:</td>
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<td>December 10:</td>
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The Arrivance: Commemorating Abolition
Popular Education for Social Change: Part the First: Theory / Practice

We each bring unique histories to this course as well as our hopes, fears, and longings. In this first meeting, we will introduce the course and our intent to examine popular education within a postcolonial frame. More than spectators of these histories we are, as Brazilian theatre director Augusto Boal coined, *spect-actors* in this history—both witness and player, both shaped by and shaping the social-political-cultural forces at play. Where and how do we each fit into this picture? Are we content with our fit? What do we think of the picture into which we fit or not, as the case may be?

The starting point of critical elaboration is the consciousness of what one really is, and is ‘knowing thyself’ as a product of the historical process to date, which has deposited in you an infinity of traces, without leaving an inventory. *Antonio Gramsci*

*Words have power to destroy and heal. When words are both true and kind, they can change our world.*

*Shunryu Suzuki*

1. September 13: "I have a map in my head"*

*See page 23 for session title sources as well as photograph details.

For the first five of your reflections are to be submitted prior to Block Week on Thursday, October 18.

5. WRITING PROJECT (Due Fri, Dec. 7 — 2,000-4,000 words)

This writing project is an opportunity for you to further your critical thinking. Using all of the writing you have done for the course as research, you will problematize some aspect of learning/education. This paper could be an exploration of the use of popular education in a specific setting or community center. You can use the following questions as a guide for your writing:

**Personal Implications:**
1. What feelings did I have as I read? 2. How does this history/theory that I have just read affirm or alter my understanding of myself and my identity? 3. What is one critical question I would pose to the author?

**As an Educator:**
1. How could I integrate these ideas into my practice? 2. What methodological approaches could I use with xxx to explore these ideas critically? 3. What new ways of knowing and learning does the reading offer?

**As a Reader:**
1. How did I negotiate these ideas into my practice?
2. What are my understandings of my self and others?
3. What is one crucial question I would pose to the author?

*Note that the case may be that the course is teaching us exactly what we need to know as educators. This is a moment of being led by and through the social-political.*

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EXPECTED & EVALUATION

1. PARTICIPATION & READINGS
Weekly attendance and physical, vocal and aural participation is required. Participation in a class is about both your personal development and your contributions to the social and intellectual dynamic of the group. You are expected to do your best to complete the required readings for each session. These readings have been chosen to give you a theoretical grounding in popular education and related practices that both complement and challenge it.

2. STRUCTURED CRITICISMS (completed in class weekly)
A structured criticism is a dynamic way of evaluating something (a classroom situation, reading, event, experience, person, relationship, etc…). A structured criticism can include:

1. What you connected with and how this insight is important for you or what helped you learn this in this particular class. (At least 3 examples.)
2. What you learned about the way you learn. (At least 1 example.)
3. What you would like to change to better fit you & your values. (At least 2 examples.)

3. A STORY OF WHY YOU ARE HERE (Due Thurs., Sept. 20)
Tell a story of your journey to being a participant in this class. You can include personal history, critical questions, ideas about popular education or other practices and theories of critical education of which you have knowledge or experience. In particular, reflect on your own educational experiences, formal and non-formal, as learner and educator. Include questions, ideas, and/or concerns you may have around popular education for social change, as well as this year’s theme of “decolonizing education.” This exercise helps us get acquainted and get a sense of where we are starting out as a class. It also gives you an opportunity to make your own experience of learning and educating a subject of reflection. Suggested length: four pages, double-spaced, type-written (700-1000 words). And, for you enthusiastic storytellers, please try not to go over 1000 words. (There’s only one course instructor and many of you — you can do the math.)

4. CRITICAL SELF-WRITING & PRAXIS EXERCISE (completed weekly—250 to 500 words each)
You are expected to develop a series of “reflexions” on the readings. Each week you will have the opportunity to reflect systematically on the readings, with an emphasis on connecting your self to the theory

A key tenet of popular education is that no education is neutral: it either supports the status quo or challenges it. Yet there are many ways of understanding education, and this course invites us into dialogue with selected authors representing diverse standpoints regarding the colonial history of education, a postcolonial re-imaging of education and what a decolonized popular education looks like. In this session we will introduce the five texts representing Indigenous epistemologies and practices, Latin American popular education theories/methodologies, African American thought and activism, postcolonial and diasporic theory and literature.

TO BE READ BY THIS CLASS: (60 pages)
Findlay, L.M.
Battiste, Marie
Shaul, Richard
Freire, Paulo
Kane, Liam
Kelley, Robin D.G.
Loomba, Ania
Popular Education for Social Change: Part the First: Theory / Practice

3. September 27:
Education as the Practice of Freedom

TO BE READ BY THIS CLASS: (66 pages)
Freire, Paulo 2000
Chapter 1 & Chapter 2
in
Pedagogy of the Oppressed: 30th Anniversary Edition
New York: Continuum Publishing; pp. 43-86.

Cajete, Gregory 2000
Indigenous Knowledge: The Pueblo Metaphor of Indigenous Education
in

Hingley, Ian 2000

While Paulo Freire is often considered the father of popular education, Indigenous peoples have long understood education as integral to life and all social/political, spiritual and cultural relations. Indigenous learning, as well as many other pedagogies, have long recognized the intimate connection between lived experience, collective and individual critical reflection and learning/teaching. What kinds of learners/teachers have we been? How can we challenge and expand our notions of education?

Teaching is a way of healing and a way of life.
Gregory Cajete

Where has our journey brought us? What does popular education for social change look like from this vantage, albeit merely a stop along a longer journey? How have we re-imagined ourselves and our histories of learning and teaching? Have we, in fact, practised a decolonizing pedagogy? What have been some of our achievements? And some of our contradictions? What do the roads ahead look like?

TO BE READ BY THIS CLASS: (51 pages)
Kane, Liam 2001
Chapter 9 & Postscript
in
Popular Education and Social Change in Latin America.

12. December 6:
Before the Balance, Tomorrow

Where do we go from here?

Before the Balance, Tomorrow

Education as the Practice of Freedom

3. September 27.
Popular Education for Social Change: Part the First: Theory / Practice

Before the Balance, Tomorrow


Education as the Practice of Freedom

Before the Balance, Tomorrow

Education as the Practice of Freedom
11. November 29:

**What If the Desert Were Ocean and the Earth Were Sky?**

_How is popular education being reshaped?

Popular education is explicit about its commitment to effecting social change and therefore is aimed at changing the world for the better. As praxis it does this through both theory and action. What is the legacy of popular education in Latin America? What are the inevitable contradictions that need to be examined? How is it being challenged by new movements and politics?

I have lived on a razors edge. So what if you fall off, I'd rather be doing something I really wanted to do. I'd walk it again.

_Georgia O'Keefe_

**4. October 4:**

"... a world made of stories."

What would a decolonizing education look like?

What is the obligation of emancipatory education to counter Eurocentric power relations and ways of knowing? In this session we plunge into dialogue with popular education theory and aboriginal ways of knowing, from both native and non-native perspectives.

Every teacher is always a pupil and every pupil is always a teacher.

_Antonio Gramsci_

Dialogue is the encounter between people, mediated by the world, in order to name the world. Hence, dialogue cannot occur between those who want to name the world and those who do not wish this naming - between those who deny other people the right to speak their word and those whose right to speak has been denied them. Those who have been denied their primordial right to speak their word must first reclaim this right and prevent the continuation of this dehumanizing aggression.

_Paulo Freire, Pedagogy of the Oppressed_

**TO BE READ BY THIS CLASS: (145 pages)**

Freire, Paulo

Battiste, Marie

Henderson, James (Sákêj) Youngblood
5. October 11:

― to change the order of the world.

Are we perpetuating colonialism or creating a postcolonial world?

All colonial people, both the colonizer and the colonized, have shared or collective views of the world embedded in their languages, stories, or narratives. LeRoy Little Bear

Washing one’s hands of the conflict between the powerful and the powerless means to side with the powerful, not to be neutral.

Paulo Freire

to create a new culture does not only mean to make original discoveries on an individual basis. It also and especially means to critically popularize already discovered truths, make them, so to speak, social truths; to make them a consistent, ironical polemic against and especially means an intensive, almost epic, struggle to make visible the real bases of one’s own activity.

Antonio Gramsci

TO BE READ BY THIS CLASS: (93 pages)

Loomba, Ania 2005


Little Bear, Leroy 2000


What is our shared colonial history and how does it shape the way we think, learn and act in our current context? How do Aboriginal and Eurocentric values collide in our current context? How do we approach colonial history and how does it shape the way we think?
9. November 15:

**Not the Master's Tools**

How do we liberate the “how”?

What does decolonizing look like? Having covered history and theory thus far, what are the methodological implications of a postcolonial critique and re:visioning of popular education?

Be passionately aware that you could be completely wrong.  
_dian marino_

We were warned that Algebra was going to be really difficult, whereas Einstein was told that it was a hunt for a creature known as “X” and that when you caught it, it had to tell you its name.  
_Keith Johnstone_

Nevertheless the fact remains that the desire to play is fundamentally the desire to be.  
_Jean Paul Sartre_

**The Arrivance:**  
Commemorating Abolition

Public event of commemoration, popular education, and performance on the occasion of the 200th anniversary of the abolition of slavery (ACE- Proscenium Theatre).

6. October 18:

**The bread that lasts**

What are the ways we challenge radical politics?

Popular education both opens and creates spaces for dissident and counter-hegemonic narratives to be told. What do postcolonial narratives tell us about the history of racism, patriarchy and other systems of identity, oppression and resistance? How does emancipatory education articulate with so-called identity politics, 20th Century nationalisms, and the new and old forms of racism that yet abound?

**TO BE READ BY THIS CLASS:** (75 pages)

Kelley, Robin D.G.  

Poka Laenui (Hayden F. Burgess)  

**TO BE READ BY THIS CLASS:** (120 pages)

Loomba, Ania  

Chamberlin, J. Edward  
If popular education can be defined as praxis that resists unjust uses of power, then what would we consider as effective and just means by which this resistance can be effected? What vision, tactics and strategies of dissent, radical critique and change does postcolonial theory allow us to imagine? Who is it that does this imagining?

What visions guide us?

If popular education can be defined as praxis that resists unjust uses of power, then what would we consider as effective and just means by which this resistance can be effected? What vision, tactics and strategies of dissent, radical critique and change does postcolonial theory allow us to imagine? Who is it that does this imagining?

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Loomba, Ania
2005

Kelley, Robin D.G.
2002

Smith, Graham Hingangaroa
2000

Henderson, Dennis (Sêkhawáh); Youngblood, Audre
2000

Kelley, Robin D.G.
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To be read by this class: (119 pages)

Kelley, Robin D.G.
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Henderson, James (Sákéj) Youngblood
2000

William James
An artist's purpose is to get his work done, and when he has finished, he is through. What he has done is what matters, not what he has done.

The People Could Fly
8, November 8:

How do we understand/practice difference?

To be read by this class: (76 pages)

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