All human beings by nature desire to know.

—Aristotle

The seeds of knowledge, of virtue, and of piety are, as we have seen, naturally implanted in us; but the actual knowledge, virtue, and piety are not so given. These must be acquired by prayer, by education, and by action.

—Jan Komensky

Real thinking cannot be learned from books. It also cannot be taught unless the teacher remains a learner well into old age. Therefore, let us hope for a dialogue.

—Martin Heidegger

The importance of education cannot be overestimated. Our very being depends upon it. Yet despite this importance, education is neglected as an object of serious contemplation. We will attempt to begin correcting this neglect by reflecting upon a process into which we have been thrown since birth. Using philosophical investigations as our common ground, we will study the phenomenon of education. The nature of teaching and learning will be examined in the wider context of considerations of human abilities, the ways in which knowledge is acquired, and how knowledge is communicated by means of language or other symbols. The ends of education will be examined, leading us to look at the training of the body, the formation of character, as well as the cultivation of the mind. Furthermore, the relation between education and the state will be examined given that the division of responsibility for education among various agencies depends upon the view of the state and of the individual. Thus, we will find that questions about the purpose of education, and what sort of education will be given to different elements within a society, are differently raised and differently answered in the context of discussions of different forms of government.

REQUIRED TEXTS

* Republic, Plato (Translated by G.M.A. Grube, Hackett Publishing)  
* Nicomachean Ethics, Aristotle (Translated by T. Irwin, Hackett Publishing)  
* Discourse on Method, René Descartes (Hackett Publishing)  
* On the Study Methods of Our Time, Giambattista Vico (Cornell University Press)  
* Education and Experience, John Dewey (Simon and Schuster)  
* Reproduction in Education, Society, and Culture, Bourdieu and Passeron (Sage Publications)
COURSE OBJECTIVES

The main objectives of this course are the following:

* To awaken an interest and to cultivate an enthusiasm for asking substantive questions about education;
* To engage in inquiry into the basic assumptions about education;
* To encourage critical thinking about education and provide the tools necessary for this critical engagement;
* To explore the moral and political dimensions of education.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Your success in this class will depend upon regular class attendance—which involves more than your physical presence—as well as keeping up on the assigned reading. However, while regular class attendance and sustained reading of the assigned material are necessary conditions for success, they are not sufficient conditions for your success. The material that we will engage is not something that can be mastered by oneself nor can it be learned without patient and sustained attention. Thus, listening attentively to lectures and videos, actively participating in the process of asking and answering questions—those of the authors we will read, those of your classmates, as well as your own—and taking the time to reflect upon what you have read and heard will also be required if you are to get the most out of this class and the material that will engage us.

Your progress in this class will be assessed in several ways. First, you will keep a journal over the course of the semester. In this journal, you will respond to various prompts relating to education. A prompt will be given on Wednesday and your journal entry will be due on the following Monday. You will write approximately one typed page (~ 350 words) each week. This journal will account for 25% of your final grade. Second, you will produce either a music CD complete with liner notes or a photo essay accompanied by a statement of purpose and explanation. This assignment will account for 25% of your final grade. Further and detailed instructions for this assignment will be provided in the course of the semester. Third, you will write a letter to your future self that will serve as a reminder of the material we have discussed in this course. This letter will account for 25% of your final grade. In addition to these assignments, there will be frequent, unannounced exercises based upon the assigned readings. These exercises will cumulatively account for 25% of your final grade. These exercises will not require mastery of the assigned readings, but will expect a familiarity that can only be gained from a close and patient reading of the texts.

No late work will be accepted. Nor will there be an opportunity for extra credit.

NOTE

MTU complies with all federal and state laws and regulations regarding discrimination, including the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA). If you have a disability and need a reasonable accommodation for equal access to education or services at MTU, please call Dr. Gloria Melton, Associate Dean of Students, 487-2212. For other concerns about discrimination, you may contact your advisor, department chair, or the Affirmative Action Office (487-3310).
PROPOSED READING SCHEDULE

Week One:
1. January 13: Introduction—What is philosophy?
2. January 15: Introduction—Looking at Education through the lens of Philosophy

Week Two:
1. January 20: No Class—MLK Day

Week Three:
1. January 27: Plato—Republic, Book II (368c-383c)
2. January 29: Plato—Republic, Book III (386-392d; 401b-402b; 403c-403e; 410c-417b)

Week Four:
1. February 3: Plato—Republic, Book IV (419-425c; 427d-430c; 431d-445b)
2. February 5: Plato—Republic, Book V (449-457c; 462-466d; 471c-480)

Week Five:
1. February 10: Plato—Republic, Book VI
2. February 12: Plato—Republic, Book VII

Week Six:
1. February 17: Aristotle—Nicomachean Ethics, 1094a-1096a10, 1097a15-1103a10
2. February 19: Aristotle—Nicomachean Ethics, 1103a10-1108b35, 1109b30-1115a5

Week Seven:
1. February 24: Aristotle—Nicomachean Ethics, 1129a-1130a15, 1131a10-1143b15
2. February 26: Aristotle—Nicomachean Ethics, 1176a30-1181b25

Week Eight:
1. March 3: Spring Break
2. March 5: Spring Break

Week Nine:
1. March 10: The Fracturing of the Sphere of Culture
2. March 12: The Transition from the Pre-modern to the Modern

Week Ten:

Week Eleven:
1. March 24: Vico—On the Study Methods of Our Time, pp. 3-47
2. March 26: Vico—On the Study Methods of Our Time, pp. 70-81
Week Twelve:
1. March 31: Dewey—Experience and Education, pp. 17-50
2. April 2: Dewey—Experience and Education, pp. 51-91

***CD/PHOTO PROJECT DUE***

Week Thirteen:
1. April 7: Bourdieu and Passeron—Reproduction, pp. 3-31
2. April 9: Bourdieu and Passeron—Reproduction, pp. 31-68

Week Fourteen:
1. April 14: Bourdieu and Passeron—Reproduction, pp. 71-106
2. April 16: Bourdieu and Passeron—Reproduction, pp. 107-139

Week Fifteen:
1. April 21: Bourdieu and Passeron—Reproduction, pp. 141-176
2. April 23: Bourdieu and Passeron—Reproduction, pp. 177-219

Week Sixteen:
1. April 28: Class Presentations
2. April 30: Class Presentations

***LETTERS DUE***

Week Seventeen:
1. No Class Meeting