

CILAS Pedagogy Lab – Fall 2021

Offered by Karim-Yassin Goessinger

What is ‘radical education’? In this fall’s pedagogy lab, we will explore different associations we may have with the term "radical" and will consider the historical, social and conceptual dimensions of the term. We will focus particularly on the negative and positive connotations of the word “radical”, and the distinctions that can be made between these ideas and connected ideas such as “reform”, “revolution” and “progress”. We will engage with the work of the Brazilian educator and theorist Paulo Freire and the tradition of Critical Pedagogy to consider the central themes in Freire’s work: the oppressed/oppressor relationship; critical consciousness; humanization; dialogue and liberation, and the intellectual roots of Freire’s thought. We will focus on the ways that Freire’s work has been developed by theorists and practitioners outside the context of adult education in Latin America. In particular, we will discuss some critiques of Freire by Feminist theorists and by Critical Race scholars.

We then move to questions concerning the control and provision of education and the role of the state. We will take a step back to examine the arguments put forward by critics of state education at a time when universal state educational provision was a contested idea. Starting from the anarchist rejection of state education articulated by William Godwin in the 18th Century, and comparing this with the liberal suspicion of state education put forward by J.S. Mill in the 19th Century, we will look at how fundamental questions about individual rights, the moral status of children, paternalism, and the limits of individual freedom are reflected in ideas about the control, provision and purposes of education. More specifically, we will consider the historical tradition of community-based adult education to understand how radical educational ideals and demands, on the part of working-class communities and political movements, shifted and how these shifts and orientations are reflected in contemporary debates. We explore some contemporary examples of community-based radical education projects in a post-colonial context, such as the Zapatista Autonomous education movement and the Landless Rural Workers' movement schools in Brazil.

We then examine the tradition of anarchist education, focusing specifically on the notion of the school as a form of prefigurative practice. In exploring the central anarchist values of mutual aid, freedom and cooperation, we will address the philosophical question of how the anarchist perspective yields a distinctive position on the relationship between education and social change. We will compare this position to the Marxist and the Liberal position, and to non-anarchist Libertarian educational experiments to consider the ways anarchist educators and theorists addressed issues of teacher authority, knowledge and pedagogy. The following week we will focus on libertarian education and deschooling and will look at the defense of libertarianism in education, drawing on principles of individual rights and autonomy, as a rationale for a particular form of learning, and as a route to individual flourishing and happiness. We will think about how these different ideas and values are intertwined and look at the way they are reflected in radical educational experiments, beginning with Tolstoy’s 19th Century school, Yasnaya Polyana, and ending with A.S. Neill’s Summerhill.

We will then look at a contemporary form of radical education that operates both within and outside of mainstream schools: Hip-Hop Education. We will engage with some theoretical literature on this field and will explore how it addresses issues of identity, power, knowledge and social justice, comparing this work with related work from the field of critical pedagogy and other ideas encountered earlier in the module. The following session will look at the area of home schooling. In discussing the various arguments offered in defense of home schooling, and the distinctions drawn between “unschooling”, “de-schooling” and “elective home education”, as well as some of the objections to it, we will revisit some earlier discussions about the control and provision of education and their connection to political questions about the relationship between the individual and society. Finally, we will explore the tradition of radical state education and will revisit some of the questions about the control and provision of education, the nature of education as a public good, and issues of educational equality and access. We will look at some examples of experiments in radical democratic education within the state system.

Lab participants will get to discuss selected readings and develop/design a small ‘core’ curriculum in Arabic and/or English to teach to adults in partnership with StARS and Beit Yakan once a week beginning in January.

Reading list to select from

Carver, T. (2009) “Moving Targets and Political Judgements”, in J. Pugh (ed.) *What is Radical politics Today?*, Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan

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- Ellsworth, E. (1989) "Why Doesn't This Feel Empowering?" *Harvard Educational Review*, 59, 297-324.
- Ladson-Billings, G. (1997) "I Know Why This Doesn't Feel Empowering: A Critical Race Analysis of Critical Pedagogy" in *Mentoring the Mentor: A Critical Dialogue with Paulo Freire*, edited by P. Freire. New York: Peter Lang.
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- Miller, P. (1989) "The Historiography of Compulsory Schooling" in *History of Education*, Vol 18 No. 2
- Niemi, W.L. and Plante, D.J. (2008) "Democratic Movements, Self-Education, and Economic Democracy: Chartists, Populists, and Wobblies", *Radical History Review*, Vol. 2008, No. 102: pp. 185-200 L
- Tarlau, R. (2015) "How Do New Critical Pedagogies Develop? Public Education, Social Change, and Landless Workers in Brazil" *Teachers College Record* Volume 117 Number 11, 2015, p. 1-36. URL
- Cumberbatch, P. and Trujillo-Pagán, N. (2016) "Hashtag Activism and Why #BlackLivesMatter In (and To) the Classroom" in *Radical Teacher*, No, 106 (Special Issue on Teaching Black Lives Matter).
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