INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION
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Office Hours: M 11 –12:30pm and by appointment

COURSE INFORMATION
SPRING 2012
EDUC-H 205, Section 27323
Time: MW 9:30-10:45am
Room: Education 1230

PLEASE NOTE: For authorization please contact Sandy Strain at strain@indiana.edu
This class was formerly F205 – The Study of Education and the practice of teaching.

II. COURSE OBJECTIVES
This course is designed for students—those aspiring to be educators as well as those interested in
education as a field of study in and of itself—who wish to explore the nature and purposes of education
from a thoughtful, critical, and, ultimately, philosophical perspective. The main goal of the course is to
help you develop your abilities to think, write, and speak critically, reflectively, and philosophically on
issues and problems related to education, teaching, and learning. We will consider such questions as:
What is the purpose of education? What does it mean to be an educated person? How do we come to
“know” things? What constitutes learning? Who is responsible for children’s education in a democracy?
Does the responsibility rest with parents, the government, or society? Are children passive recipients or
active shapers of their education? Should all children be educated equally? What is the role of the
teacher in education? What makes a good teacher? What is the role of the school in society? What
makes a good school?

Students will be encouraged to evaluate critically various points of view, share interpretations and
reactions, and apply, jointly and individually, ideas encountered in class to related interests and subjects.
We will constantly seek to connect broad theoretical issues with current debates in and about education,
and with our own particular interests. However, the connections might not always be obvious or clear.
Where they are not, students should raise this problem so that it becomes a subject of our discussion. We
will explore some current educational issues but always with an eye toward the underlying political,
social, cultural and moral issues they often reflect.

This course is meant to represent a range of ideas—and the development and rejection of those ideas over
time—that have had the strongest and most lasting impact on educational thought and practice. From such
ideas (and the women and men behind them), we can start to develop and refine our own ideas on
education, teaching, and learning and we can start to address the questions listed above in addition to
many others.

REQUIRED TEXTS
Reed, Ronald F. & Tony W. Johnson (eds.), Philosophical Documents in Education. 3rd ed. New York:
Plato, Meno. G.M.A. Grube (transl.). Indianapolis: Hackett, 1976 or downloadable at
http://classics.mit.edu/Plato/meno.html
Nussbaum, Martha. Not for Profit, Why Democracy Needs the Humanities. Princeton, Princeton
University Press, 2010
Packet of Readings, available on Oncourse under “Resources.”