EDUC H205 – Introduction to Educational Thought
Spring 2013
Honors Section 26433 Monday/Wednesday 2:30-3:45pm
Room 2275 School of Education
Instructor: Prof. Luise McCarty <lmccarty@indiana.edu>

Course Description in Bulletin:
This introduction to central ideas and philosophies in the field of educational studies explores questions about the nature of education, its social aims, and the ideas and practices embodied by various approaches to education in order to provide a deeper understanding of what it means to be an educator.

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 students develop the abilities to think, write, and speak critically, reflectively, and philosophically on issues and problems related to education, teaching, and learning.

The course provides an overview of the ideas and concepts that throughout history have formed the basis for educational practice. From the ancient Greeks to contemporary society, education has consistently been guided by foundational assumptions concerning the nature of human beings, the universe, knowledge, and the state. By studying these ideas and learning about their practical consequences for the content, organization, and distribution of education, students develop the ability to think, write and talk more deeply about education. Questions about what it means to be educated, the moral obligations of teachers, and the social aims and visions embedded in various approaches to education form a central component of this course. Students are introduced to the history of philosophy of education through the study of classical theorists from Plato and Aristotle to Locke, Kant, Rousseau, and Dewey as well as contemporary thinkers, such as Nel Noddings, Cornel West, and Martha Nussbaum.

H205 requires extensive analytical and critical writing as a means to evaluate different theoretical positions on education. Aside from primary texts in the philosophy of education, it makes use of novels, histories, biographies, films, and memoirs to illustrate and make concrete the philosophical ideas under consideration. The course maintains a strong emphasis on the ethical issues of educational purpose, structure, and practice raised by these theoretical positions.

H205 fulfills the Intensive Writing requirement in the School of Education and the General Education requirement in Social and Historical Studies.