

Sociology of education and educational knowledge: The theories and the problematic of pedagogical practices – 5 ECTS

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Course Description

The course focuses on the sociological theories and the problematic of pedagogical practices. It aims at helping students understand and critically appreciate a conceptual framework for studying the social construction, transmission and evaluation of official pedagogic discourse and practice as well as their implications for the formation of pedagogical subjects. This conceptual framework draws, mainly, on the theory of Basil Bernstein, which is followed in its development and in its emphasis on the field of symbolic control. The Bernsteinian perspective is enriched through the examination of the theoretical contribution of Pierre Bourdieu, especially his concepts “forms of capital”, “social field” and “habitus”. The course also explores the significance and the influence of the work of Michael Foucault in the understanding of questions on forms and relations of power, knowledge and subjectivity, and more generally the relationship of the concepts and the methodology of Foucault with social research and the study of crucial and contemporary educational issues.

Objectives

The main objectives of the course are:

- The focus on three main sociological theories on knowledge and the understanding of their distinct contribution in the study of social/pedagogical practices.
- The study of a systematic theoretical framework to analyse the official pedagogic discourse and the official pedagogical practices, as well as their implications in the formation of pedagogical identities.
- The critical appreciation of the theoretical framework for analysing pedagogical discourse/pedagogical practice, through the comparative examination of the three distinct theories.
- The discussion of methodological issues and the exploration of the possibilities that

combining theories or alternative approaches can offer in the study of crucial contemporary educational issues.

Learning Outcomes

Upon the successful completion of the course students should be able to:

- Understand in depth the sociological approach and problematic in the exploration of pedagogical knowledge and pedagogical practices.
- Know the main theories and recognize their distinct contribution to the development of the sociological perspective for the study of the differentiated fields of practice within the wider field of education.
- Have basic theoretical knowledge for approaching and analysing the changes in the programmes of study, the pedagogical methods and the practices of evaluation.
- Identify and discuss critically the implications that different forms of knowledge organisation may have in the formation of pedagogic identities.
- Have sufficient knowledge and abilities to read the scientific literature in this specialised scientific field.
- Use adequately the relevant scientific literature.
- Combine theories or use alternative approaches in examining and analysing crucial contemporary educational issues.

Competencies:

Search different sources, organise information, critical reading of texts, critical appreciation of theories, analysis and synthesis of information and data, teamwork.

Teaching/ learning methods

Teaching is in the form of lectures and seminars. It presupposes individual study, team work, and participation of students: (a) in the discussion of the proposed literature week by week. (b) in locating and reviewing empirical studies and identifying and discussing their theoretical references and methodological choices.

Students' assessment

The evaluation takes account of:

- Students' active participation in the educational process, which presupposes systematic study, week by week, of the proposed literature sources (30% of the total score).
- Students' performance in a short essay, requiring the review of significant journals in the field and work in small groups (70%).

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Important scientific journals in the field

European Education Research Journal
Journal of Education Policy
British Journal of Sociology of Education
Globalisation, Societies and Education
International Studies in Sociology of Education