

UV9412 – Political Philosophy of Education

The students' evaluation of the PhD course. Autumn 2025

This course is a biannual intensive two-days course on political philosophy of education. The course is particularly valuable for PhD candidates whose research focuses on ethical-political issues related to education in contemporary societies.

The course takes the form of a collaborative research seminar. Consequently, the students' active engagement with the literature and in the seminar is a vital part of the course content. The aims are to

- provide experience on the systematic ways of working in a collaborative research seminar
- learn how to explore some of today's most pressing social and ethical-political issues in light of contemporary and classical philosophical texts
- acquire skills of how to write a philosophical essay at high international standards

To earn 3 ECTS credits, attendees were asked to submit a philosophical essay before the course. The essays addressed topics relevant to political philosophy of education and made use of selected parts of the course literature. All essays were distributed and read by the group beforehand and presented and discussed during the seminar. In addition to the oral feedback, each student received written feedback on their essays.

This year's course offered literature, lectures and in-depth discussion on four topics:

- 1) The Political Dimension of Environmental and Sustainability Education
- 2) The Cosmopolitan Turn in Education and the Eclipse of Cosmopolitan Justice
- 3) Undemocratic Emotions in Education
- 4) Academic Citizenship in Challenging Times

Feedback on the course content and learning activities

Ten students attended the course. Seven attendees answered the online evaluation form. All seven said the course was easy to follow and six found the course relevant to their PhD projects. One of them said that

Very interesting course content. I liked that it was structured under four different themes. it was a very inspiring and thought-provoking seminar, which gave some good inputs to my PhD project. All four lecturers provided very valuable insights to the different themes.

However, one of the respondents questioned the high number of presentations, which somewhat compromised the opportunity to dwell more on each topic:

Interesting papers. However, I would have preferred that there were fewer papers, and that lectures and discussions revolved around a more in-depth discussion on a handful of them. The lecture on Hegel was a great example in that case.

Not surprisingly, all students say that they were well prepared for the course and that they were actively engaged in the discussions. It also seems that everyone liked the course format. However, the schedule was a little tight, and most students would have liked to extend the course with one extra day.

The course was well set up, and I especially liked the good and open atmosphere that created a good space for discussions and questions. There could have been some more lectures, in addition to the student presentations of their essays. Also useful with written feedback on the essay.

When asked how the course could be improved, one student responded that Stiegler's article should be removed from the curriculum, while another said that the expectation for essays should be communicated more clearly. Apart from that, the students thanked for "a wonderful course" and referred to previous comments in the questionnaire.

General evaluation

Overall, the students reported that their expectations for the course were met. They found the course relevant to their research activities and were well prepared for the course. They read each other's philosophical essays beforehand and provided fruitful comments on their fellow students' papers. The students also reported that they enjoyed the wide range of theories and perspectives that were addressed, and that four teachers were actively engaged in the conversations.

The structure was really good, how the subject was taken on through the student-texts! The teachers were constructive, encouraging, enthusiastic and engaging in their comments and the conversations

Overall, the format of the course seems to work well. Both in terms of relevance to the PhD candidates' projects, their motivation for attending the course, their engagement with the course literature and for their writing skills.

However, as the schedule was a little tight, we need to consider spending less time on presenting the students' essays, so that we have more time for discussions on their essays. The same goes for the lectures: To avoid a superficial treatment of the topics, we should set aside enough time for in-depth discussions after each lecture.

Several students have suggested extending the course by one extra day. However, we been hesitant about this solution, as several visiting PhD candidates attend each year and would need to pay for an additional night at a hotel. Still, the same number of seminar hours spread over three days will be experienced as less hectic. It might thus be a good alternative to structure the course as three shorter days instead of two long and intensive ones.