I. PURPOSE

The purpose of the Educational Philosophy paper is to formulate your philosophy of education based on your reflection on the readings and class discussions, as well as your own experience.

While your philosophy should be unique and not a reformulation of an educational philosophy covered in class, you should **rely on class readings** and discussions to help you think critically about your own philosophy as well as to formulate criticisms. *Please note this is not a research paper. The use of texts other than those assigned in the syllabus or any kind of secondary sources is not permitted.*

An Educational Philosophy paper **must satisfy the following three requirements**:

1. Present and defend a position on education as it *should be*, formulated in terms of **three beliefs**.
2. Consider and respond to possible **criticisms** for each educational philosophy belief.
3. Relate **each principle to one author** from the syllabus. There should be a **different author for each principle**, adding up to three authors in your whole paper. The purpose of using the authors is to strengthen and clarify your position, as well as to show your understanding of their view. For each of the three chosen authors, provide at least **one key quote** from the author with page reference.

The required length is 5-7 pages

II. DEVELOPING YOUR 3 BELIEFS

1. Basic Beliefs of your Philosophy of Education

Whether you are aware of it or not, and even whether you are planning to be a teacher or not, you already have certain beliefs about what education should be. These beliefs should be consistent with your view of the major purposes of education. Identify three of those beliefs and explore each one both analytically and with examples.

It is required that your beliefs cover **three different areas** or topics of controversy in philosophy of education. For instance, do not make all of your beliefs about pedagogy/teaching methods. If you have one belief about pedagogy/teaching methods, then the other two beliefs should be on different areas.

Look back through your class notes and activities for ideas. The following are some additional ideas on possible areas to explore:

a) Should education primarily serve to transmit knowledge or to foster critical thinking?

b) What curriculum and methods would best achieve the desired results?

c) How is learning possible and what does it mean to have learned something? How much of this is based on capacities and personalities present at birth and how much can be changed? How flexible are human beings?

d) Which should be given priority – education for personal development, citizenship, or employment? Liberal education or vocational education?

e) What should be the relation between education and maintenance of class structure in society? Should different classes or cultural groups be given different education programs?

f) Do the rights and beliefs of children, parents, teachers, and socio-cultural or ethnic groups conflict, and if so who should be dominant?

g) Should all children have a right to state-provided education? If so, should this education respect the beliefs and customs of all groups?

h) Other Possible issues:

⇒ Religion should be a part of a child's education
Religion should not be a part of a child's education.

⇒ The primary purpose of education is to teach new information (older -> younger)
The primary purpose of education is to learn how to ask questions (think critically)

⇒ The primary purpose of education is to learn from older generation
The primary purpose of education is to learn from peers

⇒ Education should primarily serve to teach respect for elders and to value tradition.
Education should serve to question authority and change society.

⇒ Children are born with tendency to do bad things and the purpose of education is to correct bad inclinations.
Children are born good and education should protect that goodness from getting corrupted.

⇒ The best education is one with clear structure, rules, and punishments.
The best education is natural, with as little human interference as possible (no rules and no punishments)

⇒ Formal education should be focused only on "productive" processes, that is academics and work preparation.
Formal education should include not only "productive" but also "reproductive" processes.

⇒ Most important purpose of education is to teach you intellectual and physical skills

Most important purpose of education is to help you discover your true self and find happiness.

How to align a philosophical belief with an author from this course:

Examples: Sample philosophical beliefs for paper inspired by Du Bois

1. The best education for an oppressed/disadvantaged group is higher education.
2. All people should go to higher education (liberal arts college).
3. Education should be geared towards changing society rather than adjusting to society.

Sample philosophical beliefs for paper inspired by Delpit

1. The purpose of education is to teach skills needed for the world and this is more important than the process of learning
2. Education should be reformed so that all voices are heard, not just those who have power
3. Education should be reformed so that all learn the culture of power

Advice:

- Keep your beliefs at a philosophical level, meaning general and abstract enough so that can be applied to many different concrete experiences.
- Choose beliefs that you can imagine someone possibly disagreeing with. If the belief seems obvious and you cannot imagine anyone disagreeing with it, then revise your principle.
    - Example of a belief that would be too specific: "*I believe teaching how to use the Internet is important*." [Why is it important? How does it connect to your views on the purpose of education, etc.?]

Criteria For A Good Belief

1. **Use a full sentence** that is saying something about what you value
   (not just a phrase e.g. don't say "my belief is religion" instead "The best education is one that includes religious values from early on."***affirmative, positive**
   (e.g. don't say "I am against home schooling." instead: "The best education is one that takes place in the classroom."
2. **Make it philosophical** (abstract, values - "should" "purpose" "best")
   (e.g. don't say how things are, descriptive; "Education today just serves the wealthy." ; normative/ideals "The best education is one where all have equal opportunity."
3. **It can be controversial**!!! (e.g. don't say: "Education is important."; can say "The purpose of education is to bring out the knowledge the student already has." "Education should be focused on helping an individual figure out what they want.")

Criticisms and responses:

- For each of the beliefs of your educational philosophy you present, formulate a possible criticism in the form of a counterargument and response. Present each counterargument as convincingly as you can and then respond to it, defending your belief.

Discussion of three authors from the syllabus

- Relate **each principle to one author** from the syllabus. There should be a **different author for each principle**, adding up to three authors in your whole paper. The purpose of using the authors is to strengthen and clarify your position, as well as to show your understanding of their view. For each of the three chosen authors, provide at least **one key quote** from the author with page reference.

III. GENERAL ADVICE

1. Stick to the outline & detailed outline.
2. Begin each paragraph with a topic sentence (what am I doing in this paragraph?), followed by supporting arguments, evidence, and detail.
3. Although each topic or belief is discussed in a separate section, think about the overall organization and cohesion of the paper (e.g., perhaps a more general principle about the function of education should precede a principle about curriculum).
4. Properly cite the ideas and findings of others. Although you are writing in your voice, you will also be presenting the work of others. To avoid plagiarism, be sure to properly credit other authors' arguments and findings. Unless you are quoting, be sure to paraphrase. This means expressing an original idea in your own words, not replacing a few words in a paragraph. When quoting directly, include page number(s) in parentheses after the quote.

IV. OUTLINE

Paragraph 1: Introduction -- Here you present the main ideas that will be discussed in the paper. Make sure to include your three key beliefs of education and the three key authors to be discussed. Also mention that you will be considering criticisms of your beliefs.

Paragraph 2: Belief 1
Paragraph 3: Criticism of Belief 1
Paragraph 4: Discussion of Author 1 in connection to Belief/Criticism 1

Paragraph 5: Belief 2
Paragraph 6: Criticism of Belief 2
Paragraph 7: Discussion of Author 2 in connection to Belief/Criticism 2

Paragraph 8: Belief 3
Paragraph 9: Criticism of Belief 3
Paragraph 10: Discussion of Author 3 in connection to Belief/Criticism 3

Paragraph 11: Conclusion -- Here, you briefly summarize your arguments and discuss implications for society or education, hopes for the future, recommendations for teachers, and so on.

V. STEP BY STEP GUIDE

Paragraph 1: Introduction Paragraph: Here you present the main ideas that will be discussed in the paper. Make sure to include your three key principles of education and the three key authors to be discussed. Also mention that you will be considering criticisms of your principles.

Paragraph 2: First belief - development

- **"D" for "DEFINITIONS"** = what are they key concepts in your principle? What do they mean? Spend extra time with any concepts that might be vague or interpreted different ways and make sure it's clear how you are understanding that term. (e.g. if your principle has the word "education" in it, what does that mean? Are you including education from all sources or just formal education in schools?)

- **"R" for "REASONS"** = what are your supporting reasons? Make sure you can defend your argument using just 2 or 3 reasons. Preferably one of your reasons should be more general and involve the deeper value you care about, while the other reason should connect to your specific topic. (This will be shown in class.) Note it is OK and even recommended to use clear, direct language like "my first reason is…".

- **"E" for "EXAMPLES"** = evaluate a personal example from your own life and education in light of the principle. This can be from any stage/source of your education including parents, family, teachers, mentors, learning on your own, etc. The example can be positive, that is, something which illustrates the principle at work, or negative, that is, something which does not show the principle at work, but you wish it had. In the negative case, suggest at least one specific way in which you wish things had been different. Explain in detail.

Paragraph 3: Criticism of first belief

- Criticism could be just going against the whole belief OR you can also criticize one of the reasons provided (either is fine)
- It is recommended to choose criticisms that are more at the ideas level rather than the practical level. (e.g. better: someone might disagree with my belief above and argue that it will harm students. worse; someone might disagree with my belief and argue that it will just be too hard to carry out.
- Response to the criticism (i.e. why you think this criticism is not good and your argument still holds up well)

Paragraph 4: Discussion of connected author from this course

- Overall statement on how you think the author connects -- would he agree or disagree with your belief?
- General explanation of how author's ideas connect to either your belief
- Minimum of one quote with page number to elaborate and illustrate author's ideas

Now repeat the process for the second belief (**paragraphs 5**, **6, 7**) and the third belief (**paragraphs 8, 9, 10**).

Paragraph 11. Conclusion Paragraph: Here, you briefly summarize your arguments and discuss implications for society or education, hopes for the future, recommendations for teachers, and so on.