

University of British Columbia  
Faculty of Education, Department of Educational Studies

**Second Inter-University Graduate Seminar in Educational Research**

“Thea’s Lounge”, 2<sup>nd</sup> floor of the Thea Koerner House, 6371 Crescent Road, UBC

**Saturday, June 1, 2013, 8:15-16:00**

The Inter-University Graduate Seminar in Educational Research is yearly graduate student scholarly event, now in its second iteration. It brings together students from various universities to celebrate and share their work in a collegial, inspiring, constructive, and supportive environment. The Seminar is an inter-disciplinary space where participants productively engage new fields of study and innovative research methodologies. It is also a social space, where participants establish contact and build meaningful intellectual and social engagements with peers beyond their respective home university and/or academic programme.

Each presentation is up to 30 minutes long, followed by 15 minutes of open discussion.

Seminar papers are organized in three thematic panels:

1. ***Indigenous Knowledge, Cultural Identities, Learning*** critically examines the legacies and power relations that underpin experiences of schooling, policies, and learning in Indigenous communities.
2. ***Migration, Development, New Society*** critically examines the politics of immigration and development in North and South social contexts and the implications for a socially just society.
3. ***Space, Art, Education*** critically examines the place art holds in the perceptions, choices, anticipations, and dissent of people active in diverse contexts of education, schooling, and politics.

**\*\*\* PLEASE RSVP \*\*\***

Participation is free and no registration fees are required. To allow planning, please **RSVP** by simply emailing your name and graduate programme affiliation to André Mazawi, <andre.mazawi@ubc.ca>, **by Monday, May 27, 10:00am** at the latest.

\* Light lunch & refreshments, courtesy the *Department of Educational Studies* (EDST).

## **PROGRAMME**

**08:15-08:30**

Coffee/Tea

**08:30-08:45**

Convenor's welcome & programme overview

**08:45-09:15**

**Keynote Address**

**Faces of meritocracy: Intersectional forms of oppression in the Chilean context**

David Romero

In this presentation, I situate the way in which meritocracy has been represented in the Chilean context in relation to historical, literary and social discourses. My purpose is twofold. First, I show how meritocratic practices blatantly express forms of biopolitics that have been carried out in Latin America. Secondly, I explain how meritocracy has produced intersectional forms of oppression aimed at naturalizing a specific body with a particular racial, ethnic, sexual, class, and gender identity by using diverse procedures of exaltation and abjection.

*My research identity is defined as interdisciplinary. I studied literature, and gradually became interested in education, probably forced by the ideological constraints that I perceived in my field. That is why I focused my PhD dissertation on the social uses of literature, specifically in the Chilean schooling system between 1930 and 1973. I studied the discursive mechanisms underpinning different expressions of macro-politics, and how they were implicated in producing specific forms of subalternity in the process of socially distributing particular authorized knowledges.*

*Right now, I am exploring the relationship between meritocracy, public policies, and the construction of different forms of subjectivity. Although meritocracy has been studied in general terms, and depicted positively or negatively depending on the ideological standpoint that undergirds different academic discourses, in the Latin American context, nothing has been said about the specific ways in which meritocratic practices affect particular bodies, that is to say, the traces of power in the intimate space of the self. In this sense, I would describe my work as an attempt to flesh out how historical macro-structures descend to the realm of the microscopic and to reconstruct the relationship between these two levels, in order to reclaim politics as a more quotidian activity.*

**09:15-09:30**

Coffee/Tea Break

**09:30-11:00**

**Panel 1: Colonialism, Indigenous Knowledge, Learning**

**Out of the margin: Centering Indigenous Knowledge in B.C. and Québec educational initiatives**

Alana Boileau

In this paper, I argue that across Canada, measures that target Aboriginal youth with the hopes of creating a sense of belonging and achievement in the mainstream schooling system must be paralleled by measures that, in anthropological terms, make non-Indigenous students' world strange. Bearing in mind that a decontextualized and superficial engagement with Indigenous stories and ceremony are detrimental, educators must strive to meaningfully bring Indigenous knowledge to the classroom so as to provide non-Indigenous students with a vantage point from which to reconsider their own worldviews on the one hand, and become more cognizant of the knowledge that was born out of the land on which they study and play every day.

*Alana Boileau is an M.A. student in UBC's department of Educational Studies. In 2009, after an internship in a rural village of Kenya's Maasailand, Alana realized how little she knew about the people indigenous to the place she called home. She struggled to understand how she could have come "so far", a university education, having learned so little about the people from the land she occupied. With the advice of her supervisors, Dr. Jo-Anne Dillabough and Dr. Michael Marker, Alana made it her graduate research journey to explore the charged issue of hers and other Québécois' attitudes towards Indigenous peoples.*

**Colonial policy's repetitive effects: A critical analysis of Aboriginal education enhancement agreement policy in BC**

D. Lyn Daniels

In this paper, I 'historicize' Aboriginal education. Historicizing Aboriginal education 'unmaps' how white Canadian settler society secures dominance through particular use of policies, of spatial concepts, of colonial discourses, of photography and of real material practices based on these knowledge-generating systems. I explore these historical relationships in order to contextualize Aboriginal college students' memories of public education. I decolonize the history of Aboriginal education in Canada and I argue that memory must bridge history in order to fully assess the repetitive effects of colonial policy.

*Lyn Daniels, M.Ed. is the District Vice-Principal, Aboriginal Education in the Burnaby School District. Lyn is Cree and belongs to the Kawacatoose First Nation in southern Saskatchewan. She has worked in several school districts in BC and for the Ministry of Education as a coordinator and consultant in Aboriginal Education. Lyn is doctoral candidate at UBC in Educational Policy and Leadership. Lyn's research focuses on Aboriginal students' memories of public education and how they compare to the memories of former Indian residential school students.*

**11:00-11:15**

Coffee/Tea Break

11:15-12:45

**Panel 2: Migration, Development, New Society**

**Migrants: Disempowered Powers**

Saeed Nazari

This paper strives to provide a complementary overview of minoritized migrants' integration and settlement in Canada, employing Pierre Bourdieu's socio-critical and Edward Said's geopolitical theories. The global capital flowing into Canada through migration fortifies the economic and social infrastructures, however, available scholarship reveals that skilled migrants, specifically visible minorities still struggle with securing a decent position and integration into Canadian workplace. Bringing along different forms of cultural capital and social capital, these skilled migrants end up with precarious employment in a Eurocentric competition where their training and work experiences are rendered irrelevant. As Samers (2010) has evidenced, there is not a single approach to understanding migration, rather the observer's vantage point provides some knowledge. The researcher in this paper looks into migrants' integration from two complementary perspectives. At a micro level, from Bourdieu's sociocritical vantage point, issues of *habitus*, symbolic power, censorship, politics, ideology, and normalization in migrants' settlement within their new market are investigated. At a macro level, from Said's geopolitical standpoint, the influence of the political context in which migration for the Middle Easterners takes place and their settlement will be investigated. This paper will eventually suggest some outlines for Canadian society and policy makers to improve Middle Eastern migrants' status quo by facilitating their candid integration in Canada.

*Saeed Nazari has received his master's degree in English Language Teaching from Shiraz University (Iran). He has got several years of teaching and research experience with adult learners and is currently teaching English to international learners at Vancouver Georgia College. His research interests include critical sociocultural theories in education, sociopolitical issues in English language teaching, globalization and linguistic imperialism, and socialization of visible minorities in Canadian workplace. He is also the co-founder of Iranian English Language Teachers' Society of Canada (IELTSC).*

**Education system of the third world countries: A systemic fault?**

Kapil Dev Regmi

Perhaps, education is not a fault in itself but the problem is faulty 'education system'. Some scholars like Kelly in the 1980s argued that 'education has aggravated pre-existing problems rather than contributed to their solution'. Then where and when did this faulty education system start? One argument says that all started with the colonisation project that European nations initiated in the past. Robert Arnove argues that education system of a particular country in the global south has to be seen through a world system perspective 'as the present education systems of these countries are the products of past colonial penetration'. In this paper I am going to deal with how present education system has been the legacy of colonial era and has been a creator of problems rather than a solution to the pressing problems of the third world countries.

*Kapil worked as an English teacher for about 10 years in Nepal. Then he earned his Master of Philosophy (MPhil) in Education from Kathmandu University. His dissertation focused on the recognition of non-formal and informal modes of learning in opening up avenues for lifelong learning. His interest in lifelong learning brought him to the field of Adult Education. He also earned his Master of Education (MED) in Adult Education from the Department of Educational Studies at UBC and joined the same department as a PhD student in September 2012. In his PhD project he is trying to explore how a humanistic approach to lifelong learning could be an alternative model of education for solving the social, economic and political problems of the most impoverished nations of the world, also known as the Least Developed Countries (LDCs). He is interested in postcolonial studies, critical discourse analysis and lifelong learning.*

**12:45-13:30**

**Light lunch**

**13:30-15:45**

**Panel 3: Space, Art, Education**

### **Down the garden path again? A critical history of school gardens**

Julia Ostertag

This paper explores what I consider three significant yet unacknowledged instances of historical school gardening: Epicurus' Garden School (306 BCE), school gardening during Nazi Germany, and the centrality of agricultural education in the North American residential school system. Drawing in part on historical images of school gardening in Nazi Germany and during the residential school system, I – with tender yet growing critical historical and place consciousness – consider ways in which school gardening is conceived in relation to nature/culture dualisms and other forms of oppression, particularly colonialism and nationalism.

*Julia Ostertag is a PhD candidate in the Department of Curriculum & Pedagogy, UBC. Her current research explores the history and contemporary practices of school gardening via a yearlong garden installation entitled "Threads sown, grown & given" at The Orchard Garden, a campus teaching and learning garden she coordinates with an inter-faculty student team (<http://www.theorchardgarden.blogspot.ca/search/label/Installation>). Her MA thesis considered the overlapping roles of families and the Intergenerational Landed Learning Project (a garden-based environmental education initiative at the UBC Farm) in co-creating children's ecological identities.*

## **Public elementary schools and choice: Investigating parent perceptions of public elementary fine arts schools**

Suzanne Windsor-Liscombe

With more educational options available publically and privately, parents have become key players in directing their children's education. Against the backdrop of neo-liberalism, school choice plays an increasingly important role in children's education, as parents are prepared to transport their children across larger distances in order to deliver them into the best possible places of learning. This paper examines parent perceptions of elementary fine arts schools within the public school system. It focuses on a case study of one Lower Mainland public elementary fine arts school that, in 2005 was on the verge of closure with a diminishing population of 90 students. Based on interviews, key questions are discussed in this paper: who are the parents that are bringing the children into the school from outside the catchment area, where have they come from, and how did they learn about the school? This case study serves as an exemplar of the policy of school choice within the public school system and whether or not it advantages one group, in particular the middle class. Tied to this is a discussion of the dilemma faced by parents who seeking educational advantages or solutions. In a larger perspective the research might indicate the demise of the neighbourhood school.

*Suzanne Windsor-Liscombe holds a Bachelor of Music degree, an ARCT diploma in piano performance, and a Diploma and Masters of Education in English language learning. While a teacher of subjects spanning grades K-12 within the public school system, Suzanne has also worked as a Program Coordinator in the University of British Columbia's Teacher Education Office, Secondary Practicum. A sincere interest to undertake doctoral research in the Educational Policy and Leadership Programme was motivated by her observations of students within the elementary fine arts school where she is currently Head Teacher.*

## **Public spaces as informal political learning spheres: Walls as political canvases of dissent**

Gabriella Maestrini & Paulina Semeneć

“Imagine a city where graffiti wasn't illegal, a city where everybody could draw whatever they liked. Where every street was awash with a million colours and little phrases. ... Imagine a city like that and stop leaning against the wall - it's wet. — Banksy

In this presentation, we suggest that the work of Banksy, a London-based graffiti artist, is a pedagogical tool that can be used to disrupt the notion of democratic and free spaces. In particular, we argue that Banksy's images are pedagogical tools that can help foster important discussions about these often taken for granted notions. Given that public spaces are becoming increasingly controlled and surveilled, the possibilities for creative political expression is being diminished. We suggest that Banksy's street art provides opportunities for political and cultural engagement among citizens and opportunities for educators interested in social justice issues in the classroom. We hope to show that by "reading" the image, the world too, can be "read" in transformational ways (Paulo Freire). For the purpose of this presentation, we will focus on the depiction of children and the use of the wall as creative canvas. Our discussion will also draw on the concept of Thirdspace by Soja, which will allow us to engage with the political notion of public spaces, how this concept can be disrupted through graffiti art, and how reading the visual can be used as pedagogical practice.

*Gabriella Maestrini (MEd in ALGC) is a first year PhD student in the Department of Educational Studies at UBC, a long time ESL teacher and a photographer. In her work with international and immigrant students, she has been increasingly interested in the intersection of the visual and humour as anti-racist pedagogical tool in the classroom. In her current PhD work, she explores racial-ethnic humour in the stand-up performance work of Russell Peters, the potential multicultural racial implications in the classroom as well as the possibilities for anti- racist pedagogy.*

*Paulina Semenec holds a Master's degree in Curriculum and Instruction as well as a post-baccalaureate degree in education from Simon Fraser University (SFU). She has over seven years of experience teaching English as an additional language in Vancouver, and over two years of experience working with international adult educators at SFU. She is currently completing the first year of her doctoral studies in the Department of Educational Studies at UBC. Her research interests include critical media literacy, (particularly media making as a form of youth empowerment), and anti-oppressive/social justice education.*

**15:45-16:00**

**Synthesis and methodological highlights, and possible directions**

Sonia Medel

*Sonia Medel is in her final year of MA studies in the Society, Culture and Politics in Education Programme, Department of Educational Studies, UBC. Her thesis addresses the impact of Afro-Peruvian initiatives on the enactment of a participatory radical democratic citizenship in Peru. She is interested in understanding how political struggles of marginalized ethnic groups inform anti-oppressive policies, sustainable development, participatory democratic governance, and social movement learning.*

**16:00 – End.**