

EDST 578: MULTICULTURALISM, RACE RELATIONS AND EDUCATION

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course takes up the discourse that emerged in the 1970s in Canada and has remained dominant in the examination of socio-cultural difference, representation and social justice in Canadian (and international) society and education, namely multiculturalism. It also examines related and alternative discourses that have arisen to supplement or supplant multiculturalism (e.g. anti-racism, cosmopolitanism, interculturalism). The course invites students to consider a number of approaches to multiculturalism, multicultural education and their alternatives. The first of these is the continuum approach where there are various, increasingly progressive versions of multiculturalism, with conservative multiculturalism at one end and anti-racism appearing at the other (conservative multiculturalism, liberal multiculturalism, critical multiculturalism, revolutionary multiculturalism, and anti-racism). The second is the contrast approach where other discourses are seen as a stark alternative to the dominant (namely liberal, celebratory) form of multiculturalism and multicultural education. The third is the contextual approach where multiculturalism and alternatives are seen as specific approaches within a general social difference and social justice education framework (joining feminist, indigenous, postcolonial, queer, cultural studies, critical pedagogy, etc., discourses). A sustained critical approach to multiculturalism and its alternatives is encouraged in the course. In other words students are exposed to both work that advocates and work that critiques multiculturalism (e.g. theoretical and praxis work on and interculturalist critique of multiculturalism). The course involves both collaborative and individual work, encouraging students to work together as well as individually to examine the theory and practical applications of multiculturalism and/or alternative discourses to social difference and social justice issues in education and beyond. The primary goal of the course is to help students develop an informed epistemological stance regarding multiculturalism and alternative discourses and to utilize one or a combination of discourses in addressing collectively and/or individually identified sociocultural (e.g. individual and group identity politics and multiculturalism) or educational problematics (e.g. issues in multicultural education policy and/or pedagogy). For related work in this area beyond the course, see the Centre for Culture, Identity and Education website <http://www.ccie.educ.ubc.ca/>