

## EDST 503

### Course Overview

What is adult education? Where does it take place? What is it good for? And, who are adult learners and adult educators? The purpose of this course is to provide a foundation of knowledge about the field of adult learning and education (ALE) so students can begin to answer these questions. We will examine the very diverse field of ALE including its informal, formal, and nonformal elements. We will learn about the different philosophies that underpin adult education programs, practices, and policies, and about how social, cultural, and political contexts have shaped the field. While we will study adult education more broadly, looking at examples and influences from across the globe, we pay particular attention to historical and current trends and examples of Canadian ALE (beyond Molson, that is ☺).

Adult literacy, high school upgrading, and language classes at the local community centre are all examples of adult learning and education. But the field consists of so much more! ALE takes place every day – sometimes informally and incidentally – in shops, businesses, organizations, educational institutions, or labour unions. ALE occurs when we learn about how to protect our environment, how to use a new software programme on our computer, or how to integrate into a new culture and society. ALE can help us improve our health, connect to our community, apply for a new job. And, adult education policies and practices are shaped by local, national and international organizations, such as the World Bank, OECD and UNESCO. There is so much to this varied field of adult learning and education, and through this course students will be introduced to many subfields of the discipline.

### Course Objectives

In this course participants will:

- 1) Explore the breadth of learning activities considered a part of the field of adult education
- 2) Develop a critical perspective and understanding of the social, political, cultural, and economic forces shaping adult education
- 3) Analyse different philosophical traditions/perspectives influencing adult education
- 4) Examine some key historical examples of adult education in Canada and abroad
- 5) Pursue their own particular interests in adult learning and education
- 6) Learn more about the role of adult learning and education in their own lives, and that taking place in their families and communities.