





# Educational Studies (EDST) 635

## Foundations of Education in Canada (Revision 2)

**Status:**

Replaced with new revision, see the [course listing](#)  for the current revision 

**Delivery mode:**

[Grouped study](#) 

**Credits:**

3

**Area of study:**

Arts

**Prerequisites:**

None

**Precluded:**

None

**Faculty:**

[Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences](#) 

**Notes:**

Students in Group Study courses are advised that this syllabus may vary in key details in each instance of the course. Always refer to the Moodle site for the most up-to-date details on texts, assignment structure, and grading.

## Overview

Twenty-first century educators, teachers, and administrators are confronted with a plethora of complex questions and concerns. Education is taking on greater significance as an essential component in an emerging information society that highly values knowledge and learning.

Canadian education is a very large and multifaceted topic. For the purpose of graduate study within this course, one facet has been selected for close scrutiny: the public education system. Education is a provincial jurisdiction and 13 separate systems of public education are currently operating in Canada. Each system cannot be studied in detail; instead examples are drawn from several provinces and Saskatchewan's public education system has been selected as a continuous thread to help move our inquiry forward. An underlying assumption of this course is that schooling is not neutral, but rather is a contested terrain that is always shifting and changing.

The overall objective of this course is to enable students to think critically and creatively about contemporary Canadian schooling situations and issues. The course is designed to help students to cultivate a "foundations perspective of education." A foundations perspective is an interdisciplinary way of viewing education that integrates historical, philosophical, political, and sociological understandings of educational problems and issues. There is a focus on power relations, inequities, and social justice. By integrating history, philosophy, politics, the social, and culture with perspectives on schooling, it is hoped that students will develop complicated and nuanced analyses of current situations, and thereby be able to generate and imagine innovative responses. Students will become knowledgeable and conversant about salient topics such as histories of schooling in Canadian, Aboriginal, and Francophone-minority communities; multiculturalism; social inclusion; and educational change.

## Outline

- Part I: Getting oriented: Focusing on Schooling
- Part II: Looking back: Schooling in Canada from 1800 to present day
- Part III: Getting specific: Aboriginal education and French language conflicts
- Part IV: Moving forward: Schooling in Canada in the twenty-first century

## Objectives

After completing this course, students will be able to

1. describe the socio-historical evolution of schooling in Canada by attending to various levels of analysis (provincial social organization, professionalization of teachers, pedagogy and curriculum, and individual experiences)
2. identify some of the social, political, and cultural forces that have shaped schooling beyond language and religion.
3. describe and explain how education/schooling is organized in Canada and describe the significance and implications of education as a provincial jurisdiction.
4. describe and discuss the meaning and significance of a "critical social foundations perspective" of education and its implication for practice, and apply this perspective to issues of education.
5. describe and discuss Aboriginal education in Canada, currently and historically.
6. describe and discuss Francophone minority education in Canada and explain how it can be viewed as a success story of educational reform.
7. call into question taken-for-granted assumptions that underpin Enlightenment values and explain how they in/form how aims and social functions of schooling are viewed.
8. identify and discuss some of the implications of neo-liberalism in schooling and education in Canada.
9. identify and discuss various ways to conceptualize multiculturalism and the effects of it on schooling and education.
10. define and discuss social justice as it relates to multiculturalism and education.

## Evaluation

To receive credit for this course, students must participate in the online activities, successfully complete the assignments, and achieve a final mark of at least 60 per cent. Students should be familiar with the Master of Arts—Interdisciplinary Studies **grading system** [↗](#). Please note that it is students'

responsibility to maintain their program status. Any student who receives a grade of "F" in one course, or a grade of "C" in more than one course, may be required to withdraw from the program.

The following table summarizes the evaluation activities and the credit weights associated with them.

| Activity   | Weight      |
|--|-------------|
| Online Participation                               | 20%         |
| Essay: Using a critical foundations perspective    | 20%         |
| Response paper and critical questions              | 15%         |
| Term paper   | 35%         |
| Self-assessment of moderation of online discussion | 10%         |
| <b>Total</b>                                       | <b>100%</b> |

## Materials

### Digital course materials

Links to the following course materials will be made available in the course:

Noonan, Brian, Hallman, Dianne, & Scharf, Murray. (2006). *A history of education in Saskatchewan: Selected readings*. Regina, SK: Canadian Plains Research Centre.

Behiels, Michael D. (2004). *Canada's Francophone minority communities: Constitutional renewal and the winning of school governance*. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press.


### Physical course materials

The following course materials are included in a course package that will be shipped to your home prior to your course's start date:





Baldwin, Douglas O. (2008). *Teachers, students, and pedagogy: Selected readings and documents in the history of Canadian education*. Markham, ON: Fitzhenry & Whiteside.

## Athabasca University Online Materials

**Course Home Page:** You will find Course Information (including the Assignment File and other pertinent information) at the top of the course home page. You will also find your Study Guide presented unit by unit online. You will find your assignments and links to submit your work to your professor on the course home page.

**Athabasca University Library:** Students are encouraged to browse the Library's Web site to review the Library collection of journal databases, electronic journals, and digital reference tools: <http://library.athabascau.ca> .

## Important links

- › [Master of Arts in Interdisciplinary Studies](#) 
- › [Focus Areas](#) 
- › [Courses](#) 
- › [Fees and Funding](#) 

Athabasca University reserves the right to amend course outlines occasionally and without notice. Courses offered by other delivery methods may vary from their individualized study counterparts.

*Opened in Revision 2, May 1, 2012*

*Updated March 13, 2025*

View [previous revision](#) 