

Perspectives on Pedagogy

ARU Syllabus

Last updated: May 19, 2025

COURSE TITLE: Perspectives on Pedagogy

COURSE YEAR AND QUARTER: 2024-25, Q3

PRE-REQUISITE COURSES:

300-level courses require that a student has completed the “16-Week Objectivism Seminar” or the “Intensive Seminar on Objectivism”.

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

Ayn Rand’s philosophy is a powerful framework for educators. This seminar is a deep dive into what she said directly about education, which includes both profound critiques of the status quo and positive conceptions of how to support developing minds. The discussion will include a special emphasis on relating Rand’s ideas to the history and present state of the field.

About half the course will be on “The Comprachicos”, the remainder will be on “Art and Moral Treason” and Rand’s thoughts on Montessori education. Class discussion will include comments on the history and present state of education from the instructor.

COURSE DURATION: 8 weeks

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

The goal of the course is understanding Rand on education, with a special emphasis on contextualizing her views in the history and current reality of the field of education.

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

Instructor:

Dr. Matt Bateman

Matt Bateman is a philosopher who has worked in Montessori education for the past ten years. He received his PhD in philosophy from the University of Pennsylvania, and was a cofounder of Higher Ground Education, the largest Montessori school network in the world. He is currently writing a book on education.

WEEKLY COURSE OVERVIEW

Week 1 (April 9, 2025): The history and current state of education

- Reading: none; feel free to advance
 - 2-hour lecture, lightning tour of general education

Week 2 (April 23, 2025): The Comprachicos (intro, preschool)

- Reading: “The Comprachicos”
 - Read the whole thing
 - Close study of sections I and II (intro, preschool)

Week 3 (April 30, 2025): The Comprachicos (elementary school through high school)

- Reading: Close study of section III

Week 4 (May 7, 2025): The Comprachicos (university)

- Reading: Close study of section IV

Week 5 (May 21, 2025): The Comprachicos (conclusion, recap)

- Reading: Close study of section V
 - Reread whole essay

Week 6 (May 28, 2025): Art and Moral Treason

- Reading: “Art and Moral Treason”

Week 7 (June 4, 2025): Rand on Montessori

- Reading: Dr. Montessori’s Own Handbook, pp. 1-20 (chapters: Introductory Remarks, A Children’s House, The Method)
- (Optional reading: Hessen, “The Montessori Method”)

Week 8 (June 11, 2025): Rand on Montessori and conclusions

- Reading: Dr. Montessori’s Own Handbook, pp. 69-98, 114-121 (chapters: Language and Knowledge of the World, Freedom, Writing, Moral Factors)
 - Optional: Read the rest of the book (it’s very short: small pages, lots of illustrations)

CORE READINGS

- Ayn Rand, “The Comprachicos”, (The New Left or Return of the Primitive)
- Ayn Rand, “Art and Moral Treason” (The Romantic Manifesto)
- Maria Montessori, Dr. Montessori’s Own Handbook (the book Hessen is reviewing in The Objectivist)
- Full scan online at <https://archive.org/details/drmontessorisown00mont/>

BACKGROUND READINGS (ALL OPTIONAL)

- Beatrice Hessen, “The Montessori Method”, (The Objectivist, May through July 1970)
We’ll go over this essay a fair bit during the course, but since this resource is hard to acquire due to copyright restrictions, it’s an “Optional Reading”.
- Raffaella Cribiore: Gymnastics of the Mind
Detailed, classroom-implementation-level history of the Hellenistic education
- Herbart Kliebard: The Struggle for the American Curriculum

High level intellectual/sociological history, focused on the different strains of progressivism in late 19th c. to mid 20th c. education

- Milton Gaither: Homeschool: An American History
A high level intellectual/sociological history of American Education focused on home schooling (as a common practice in the colonial period through mid 19th c., then as a countercultural practice in the 60s and beyond)
- Ralph Taylor: Basic Principles of Curriculum and Instruction
Framework for understanding different ways that education can be organized

ASSIGNMENTS

TBD

OVERALL COURSE GRADE:

TBD

GENERAL POLICIES:

Familiarize yourself with the [ARU Handbook](#) if you have not already done so. Unless specified otherwise in this syllabus, all policies in the Handbook are in effect for this course.

COURSE WEBSITE:

Logistical details about the course are available at the course website[LINK to be provided by ARU], including:

- Live class schedule and Zoom link for attending live classes
- Recordings of past classes
- Office hour details, including links to book an appointment
- Teaching assistant information
- How to join the ARU Discord server

The course website is also accessible through your dashboard after logging into the [ARU website](#). Contact aru@aynrand.org if you have any issues accessing the site.

COURSE COMMUNICATION:

- Course announcements are posted in the Announcements tab of the course website and automatically emailed to all participants. Please make sure you are receiving these emails and that they are not going to your spam folder. If you join after the start of class, be sure to check the Announcements tab for anything you may have missed.

- For questions about course content, structure or schedule, please ask during the live class or in the course channel on the ARU Discord server (see the Discord tab of the course website). Questions about your assignments and grades should be directed to the teaching assistant.
- For personal administrative issues (e.g., website problems), contact aru@aynrand.org.
- If you have a technical issue preventing submission of an assignment, email your assignment to the TA and cc: aru@aynrand.org to troubleshoot the matter.