PHIL 399 Sp St Teaching Children Philosophy
CRN 24895 - 4 Credits

Course Time and Location
MW 4:00-5:50 p.m.  HEDCO Education Building, Room 144.
NOTE: Beginning week three of the term, Monday classes will be replaced with outreach discussions held on a
Monday, Tuesday or Wednesday at a designated elementary school in District 4J. University students, working
individually or in 2-person teams, will co-lead philosophical discussions in a 3rd, 4th or 5th grade classroom.
Wednesday classes from 4:00-5:50 p.m. will continue throughout the term.

Instructor, Contact Information and Office Hours
Paul Bodin, instructor, Philosophy and Education Studies.
Contact information:  Email:  pbodin@uoregon.edu
Students may also contact the instructor by phone for emergencies:  541-686-9270

Consultation hours:  Before or after class, or at a time arranged between student and instructor.

Course Overview
In this seminar, we will explore various methods for bringing philosophical ways of thinking into
a community of discourse in third, fourth and fifth grade classrooms.  The seminar will focus on methods
for teaching children skills in critical thinking, inquiry, empathy and written reflection as they participate
in focused discussions that university students will co-lead around philosophical topics.

In order to model this process, we will explore an interdiscipliary curriculum linking philosophy
and education studies at the elementary level.  We will focus our attention on key questions that can be
found in children’s literature and short dramatic dialogues; questions like,  What is friendship?  Is it
always wrong to lie?  What does it mean to be brave?  What does it mean to be a girl or a boy?  What
is beauty and can we evaluate it?  Do animals have rights?  How should we respond to unfair rules?
and Do we have a responsibility to care for our environment?

Learning Outcomes
By the end of the term, students will gain new skills at facilitating philosophical discussions with
children.  These include:  an ability to prepare discussion templates around topics in ethics and
aesthetics,
and an ability to model philosophical dialogue that supports children’s critical thinking and empathy.

Required Texts
1.  Wartenberg, Thomas E.  Big Ideas for Little Kids:  Teaching Philosophy Through Children’s
    Literature Rowman & Littlefield, 2009
2.  Lobel, Arnold  Frog and Toad Together (children’s picture book)
3.  Catalanotto, Peter  Emily’s Art (children’s picture book)
4.  Choi, Yangsook  The Name Jar (children’s picture book)
5.  Lobel, Arnold  Owl At Home (children’s picture book)
7.  Lionni, Leo  Frederick (children’s picture book)
8.  Instructional handouts, including discussion templates and two-minute plays will be assigned on a
    regular basis as additional required readings for the course.  They can be found in Blackboard
Course Assignments

There are four ways that students in this course will apply their study of philosophical thinking to the dynamics of elementary school classroom learning communities. Each will be evaluated by the instructor based on the level of quality, thoughtfulness, creativity and completeness.

1. **Revising discussion templates and facilitating eight circle discussions in a designated 3rd, 4th or 5th grade classroom.** 40% of the grade.
   
   The goal of this course is to prepare students to become skillful and effective facilitators of philosophical discussions with children. To this end, university students will be evaluated on their ability to:
   
   • Lead an introductory discussion with children to brainstorm rules that encourage collaboration over the next seven weeks of the outreach period.
   • Revise seven existing discussion templates to personalize each discussion, create an effective opening, a sequence of philosophical questions, and a strategy for closure.
   • Lead discussions using effective facilitating strategies covered in class.
   • Transition the children to reflective journal writing after each discussion.

2. **Creating one original discussion template.** 20% of the grade.
   
   Each university student will create an original discussion template that links a philosophical concept with either a published illustrated children’s book story or an original two-minute play. The original discussion template will be final drafted and sent as an attachment by email by week nine of the term. It will include elements of templates used in this course; including philosophical guidelines, ideas for introduction and closure, a question set, and ideas for possible extensions and enrichment.

   Refer to the handout, “Original Lesson Plans” for details.

3. **Reading children’s journals and writing thoughtful responses.** 20% of the course grade.

   University students will collect journals from half of the classroom of children each week to take home and read. They will respond to each student with personal comments related to the philosophical topics raised; and choose two or three journals each week to write longer, more comprehensive responses.

   Undergraduates will also revise a *Letter of Introduction* to the children and their families, to be distributed by each classroom teacher prior to the first circle discussion.

4. **Writing weekly reflections that describe the experience of leading eight circle discussions.** 20% of the course grade.

   University students will write thoughtful reflections that describe their experiences each week leading a discussion with children. Although written reflections can, and should, be done in an informal, informational style, they will also be carefully edited for final draft. The instructor will read them each week in order to gain further knowledge of the challenges and successes experienced by students in the course.

   Each of eight reflections will be posted in the Blackboard Discussion Board. Length of each post: approximately one page of draft, or between 500 to 800 words. Students will read at least two other reflection posts each week and write short responses to them on Discussion Board strands.

   Students leading discussions on Monday or Tuesday will post their written reflections by 8 p.m. Tuesday evening. Students leading Wednesday discussions will post their reflections by 8 p.m. Wednesday evening.

   Refer to the handout, “Reflection Topics”.

Documents.
Optional:  An evaluation of a peer facilitator leading a classroom discussion with children.

University students may, if they wish, travel to another school or visit another classroom in their designated school, to evaluate a peer from our class leading a discussion with children. Their evaluation can involve informal oral feedback after the experience; and include a written evaluation highlighting the facilitator’s strengths and areas for improvement.

Refer to the handout, “Evaluating a Student Facilitator or Team”.

A note about grades.

This instructor prefers to minimize the importance of letter grades as a primary way for students to determine their success in this course. However, the protocol for courses of this kind is to assign a letter grade at the end of the term. There will be many moments for feedback and evaluation given to students during the course: during class discussions, during the reading of weekly reflections, when students share excerpts from children’s journals along with their written responses, and during times when the instructor and GTF visit elementary school classrooms while philosophical discussions are in progress.

Students in this course who demonstrate quality work, preparation and collaboration in the four areas outlined in the section, “Course Assignments”, will receive an ‘A’ grade. Students who have missed major components of the course assignments will have an opportunity to make up work or revise substandard assignments, based on the instructor’s suggestions. Students who, at the end the term, have submitted substandard work or still have missed key assignments will receive a C grade or lower.

Classroom Outreach

- Students will visit their assigned 3rd, 4th or 5th grade classroom to introduce themselves and brainstorm rules with the children for conducting effective circle discussions during week 3.
- Students will visit their assigned classroom on a Monday Tuesday or Wednesday during weeks 4 through 10 to lead 40 to 45 minute discussions, each focused on a philosophical theme. A 15-20 minute time for independent journal writing will follow each discussion.

(Specific days and times for weekly visits will be determined by undergraduates and classroom teachers.)

Week-by-Week Calendar of Activities and Assignments

IMPORTANT NOTE ABOUT THE SYLLABUS GRID BELOW: Please treat this grid as a work-in-progress, where activities and assignments may change based upon the instructor’s goals and weekly input from undergraduates. Blackboard Announcements will be used weekly to update students on any changes to the syllabus.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Themes/Activities</th>
<th>Assigned Reading for the coming week</th>
<th>Other Assignments for the coming week</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Week One</td>
<td>1/5 - Introduction to teaching philosophy for children curriculum. - How to create a philosophical discussion template from a picture book. - Survey of picture books and dialogues. - Getting into working groups. - Practice story #1: Runaway Bunny.</td>
<td>- Wartenberg, Preface, Ch. 1-3. - Read The Name Jar. Bring the book to class. - Write down key philosophical questions. Then download and read the discussion template for The Name Jar. Compare.</td>
<td>- Bring your revised discussion template for The Name Jar to class. - If you haven’t yet done this, fill out and bring to class the Criminal Background Check form. - Let Paul know your available times to lead weekly class discussions. Block out 2 1/2 slots on Mon., Tues. or Wed. morning.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week</td>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Tasks</td>
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| 1/7  |      | - Overview of different philosophical themes and approaches.  
       - Small group practice at leading circle discussions: *The Name Jar*.  
       - Discuss Chapters 3-4 in Wartenberg.  
       - Philosophical journals are passed out, along with insert pages.  
| 1/12 | Small group practice at leading circle discussions: *Frederick*.  
       - Discuss Chapters 4-5 in Wartenberg.  
       - Focus on facilitating techniques for philosophical discussions.  
       - How to create a letter of introduction.  
       - Preparing for teachers’ visit to class this Wednesday.  
| 1/14 | Visit by classroom teachers.  
       - Placements are determined; days and times for weekly discussions; directions to the school; contact information exchanged.  
       - Letters of Introductions given to teachers.  
       - Day and time is set for a first visit to the classroom next week.  
       - Discuss philosophical themes in *The Araboolies of Liberty Street*.  
       - Practice time leading your first children’s discussion in a classroom. Focus on opening strategies, encouraging peer responses, and closure.  
| 1/19 | No university class today. Instead ... First visit to classrooms this week.  
       - Topics include:  
         - *What are philosophical discussions?*  
         - *What rules should we have in place to create the best possible discussions?*  
       - Read Wartenberg, Ch. 8  
       - Read the chapter on courage from *The Socrates Cafe*.  
       - Read *Dragons & Giants*. Bring book to class.  
       - Read 2-minute play, *Who’s the Bravest of Them All?* Bring a print copy to class.  
       - Read discussion template for *Dragons & Giants*. Make notes. Revise the template and bring your revised version in print form to class.  

Write a reflection #1 about your experience leading this week’s discussion. Post your reflection on the weekly Discussion Board strand by Tues. 8 p.m. Read and respond to at least two peers in class. (Due Wed. 8 p.m. for those leading Wed. discussions in classrooms.)
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<th>Week Four</th>
<th>1/21</th>
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| - Discussion of first experiences in leading a classroom circle.  
  - Philosophical theme #1: Bravery.  
  Book story: *Dragons & Giants*  
  Play: *Who’s the Bravest of Them All?*  
  Teaching Ethics: *What does it mean to be brave? What does it mean to be a hero?*  
| - Finish revising your discussion template for *Dragons & Giants.*  
  - Practice facilitating a philosophical discussion about the nature of bravery with two or more adults in the days preceding your classroom discussion. |

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<tr>
<th>Week Four</th>
<th>1/26-28</th>
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| - Lead a children’s circle discussion #1: *What does it mean to be brave?*  
  - Collect half of the classroom journals to take home, read and write responses.  
| - View Harvard University's JUSTICE, episode 7, part one.  
  [www.justiceharvard.org](http://www.justiceharvard.org)  
  - Download and read and bring to class the two-minute play, *A Difficult Choice*  
  - Read discussion template for “*Is It Always Wrong to Lie?*” Make notes. Revise the template and bring your revised version in print form to class.  
| - Read half of your students’ philosophical journals. Write comments in each one; choose two or three to write longer, more elaborate responses.  
  - Write a reflection #2 about your experience leading this week’s discussion. Post your reflection on the weekly Discussion Board strand by Tues. 8 p.m. Read and respond to at least two peers in class. (Due Wed. 8 p.m. for those leading Wed. discussions in classrooms.) |

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<th>1/28</th>
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| - Share experiences leading circle discussions. Share children’s journals.  
  - Brainstorm ways to improve facilitating discussions for next week.  
  - Philosophical theme #2: The ethics of lying versus telling the truth.  
  Play: *A Difficult Choice.*  
  Possible panel of past undergraduate students in PHL 399.  
| - Finish revising your discussion template for *Is It Always Wrong to Lie?*  
  - Practice facilitating a philosophical discussion about the ethics of lying versus telling the truth with two or more adults in the days preceding your classroom discussion. |

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<th>Week Five</th>
<th>2/2-4</th>
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| - Lead a children’s circle discussion #2: *Is it always wrong to lie?*  
  - Collect half of the classroom journals to take home, read and write responses.  
| - Read the chapter on friendship from *The Socrates Cafe.*  
  - Read *Owl and the Moon.* Bring book to class.  
  - Read the two-minute play, *The Sleep Over.* Bring a print copy to class.  
  - Read discussion template for *Owl and the Moon* and *The Sleep Over.* Make notes. Revise one of the templates and bring your printed copy to class.  
| - Read half of your students’ philosophical journals. Write comments in each one; choose two or three to write longer, more elaborate responses.  
  - Write a reflection #3 about your experience leading this week’s discussion. Post your reflection on the weekly Discussion Board strand by Tues. 8 p.m. Read and respond to at least two peers in class. (Due Wed. 8 p.m. for those leading Wed. discussions in classrooms.) |
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Weekly Overview</th>
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| 2/4        | - Share experiences leading circle discussions. Share children’s journals.  
- Brainstorm ways to improve facilitating discussions for next week.  
Teaching epistemology: What does it mean to be friends? What do we know to be true? |
| Week Six   |                 |
| 2/9-11     | - Lead a children’s circle discussion #3: What does it mean to be friends? What do we know to be true?  
- Collect half of the classroom journals to take home, read and write responses. |
| 2/11       | - Share experiences leading circle discussions. Share children’s journals.  
- Brainstorm ways to improve facilitating discussions for next week.  
- Philosophical theme #4: *Do Animals Have Rights?*  
Play: *The Science Project*.  
Teaching ethics: Should we extend the idea of basic rights to include animals? |
| Week Seven |                 |
| 2/17-18    | (NOTE: Monday February 16 is an elementary school holiday. You may need to make arrangements with your classroom teacher for a different discussion time.)  
- Lead a children’s circle discussion #4: *Do animals have rights?*  
- Collect half of the classroom journals to take home, read and write responses. |

Wartenberg, Chapter 15  
- Read *Emily’s Art*. Bring the book to class.  
- Read discussion template for *Emily’s Art*. Make notes. Revise the template and bring your printed copy to class.  
Read half of your students’ philosophical journals. Write comments in each one; choose two or three to write longer, more elaborate responses.  
Write a reflection #4 about your experience leading this week’s discussion. Post your reflection on the weekly Discussion Board strand by Tues. 8 p.m. Read and respond to at least two peers in class. (Due Wed. 8 p.m. for those leading Wed. discussions in classrooms.)
### Week Eight 2/23-25

- Share experiences leading circle discussions. Share children’s journals.  
- Brainstorm ways to improve facilitating discussions for next week.  
- Philosophical theme #5: The nature of art.  
  Teaching aesthetics: *What is art? Who is an artist? Can we evaluate the quality of a work of art?*

#### 2/18

- Lead a children’s circle discussion #5: *What is art? Who is an artist? Can we evaluate the quality of a work of art?*

#### 2/25

- Collect half of the classroom journals to take home, read and write responses.

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### Week Nine 3/2-4

- Share experiences leading circle discussions. Share children’s journals.  
- Brainstorm ways to improve facilitating discussions for next week.  
- Philosophical theme #6: Gender Roles.  
  Play: *Playing With Dolls.*

#### 3/4

- Lead a children’s circle discussion #6: *What Does It Mean to Be a Girl or a Boy?*

#### 3/2

- Collect half of the classroom journals to take home, read and write responses.

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- Finish revising your discussion template for *Emily’s Art.*

- Practice facilitating a philosophical discussion about whether we can evaluate the quality of a work of art with two or more adults in the days preceding your classroom discussion.

#### 3/11

- Download and read the two-minute play, *Playing With Dolls.* Bring a print copy to class.

- Read discussion template for *Playing With Dolls.* Make notes. Revise the template and bring your printed copy to class.

- Write a reflection #6 about your experience leading this week’s discussion. Post your reflection on the weekly Discussion Board strand by Tues. 8 p.m. Read and respond to at least two peers in class. (Due Wed. 8 p.m. for those leading Wed. discussions in classrooms.)

#### 3/8

- Read half of your students’ philosophical journals. Write comments in each one; choose two or three to write longer, more elaborate responses.

- Write a reflection #7 about your experience leading this week’s discussion. Post your reflection on the weekly Discussion Board strand by Tues. 8 p.m. Read and respond to at least two peers in class. (Due Wed. 8 p.m. for those leading Wed. discussions in classrooms.)

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- Final draft of ORIGINAL discussion template due by Sun. 3/8 at 6 p.m. Printed copy brought to class Wed. 3/11.
### Week Ten

3/9-11

- **Play** *(title to be determined)*.
- **Role play**: *The Spruce Valley Town Hall Meeting*
  Focus Question: What responsibility do we have to care for the environment?
- Practice facilitating a philosophical discussion about issues related to environmental justice with two or more adults in the days preceding your classroom discussion.

Read half of your students’ philosophical journals. Write comments in each one; choose two or three to write longer, more elaborate responses.

- Write a reflection #8 about your experience leading this week’s discussion. Post your reflection on the weekly Discussion Board strand by Tues. 8 p.m. Read and respond to at least two peers in class. (Due Wed. 8 p.m. for those leading Wed. discussions in classrooms.)

3/11

- Possible visit to class of 4th and 5th graders for a philosophical discussion together.
- Presentation of original discussion templates. To be handed in to the instructor.
- Evaluation of the course.
- Final goodbyes.
- Return classroom journals to elementary classroom students.

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**THE NEXT THREE SECTIONS ARE VERY IMPORTANT!  PLEASE READ CAREFULLY.**

1. **Attendance and Absence Guidelines**

Most of the activities each week are driven by class discussions and presentations that cannot be duplicated by reading over another student’s notes. It is imperative that you make a commitment to attend every class. Excused absences will be made for sickness or family emergency. Other school or social functions that conflict with attendance in this class will not count as excused.

More than one unexcused absence during the term will result in a failing letter grade.

Students are expected to let the instructor know in advance of class that they will be unable to attend. A simple email or phone message is sufficient. Because some students are working together in teams, students anticipating an absence must contact the team member and classroom teacher as soon as possible.

Regarding sickness, winter term is high flu and cold season, especially for students spending time in elementary school classrooms. Periods of increased work load create additional stresses. Therefore students need to take care of themselves. In this regard, please do not come to class sick.

2. **Absences From Elementary Classroom Discussions**
During weeks three through ten of the term, students need to let both the course instructor and the participating classroom teacher know of an absence in advance of the scheduled discussion day; preferably a 24 hours notice of an absence rather than on the day of class. Notice of an absence should happen in two ways:
- through an email sent to the classroom teacher and the course instructor
- in a phone message sent to the classroom teacher (who might not be checking emails on that day.)

In addition, a student who knows he or she will be absent from a classroom discussion has a responsibility to send that week’s Discussion Template by email as a text or PDF file to the classroom teacher in order for that day’s lesson to move forward. The discussion can still go on in the absence of the student facilitator in three ways:
- by asking the classroom teacher to lead the discussion
- by making arrangements for another student in class to lead the discussion
- by making arrangements for the course instructor (Paul) to lead the discussion
In addition, a student missing a discussion needs to make arrangements with the classroom teacher, or another student in class, to retrieve children’s journals for that week.

3. Representing the University as a Guest in the Public Schools
When visiting public schools, university students will treat all members of the school community with a high degree of respect and professionalism. This includes:
- Outward appearance and demeanor.
- Appropriate language during elementary classroom discussions.
- Verbal and written communications made to the school community.
- Weekly collaboration with the classroom teacher.
- Appropriate written responses to children’s journal comments.
As a representative of the University of Oregon and, in particular, the Philosophy and Education Foundations programs, students in this course have a responsibility to set a high standard in their interactions with children and teachers.

Expected University Classroom Behavior

Laptops, iPads Smart phones and other computer devices may only be used during class activities for academic work, note taking and sharing. Students are asked to put away or turn off their computers at all other times. In most cases, the instructor will ask for printed copies of handouts, discussion templates and written assignments (except for weekly reflections, which will be emailed to the instructor).

Please read the Diversity section below. The attributes listed under Diversity apply to basic principles of classroom behavior during the term. In addition, all students are subject to the regulations stipulated in the UO Student Conduct Code, which can be accessed at: http://www.uoregon.edu/~conduct/

Diversity

It is the policy of the University of Oregon to support and value diversity. To do so requires that we:
- respect the dignity and essential worth of all individuals.
- promote a culture of respect throughout the University community.
- respect the privacy, property, and freedom of others.
• reject bigotry, discrimination, violence, or intimidation of any kind.
• practice personal and academic integrity and expect it from others.
• promote the diversity of opinions, ideas and backgrounds which is the lifeblood of the university.

**Documented Disability**

Appropriate accommodations will be provided for students with documented disabilities. If you have a documented disability and require accommodation, arrange to meet with the course instructor within the first two weeks of the term. The documentation of your disability must come in writing from the Accessible Education Center in the Office of Academic Advising and Student Services. Disabilities may include (but are not limited to) neurological impairment, orthopedic impairment, traumatic brain injury, visual impairment, chronic medical conditions, emotional/psychological disabilities, hearing impairment, and learning disabilities. For more information on Accessible Education Center, please see [http://aec.uoregon.edu](http://aec.uoregon.edu).

**Mandatory Reporting**

The UO is committed to providing an environment free of all forms of discrimination and sexual harassment, including sexual assault, domestic and dating violence and gender-based stalking. If you (or someone you know) has experienced or experiences gender-based violence (intimate partner violence, attempted or completed sexual assault, harassment, coercion, stalking, etc.), know that you are not alone. UO has staff members trained to support survivors in navigating campus life, accessing health and counseling services, providing academic and housing accommodations, helping with legal protective orders, and more.

Please be aware that all UO employees are required reporters. This means that if you tell me about a situation, I may have to report the information to my supervisor or the Office of Affirmative Action and Equal Opportunity. Although I have to report the situation, you will still have options about how your case will be handled, including whether or not you wish to pursue a formal complaint. Our goal is to make sure you are aware of the range of options available to you and have access to the resources you need.

If you wish to speak to someone confidentially, you can call 541-346-SAFE, UO’s 24-hour hotline, to be connected to a confidential counselor to discuss your options. You can also visit the SAFE website at safe.uoregon.edu.

**Academic Misconduct Policy**

All students are subject to the regulations stipulated in the UO Student Conduct Code: [http://studentlife.uoregon.edu/StudentConductandCommunityStandards/StudentConductCode/tabid/69/Default.aspx](http://studentlife.uoregon.edu/StudentConductandCommunityStandards/StudentConductCode/tabid/69/Default.aspx). This code represents a compilation of important regulations, policies, and procedures pertaining to student life. It is intended to inform students of their rights and responsibilities during their association with this institution, and to provide general guidance for enforcing those regulations and policies essential to the educational and research missions of the University. Fall 2012 Page 3.

**Conflict Resolution**
Several options, both informal and formal, are available to resolve conflicts for students who believe they have been subjected to or have witnesses bias, unfairness, or other improper treatment.

It is important to exhaust the administrative remedies available to you including discussing the conflict with the specific individual, contacting the Department Head, or within the College of Education you can contact Ron Beghetto, Associate Dean for Academic Affairs, at 346-1534 beghetto@uoregon.edu or Surendra Subramani, Diversity Coordinator, at 346-1782 or surendra@uoregon.edu.

Outside the College, you can contact:
* UO Bias Response Team: 346-1139 or http://bias.uoregon.edu/whatbrt.htm
* Conflict Resolution Services 346 -0617 or http://studentlife.uoregon.edu/SupportandEducation/ConflictResolutionServices/tabid/134/Default.aspx
* Affirmative Action and Equal Opportunity: 346-3123 or http://aaeo.uoregon.edu/

**Grievance Policy**

A student or group of students of the College of Education may appeal decisions or actions pertaining to admissions, programs, evaluation of performance and program retention and completion. Students who decide to file a grievance should follow the student grievance procedure, or alternative ways to file a grievance outlined in the Student Grievance Policy http://neweducation.uoregon.edu/academics/student-grievance or enter search: student grievance.

**In Case of Inclement Weather**

In the event the University operates on a curtailed schedule or closes, UO media relations will notify the Eugene-Springfield area radio and television stations as quickly as possible. In addition, a notice regarding the university’s schedule will be posted on the UO main home page (in the “News” section) at http://www.uoregon.edu.

If an individual class must be canceled due to inclement weather, illness, or other reason, a notice will be posted on Blackboard or via email. During periods of inclement weather, please check Blackboard and your email rather than contact department personnel. Due to unsafe travel conditions, departmental staff may be limited and unable to handle the volume of calls from you and others.

**Course Incomplete Policy**

Students are expected to be familiar with university policy regarding grades of “incomplete” and the time line for completion. For details on the policy and procedures regarding incompletes, consult the UO Catalog or http://registrar.uoregon.edu/incomplete_policy