Credit Rating 20 credits, SCQF 11

Course Description
The general aim of the taught course is to consider the changing relationship between adult education and lifelong learning and to explore the possibilities in the current context of realigning both for an agenda informed by commitments to social justice, equality and greater democracy. One of the implications of the rise of lifelong learning in the UK, Europe and beyond has been to reassert a human resource agenda which prioritises training for work. The broader interest in adult learning for personal, social and political purposes has been marginalised in this process. It is important therefore to analyse the ambiguities and ambivalence of lifelong learning rather than assuming it is simply a “good thing”. The content of the course will include theoretical analysis, policy critique and practical examples of educational activities which are aimed at creating a better world. Selective reference will be made to both Scottish and international examples as well as the recent and current publications and research interests of the tutor. Discussion and debate will be encouraged – and expected!

Student preparation is indicated in the programme below and it is essential that the reading tasks are done prior to each session. Most, if not all of the readings will be available on Learn or online. Further reading is indicated at the end of the programme.

Learning Outcomes
On completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Understand why critical education is desirable and possible.
- Explore different ways in which power is expressed in educational activity.
- Critically evaluate conventional understandings of adult education and lifelong learning.
- Apply critical theory to an educational setting.
- Articulate a vision of how education can make a difference to the lives of the oppressed and exploited.

Teaching
10 x 2.5 hours = 25 hours
Lectures, group activities and discussions, student group presentations.
Assessment
One essay of 4,000 words.

Content
Week 1
Introduction: What is Adult Education?
This session focuses on introducing the teaching programme and outlining the course requirements. Students will be asked to introduce themselves and to indicate how their backgrounds and experience relate to their interest in adult education and lifelong learning. We will also explore different ways of understanding adult education with a particular emphasis on the critical tradition. In preparation for this task it is essential to do the reading specified below.

Week 2
Perspectives on Adults Learning
What is the difference, if any, between the ways in which children and adults learn? Sometimes a distinction is made between 'pedagogy' and 'andragogy'. Does this make sense? It is necessary to examine the interest in the adult learner's identity and experience carefully and critically – and, moreover, to recognise that different approaches to adult education construct the notion of the adult in different ways. How can we relate individual experience to social and cultural context - and what does this do to the learner?

Week 3
From 'Adult Education' to 'Lifelong Learning'
Lifelong learning has now become a ubiquitous part of the rhetoric of contemporary educational policy, research and professional discourse. To what extent is the dominant version of lifelong learning an aspect of globalisation? What are the forces and interests that drive it – and contest it? Much is made of the importance of generating human capital in order to sustain national competitiveness in today's global market. In all of this, what has become of adult education - and the agency of the educator?

Week 4
Making power visible: the role of adult education
A distinctive feature of the critical tradition of adult education is that it has aimed to be a resource in the struggle for social justice and democratic change by empowering communities. But what problems do communities face and what do we mean by power, how does it work and what, if anything, can adult education do about it? In this session we will draw on different ways of thinking about power and their implications for achieving empowerment.

Week 5
Gender Violence - Rethinking Masculinity
Dr. Laura Ruiz-Eugenio, Marie Cure Research Fellow, University of Edinburgh and Centre for Research in Theories and Practices that Overcome Inequalities (CREA), University of Barcelona. Dr. Oriol Rios, Associate Professor University of Barcelona and CREA.

Cultural power permeates relationships between men and women. Dominant versions of masculinity feature aggressiveness, risk, high status, domination and unequal gender social practices. In this session we will look at some of the research undertaken internationally on this subject and the alternative masculinities promoted in educational work to challenge the former.
Week 6
Adult Education For Social Justice: A Freirean Perspective
Since the publication of his seminal work *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* in 1972, Paulo Freire has presented a challenge to adult educators to consider the underlying purpose of their work as educators. Freire’s influence on adult education and adult literacy has been profound particularly by inspiring an interest in popular education. In this session we will consider some of his core ideas and look at some examples of his work in practice.

Week 7
Adult Literacy: Theory and Practice
Concerns about the levels of literacy and numeracy in adults have become ubiquitous in policy in the ‘developed’ world, but the debate is constricted by a number of assumptions. These assumptions include: viewing literacy as set of skills, that literacy levels are easy to assess, that literacy is a neutral term and that increased levels of literacy skill will lead to more active and employable citizens. What are the alternative ways of thinking about literacy that will contribute to a more critical and creative understanding? What are the implications for practice when we think about literacies (plural) rather than literacy (singular)?

Week 8
Citizenship, Democracy and Education
What we mean by citizenship and how it might relate to democracy is the focus of this session. Education for citizenship presupposes some consensus on what kind of society we desire to live in and therefore what kinds of knowledge, skills and values are worth teaching and learning. Achieving this is highly problematic, however, because what citizenship means and its relationship with democracy are far from clear or agreed. In this session we will examine the different ways citizenship is conceived and what this implies for educational practice and democracy.

Week 9
Planning Your Essay
All students should come to this session with an idea of what they want to write about and with some ideas of how they will go about it and what literature is available for resourcing the essay.

Week 10
Transforming identity: an exploration
Helping adults acquire new and more powerful identities is central to the critical tradition of adult education. But acquiring positive identities is always a difficult and fraught process. In this session we will focus on what helps people continue their ‘learning journeys’ as well as begin them. In addition, we will explore the contribution of adult education to critical thinking and the capacity of individuals to act individually and severally.

Week 11
Review and Course Evaluation
In this final session there is an opportunity to review the material that we have covered over the course, to assess what has been learned, to identify further themes for study (where appropriate) and to evaluate the programme.
Readings
Specific chapters and journal articles will be recommended in each session. However, the books and journals listed here are generally relevant for this course.

Themed Further Reading

**Lifelong Learning And Adult Education**


Coffield F (1999) 'Breaking the consensus: lifelong learning as social control', *British educational research journal* 25(4), pp 479-499

Field, J (2004) ‘Does adult education have a future in the era of lifelong learning?’, *Concept* 14 (1) 3-6

Field J (2000) *Lifelong learning and the new educational order* Stoke on Trent: Trentham Books


**Adult Learning**


**Radical Adult Education For Empowerment**


Adult Education and Citizenship


Adult Literacies


See ESRC website: [www.education.ed.ac.uk/hce/ABE-seminars](http://www.education.ed.ac.uk/hce/ABE-seminars).
Journals

Concept - http://concept.lib.ed.ac.uk/
The Encyclopaedia of Informal Education - http://www.infed.org/
European research on adult learning and education - http://www.rela.ep.liu.se/

**NB** A wide range of journals in educational studies and research as well as other disciplines (e.g. sociology, politics, policy analysis, radical philosophy, cultural studies) are also relevant to this course.

For all course relevant regulations see the appropriate MSc. Programme Handbook

UPDATED: 15 August 2014