

Educational Studies Major

The major in Educational Studies challenges students to think deeply and critically about the ways in which schools socialize as well as educate citizens. It provides ongoing opportunities for conceptual integration across disciplines and domains of theory, policy, and practice. This interdisciplinary approach encourages students to study the impact of political, historical, cultural, economic, and social forces on education.

Requirements for the proposed major in Educational Studies press students to develop a solid foundation in learning theory, the social foundations of education, as well as a global perspective on education. All majors take one of the foundational courses offered by the department. Following this, each student works closely with a department faculty member to develop a course plan that meets the requirements for the major and fits the student's interests.

Individuals who complete a major in educational studies are prepared to integrate and apply knowledge to guide personal action and development, regardless of their ultimate career trajectory. The major is an excellent option for students who are interested in issues related to education but who are not planning to earn a teaching credential at Vassar. Students who earn a teaching credential at Vassar are required to major in another discipline and will not be eligible for the Educational Studies major.

To major in educational studies, students must complete 9.5 courses: (I=intensive)

- One educational foundations course designed to introduce students to critical debates about the nature and purposes of U.S. education
 - EDUC 162 Education and Opportunity in the U.S.OR
 - EDUC 235 Issues in Contemporary Education
- **One course from Cluster 1: *Pedagogy and Learning***
 - EDUC 237 Early Childhood Education: Theory and Practice
 - EDUC 250 Introduction to Special Education
 - EDUC 283(I) Our Lives, Our World: Teaching and Learning About Human Rights Alongside Youth
 - EDUC 286 Introduction to Inclusive Pedagogies in Quantitative Education
 - EDUC 350 The Teaching of Reading
 - EDUC 351 The Teaching of Reading: Curriculum Development in Childhood Education
 - EDUC 353 Pedagogies of Difference
 - EDUC 361 Math and Science in the Elementary Classroom
 - EDUC 373 Adolescent Literacy
 - EDUC 382 Reframing Literacy for the 21st Century

- **EDUC 392 Multidisciplinary Methods in Adolescent Education**

- **One course from Cluster 2: *Domestic Issues in Education***
 - EDUC 215(I) Intersections of Our Homes, Schools, and Communities
 - EDUC 232 Accessing the Ivory Tower
 - EDUC 251(I) Community Organizing and Schools
 - EDUC 255 Race, Representation, and Resistance
 - EDUC 261(I) Intergroup Dialogue on Race and Migration
 - EDUC 263 The Adolescent in American Society
 - EDUC 269 Constructing School Kids and Street Kids
 - EDUC 270 Undocumented, Unapologetic, Unafraid
 - EDUC 279 Rethinking Gender in an Educational Context
 - EDUC 282 (I) Community Schools Research & Practice
 - EDUC 340 Disability Studies in Education: Research, Policy, and Practice
 - EDUC 355 The School-to-Military Pipeline
 - EDUC 367 Urban Education Reform
 - EDUC 369 Social Citizenship in an Urban Age
 - EDUC 380 Civic Engagement in U.S. Education
 - EDUC 386 Ghetto Schooling

- **One course from Cluster 3: *Global Perspectives on Education***
 - EDUC 105 Conceptualizing Latin and Latino/a America
 - EDUC 248 The Human Rights of Children
 - EDUC 256 Bilingualism and/in K-12 Public Education
 - EDUC 261(I) Intergroup Dialogue on Race and Migration
 - EDUC 270 Undocumented, Unapologetic, Unafraid
 - EDUC 271 Hello, Dear Enemy
 - EDUC 275 International and Comparative Education
 - EDUC 278 Education for Peace, Justice, and Human Rights
 - EDUC 281(I) Finding Place - Refugee Youth Schooling Experiences in Athens, Greece
 - EDUC 283(I) Our Lives, Our World: Teaching and Learning About Human Rights
Alongside Youth
 - EDUC 288 Education and Development in Haiti (I)
 - EDUC 289 Education and Development in Haiti (I)
 - EDUC 322 Afro-Indo-Anglo Caribbean: Education, Feminism, Indigeneity and Migration
 - EDUC 387 Science, Spirituality, and Peace Ed: Addressing Climate Change

- **Two additional electives.** These can be additional courses from one of the three clusters listed above, or:
 - Course from another department upon approval*
 - Transferred from another institution upon approval*
 - May include up to one unit of graded 1/2 unit courses
 - May include up to one unit of graded 100-level courses

* Complete **Request for Outside Department/Institution Credit** form

- **CEL Unit: EDUC 290 (.5 credit)**
- **One course designed to develop students' skills in conducting research:**
 - EDUC 365 Social Science Research Methods
 - AFRS 299 Research Methods
 - ANTH 245 The Ethnographer's Craft
 - SOCI 254 Research Methods
- Advanced Seminar: EDUC 384
- All Education students have the option of completing a capstone thesis or project during their senior year. Students choosing a capstone project or thesis are required to take EDUC 302/303. Students not choosing to do a capstone thesis or project must complete an additional 300-level education course.

Additional requirements:

- After declaration of the major, all courses taken toward the major must be graded. The only exception to this is when credit is earned through a Vassar JYA program, such as that in Ireland, are ungraded.
- A maximum of 2 units can be transferred from another institution (including JYA programs like Ireland) to count towards major.

Application Procedure:

- Complete "Major in Educational Studies" application form and turn in to department administrator.
- Department reviews application and assigns advisor to student.
- Student completes "Declaration of Major" form for Registrar.
- Student makes appointment with advisor and completes draft of "Yellow Form" to bring to appointment.
- Student and advisor meet to develop course plan and select thesis topic.

Schedule for Major Thesis or Project:

- April Junior year – student submits 3 potential thesis subjects
- 3rd week September Senior Year – Annotated bibliography and proposed Project/Thesis Student identifies another faculty advisor to be the second reader for thesis
- Post October break – literature review due on Monday
- Early December – Methodology Due

- December Study Week – Round table discussion of thesis topic with advisors
- Early February – First chapter of analysis due to advisor
- Post Spring break – Thesis draft due on Monday upon return from break
- Late April – Thesis due to department as a .pdf file and 1 paper copy
- Study week Monday - Thesis Presentation

Thesis:

- Thesis should contain a minimum of 5 chapters (introduction, literature review, methodology/methods, analysis/discussion, and conclusion) and a minimum of 50 pages. If this is a group thesis, each group member needs to be responsible for one analysis chapter (a minimum of 10 double-spaced pages and not to exceed 15).
- For curriculum project - untaught written curriculum should be the same length of a thesis. For an implemented project, expectation is at least 20 pages with the additional pages for reflection.
- Thesis must be graded (cannot be taken ungraded)
- Requirements for thesis earning “Distinction”:
 - Minimum grade for thesis A-
 - All of the departmental deadlines must be met
 - Must be nominated by Education Faculty member who has read the thesis and have unanimous support from advisors
 - Thesis must add a new insight into the topic and present a cohesive argument supported by evidence. Student must show they are able to independently move forward.

Departmental honors:

To graduate with departmental honors in Education, the candidate must meet the following criteria:

- An overall GPA of 3.5 and a GPA of 3.7 or better in Educational studies courses.
- Scholastic excellence as evidenced by (a) strong performance in the student’s overall work at Vassar; (b) the passing “With Distinction” of the senior thesis or project and/or (c) superior academic performance in courses in the department.
- The departmental faculty’s sense of the student’s serious commitment and comprehensive grasp of the scholarly study of education.
- Students must show engagement in department activities and involvement with education programs through the department or community (such as VCUEI).
- Students must demonstrate leadership within the department and/or with fellow students