Education and Contemporary Culture

The unique international program of study at the Faculty of Education of the University of Lower Silesia introduces students in an accessible and friendly way to contemporary educational theories and issues critical for the future of pedagogical practice. The program includes an intensive practical component, which enables students to experience issues discussed in class in their concrete local real-life contexts; students will visit places connected to the learning of European cultural heritage, working with youth, adult education, teaching and learning of diversity, civic education, special needs education and they will discuss contemporary ethical challenges to pedagogical practice in global contexts of change.

A City for Learning

International students benefit from the historic city of Wrocław, a magical urban space and Poland's fourth largest city (640,000 inhabitants). This intellectual hub, where every sixth resident is a student, is one of the most dynamically developing cities in Europe. As the organizer of major European events, such as the 2012 European Soccer Championships and the 2016 European Culture Capital, Wrocław offers a lively and inspiring learning context where our international students can feel the pulse of a transforming European metropolis.

Courses

**Field Research Seminar (5 ECTS)**

This course combines class-room study with on-site critical and experiential learning of historical and cultural heritage. We are using the urban space of Wrocław and the region of Lower Silesia as laboratories in which we investigate the past and its impact on the present dynamics of this unique Central European cultural area. Students will spend most of the time visiting and studying local sites that embody the multi-layered European histories, memories and identities, including the Książ Castle, the Krzyżowa Foundation for Mutual Understanding in Europe, the UNESCO-inscribed medieval Churches of Peace, the former concentration camp of Gross-Rosen, the Wrocław Jewish Cemetery, or the UNESCO-inscribed modernist architectural masterpiece - Centennial Hall.

**Learning in Life Course (3 ECTS)**

In this course, we will introduce 'old' and 'new' ideas of learning and our discussion will focus on the following questions: What is learning? How do we learn? Where do we learn? How is learning intertwined with our everyday life? We will build on contemporary adult learning theories to help students become familiar with places, resources, practices and barriers to
learning. As a result, students will gain competencies that enable them to control the process of their own learning, and improve their ability to become critical and self-directed learners.

**Pedagogy of Diversity in Practice (4 ECTS)**

This course discusses practical approaches to socio-cultural interpretation of difference and diversity in educational settings. The course will improve students’ understanding of European cultural and linguistic diversity and help them gain skills that support learning in bilingual and multilingual environments. Our discussions will include various mechanisms of inclusion and exclusion in educational processes, with special focus on the role of gender and ethnic stereotypes.

**Emancipatory Pedagogy and Civil Society (3 ECTS)**

The course combines themes and perspectives of critical and emancipation-oriented thought in contemporary pedagogy and includes discussion of topics related to collective actions towards social change. Students will read, reflect upon and discuss pedagogical notions of socially-sensitive and engaged research as well as educational and learning dimensions of civil social action. We will focus on such themes as gender relations, globalization, social inequalities, racism, ethnicity and multiculturalism from the point of view of pedagogical theories and methods aimed at fostering critical learning processes and at involving learners in an autonomous action for change. The course will provide students with an overview of some of the recent civil society initiatives and campaigns in Poland, but it will also give them the chance to bring into the discussion the comparative perspective from their own national and cultural experiences.

**Pedagogy in Philosophical and Critical Contexts (3 ECTS)**
*Michał Kruszelnicki, Wojciech Kruszelnicki*

This course provides students with philosophical foundations of education viewed as a process of building critical reflexivity and civic attitudes. In our readings and discussions, we will focus particularly on those philosophical texts that help improve our understanding of the democratic functions of education and at the same time cultivate critical reflection on established truths and social conventions toward greater justice, democracy and freedom.

**Contemporary Challenges to Ethics (4 ECTS)**
*Jerzy Kochanowicz, Lotar Rasiński, Tomasz Zarębski*

The course discusses main controversies over crucial ethical problems of present-day life, presenting the most important contemporary theoretical approaches to moral and social questions as well as their practical consequences. We will aim at developing critical discussion on social, ethical and bioethical problems, taking into consideration different points of view on these issues. Our discussion will include such topics as: critical attitude in social life, problems of defining life and death (euthanasia, abortion), limits of individual freedom, patterns of life in postmodern society, multiculturalism as a philosophical problem.
**Experiencing Special-Needs Education in Poland (3 ECTS)**  
Małgorzata Sekułowicz, Agnieszka Sekułowicz

This seminar introduces students to new approaches in special-needs education. During interactive and field-based classes, we will visit different educational, therapeutic and rehabilitation facilities, including institutions and organizations which focus on working with children and youth diagnosed with autism, intellectual disabilities and cerebral palsy. We will also meet with adult participants of day-time workshops and full-time rehabilitation institutions. During classes, we will discuss issues and exchange views (discussion panels) on integration and inclusion of people with disabilities based on specific types of disabilities and examples of individuals and families.

**Working with youth – social and psychological aspects of education (3 ECTS)**  
Małgorzata Gamian-Wilk, Dorota Dyjakon

The course introduces students to specific forms of educational work with youth. We will focus on case studies (e.g. problems of school-based bullying, youth from dysfunctional families, youth with behavioral disorders) in order to help students gain skills in diagnosing educational problems. Students will learn how to support both students and teachers in solving educational issues through psychological approaches (e.g. by applying techniques of group conflicts management, tutoring, coaching, or motivating strategies). They will also learn how to prepare and conduct workshops aimed at preventing threats (e.g. discrimination, violence) and at improving competencies (e.g. creativity, social skills, emotional intelligence).

**Foreign Language - Polish (2 ECTS)**

This "survival-level" course of the Polish language focuses on its practical use, including functional everyday Polish (introductions, greetings and wishes, food, cardinal Numbers, etc.), practical task in real-life situations (services, emergency situations, health, shopping, travelling, getting directions, etc.), vocabulary building and pronunciation and Polish culture guide.