



Master of Arts Interdisciplinary Studies (MAIS) 644

Adult Education, Community Leadership, and the Crisis of Democracy (Revision 4)

Status: Replaced with new revision, see the [course listing](#) for the current revision

Delivery mode: [Paced study](#) . Delivered via Brightspace.

Credits: 3

Area of study: Arts

Prerequisites: None

Precluded: None

Faculty: [Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences](#)

Notes: Students in group study courses are advised that this syllabus may vary in key details in each instance of the course. Always refer to the course website for the most up-to-date details on texts, assignment structure, and grading.

Overview

MAIS 644 is a course about adult education and community leadership. It begins from the premise that we live in a time of extraordinary worldwide upheaval and questioning about the fate of the earth. The course includes a discussion and critique of the moral and ethical leadership of those commanding the power domains of business and politics.

Among other things, MAIS 644 considers:

- democracy in our business and community organizations
- the elements of democratic communication (conversation)
- ways to speak and act intelligently as designers of just learning organizations

The fundamental question MAIS 644 addresses is whether we can think beyond the boundaries of “liberal democracy” imaginatively, without abandoning existing forms of parliamentary democracy, human rights frameworks, and pluralist forms of life. Can we deepen our theoretical understanding of democracy, pressing the notion into the realm of workplace organization (perhaps bringing down to earth the old dream that workers could control the means of production) and plumbing the dialogic potential within forms of governance and a dynamic civil society?

Outline

MAIS 644 is divided into six units:

- Unit 1: Basic Conceptual Building Blocks
- Unit 2: Designing the Just Business Organization
- Unit 3: Civil Society as the Pre-eminent Learning Domain
- Unit 4: Adult Educational Leadership for Social Reform: Three Case Studies
- Unit 5: Deliberative Democratic Leaders as Convenors of Dialogue
- Unit 6: Deliberative Democratic Leadership and the Struggle for Recognition

Learning outcomes

By the end of this course, students will be able to:

- appreciate, and understand, the connections between the theoretical perspectives in adult education, as well as community leadership, and the practice of adult education/leadership across multiple contexts,
- engage in dialogue with colleagues and practitioners through various lenses of social and educational theory, with an understanding of their implications for a broad range of social contexts,
- formulate, and articulate, new and emerging perspectives across a wide range of social issues of particular relevance to adult education and community-based leadership, and
- develop mastery of informed self-critical reflection with respect to one's educational and leadership practice across a wide range of social contexts.

Evaluation

To receive credit for this course, students must participate in the online activities, successfully complete the assignments, and achieve a final mark of at least 60 per cent. Students should be familiar with the Master of Arts—Interdisciplinary Studies [grading system](#). Please note that it is students' responsibility to maintain their program status. Any student who receives a grade of "F" in one course, or a grade of "C" in more than one course, may be required to withdraw from the program.

The following table summarizes the evaluation activities and the credit weights associated with them.

Activity	Weight
Online Participation	30%
Narrative Assignment	10%
Literature Search	25%

Activity	Weight
Reflective Essay	35%
Total	100%

Materials

Digital course materials

Links to the following course materials will be made available in the course:

Welton, M. R. (2001). *Little Mosie from the Margaree: A biography of Moses Michael Coady*. Thompson Educational Publishing.

Physical course materials

The following course materials are included in a course package that will be shipped to your home prior to your course's start date:

Seidman, S. (Ed.). (1989). *Jürgen Habermas on society and politics: A reader*. Beacon Press.

Athabasca University Online Materials

Course Home Page: You will find Course Information, your Study Guide, your assignments and upload links to submit your work to your professor on the course home page.

Athabasca University Library: Students are encouraged to browse the Library's website to review the Library collection of journal databases, electronic journals, and digital reference tools: <http://library.athabascau.ca> ↗ .

Important links

- › [Master of Arts in Interdisciplinary Studies](#) ↗
- › [Focus Areas](#) ↗
- › [Courses](#) ↗

> Fees and Funding 

Athabasca University reserves the right to amend course outlines occasionally and without notice. Courses offered by other delivery modes may vary from their individualized study counterparts.

Opened in Revision 4, March 13, 2025

Updated February 5, 2026

View **previous revision** 
