Co-Ordinating Lecturer: Professor Ronald G. Sultana
Value of study unit: 5 ECTS
Mode of Teaching: Group seminars, student presentations, case study approaches
Mode of Assessment: Attendance and participation: 20%; Presentation (group or individual): 30%; Term paper (group or individual): 50%.

Course Outline: This unit sets out to introduce students to the field of comparative education studies, its origins in the early 20th century, and the variety of orientations, trends and schools that have developed since then. The developments in comparative education approaches and paradigms will be linked to parallel debates in epistemology, research methods, and the social sciences more broadly. Students will in particular be required to focus on such areas as: defining comparison; paradigm shifts in comparative education; the use and abuse of comparative education; ideology in comparative education; and methodological and philosophical considerations in comparative education. Our main concern will be to understand education as a social practice and as a world-wide phenomenon, while focusing on education in Malta from an international perspective. Examples, comparisons and cases are selected from a broad range of countries, with special attention being given to the Mediterranean and European regions.

Course Learning Outcomes: By the end of this course, students will be able to address such questions as: ‘What is the purpose of comparison?’ ‘How did comparative education studies begin?’ ‘What were the key debates and issues over time?’ ‘Who were some of the leading figures in comparative education, and what was their respective contribution and legacy?’ ‘What were the main paradigm shifts in the field, and why did these take place?’ ‘Which philosophical currents have had an influence on comparative education?’ ‘What are some of the main pitfalls in comparative education?’ ‘What types of question and evidence provide a legitimate basis for comparison?’ ‘How are the comparative education methods similar to/different from comparative studies in other fields (e.g. sociology, politics, religion, literature, philosophy, economy, social history, cultural studies, cross-cultural psychology)?’ ‘What kind of disciplinary background do comparativists need?’

Requirements: The course combines lectures with student-led discussions, participatory activities, and presentations. Students are required to read session specific material in advance, and to be able to critique them in class discussions. In each session, students will be asked to lead a class discussion with a partner or small group. Student subgroups will be assigned sessions for presentation according to their theme of interest. Each session will have a panel of discussants, but all students are required to actively participate by providing thoughtful, critical and constructive comments. Students are required to submit their final paper on a topic of their choice. The paper should strive to attain the standards associated with journal publications, and should be around 5,000 words in length. References should follow the style indicated in the course Guidebook.
TEXTBOOKS AND READING ASSIGNMENTS

A. Books:

I. General educational theory background:
[Recommended reading for all students, and required reading for all those who have not previously followed courses in educational theory].

Sultana, R.G. (ed.)(2001) *Yesterday’s schools: readings in Maltese educational history*. Malta: PEG, and

II. Textbooks in Comparative Education:
[Students are to choose at least ONE of these books and adopt it as required reading].


**B. Selected Readings**

[Note: these are suggested readings. Students are encouraged to select from these and to find other readings, focusing on their own interests and research focus]

**I. Comparative Education: Definitions and Purpose**

Broadfoot, P.
II. Comparative Education: History, Development and Protagonists


III. Comparative Education and its Philosophical Foundations


IV. Comparative Education and its Contexts


V. Pitfalls for Comparative Education


VI. Examples of Comparative Education


