**EDS 4107: Education, History, and Society**

**Course Lecturer:** Professor Ronald G. Sultana  
**Value of Unit:** 2 ECTS credits  
(followed by 2 ECTS credit taught by Professor Carmel Borg: 4 ECTS in all)  
**Students:** 4th Year Primary Track B.Ed. (Hons.) students

**Course Description:**  
*Education, History, and Society* is based on the fundamental sociological insight that education is a site of struggle for different power groups to establish their agenda for education and for formal schooling. Such struggles take place over a number of issues, including the definition of the aims and purposes of education, access to education, the structures of education systems, the financing of education, what counts as knowledge worth knowing (curriculum), how to teach that knowledge (pedagogy), how to assess knowledge acquisition (forms of assessment), and so on.

Historically, and across most if not all countries, the outcomes of such struggles are determined by the relative power, status, and influence of groups which are identifiable by their class, gender, and ethnicity—and in some cases by their religious, linguistic affiliation, as well as their cultural and sexual identities. The struggles between different interest groups leads to specific forms of accommodation at specific points in time, and these in turn give rise to new tensions in the way the nature of schooling is defined.

This study unit considers some of the struggles over formal education and schooling in Malta across time. The first semester (taught by Professor Ronald G. Sultana) focuses on a historical sociological engagement with some of the key contestations over education, starting with the late Middle Ages and concluding with the comprehensive education reform movement in the late 1970s. The second semester (taught by Professor Carmel Borg) focuses on more recent and contemporary struggles over education.

**Study-unit aims:**  
This study-unit aims to provide student teachers with the conceptual, historical and sociological tools to make sense of the tensions surrounding educational policy-making. Future teachers would thus be in a better position to critically de-code initiatives and practices in education, seeing them as manifestations of complex sets of interests that work to the advantage of some groups, and against the interests of other groups in Maltese society. As a result, student teachers will be able to go beyond the declared goals for education, in order to identify the ways in which policies and practices serve to reinforce power and privilege. They will also be in a better position to examine the ways in which their everyday work in classrooms schools, and as critical intellectuals in the wider public sphere, can further the equity agenda.
Learning outcomes:

1. **Knowledge and understanding:** By the end of the study unit the student will be able to:
   
   [1st semester]
   - Understand the importance of history in making sense of contemporary educational debates and issues.
   - Recognize different ways of writing educational history, the epistemological issues that arise, and the strengths and weaknesses of each approach.
   - Identify the key landmarks of educational development in Malta, and how these are linked to economic circumstances, specific social movements, ideological currents, and local, regional, and international politics.
   - Become sensitive to the ways different educational policies and practices can be traced back to specific group interests.
   - Understand the inevitable interrelationship between education, politics, and power.

2. **Skills (including transferable [generic] skills):** By the end of the study-unit the student will be able to:
   
   [1st semester]
   - Critically appraise historical texts.
   - Find and use archival texts and resources.
   - Use historical material in order to deepen one’s understanding of contemporary educational developments.

Teaching and Learning methods:

Lectures: 28 sessions of one hour each, totaling 28 hours (14 during the first semester with Professor Sultana; 14 in the second semester with Professor Borg).

Method of assessment:

**1st semester: Open Book Exam.**

Note 1: only those who attend a minimum of 12 of 14 lectures will be allowed to sit for the examination.

Note 2: the marks obtained in semester 1 and semester 2 will be added together, with the final mark for this unit being an average of both assessments.

Main text/s and supplementary readings:

**Key text:**

**Supplementary readings:**
Zammit Mangion, J. (1992) *Education in Malta*. MAS: Malta
Themes and issues raised in the Lectures:

**Introduction: Histories of education in Europe**

Theme 1: Critical perspectives on history and on educational history.

Theme 2: Education across the centuries: Europe and beyond

**History of education in Malta**

[Students are to be familiar with at least 5 of the following themes, and have in-depth knowledge of at least 3 of these 5]

Theme 3: Education in Malta before the Knights

Theme 4: Education in Hospitaller Malta

Theme 5: The *Collegium Melitense* and the *Universitas Studiorum* to 1798

Theme 6: Napoleon’s Vision for Education in Malta

Theme 7: Technical and Vocational Education in 19th Century Malta

Theme 8: P.P. Pullicino’s educational legacy

Theme 9: Shifting the Colonial Frontier: The Colonial State, Elementary Schooling and Maltese Society 1814–1914

Theme 10: The Language Question: a Political Controversy on a Linguistic Topic

Theme 11: A village school in Malta: Mosta Primary School 1840–1940

Theme 12: A.V. Laferla and education: a post-colonial approach

Theme 13: Meeting the Diversity of Student Needs: The Development of Policy and Provisions for the Education of Children with Disability in Malta

Theme 14: Why Education ‘Counts’: Educational Trajectories and Personal Histories

Theme 15: The Ideological Struggle over Comprehensive Education in Malta