

Higher Education In Prisons

Paths and Possibilities

Presented by:
The University of Oregon Prison Education Program

Where we are...

Colleges and Universities across Oregon offer GED and Adult Basic Education, certification programs, for-credit college-level classes, and other educational opportunities

❖ **The University of Oregon Prison Education Program (P.E.P.)** has offered credit bearing courses at:

❖ OSP

❖ OSCI

❖ CCCF

❖ DRCI

❖ CRCI

❖ Additional educational activities have been provided at institutions throughout the state

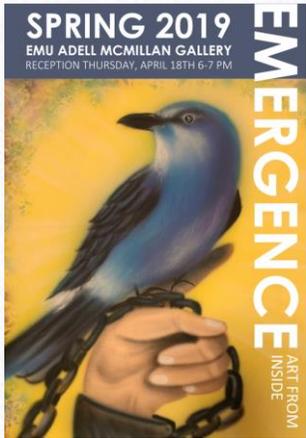
❖ We are also active on campus and in our broader community, and have worked with youth from Eugene, Salem, Roseburg, Springfield and elsewhere



UO OSP Graduation 2018

UO PEP numbers...

- **65 “Inside-Out”** classes (campus/prison blend) with a total of **1,588 students**
- Other classes “Inside-Only” courses: **964 students**
- Instructors: **31 faculty members**
- Courses in Math, Sociology, Political Science, Conflict Resolution, Geography, Anthropology, History, Public Policy, Education, English, Chinese Literature, Family & Human Services, Philosophy, Russian Literature, Germanic Languages, and Psychology
- Classes at both undergraduate and graduate levels
- **First for-credit course taught entirely in Spanish in 2021**



Academics Beyond the Syllabus

Bringing the University Into the Prisons

- ❖ Common Readings
- ❖ Writing seminars
- ❖ Communication workshops
- ❖ Speakers and cultural events
- ❖ Debates
- ❖ Club-to-club engagement
- ❖ Academic advising
- ❖ Scholarly writing and publications
- ❖ Art Exhibits



UO CLUBS AND ORGANIZATIONS	OSP/OSCI CLUBS AND ORGANIZATIONS
NASU/Native Strategies	Lakota/ <u>Inipi</u>
Black Male Alliance	Uhuru <u>Sassa/Weusi Omoja</u>
MECHA	Latino Club/La Raza <u>Unida</u>
Asian-Pacific	Asian-Pacific
Forensics	Toastmasters
Carnegie Global Oregon Ethics Program	Seventh Step
Side-by-Side	R.I.S.E.U.P.

Impacts of Higher Ed in Prisons

2019 Report “Beyond Recidivism: Positive Outcomes from Higher Education Programs in Prisons,” by Pelletier & Evans finds that in addition to **reducing recidivism and improving public safety**, those participating in educational activities while incarcerated benefit from:

- ❖ Development of personal attributes and skills
- ❖ Increased confidence
- ❖ Gain in leadership skills
- ❖ Positive self-image
- ❖ Expanded social networks
- ❖ Development of prosocial bonds to social institutions
- ❖ Improved family relationships
- ❖ Greater motivation for continued education and greater employment prospects post-release



Career Competencies

- Critical Thinking
- Communication
- Teamwork
- Technology
- Leadership
- Equity and Inclusion
- Professionalism
- Career and Self Management



<https://www.naceweb.org/career-readiness/competencies/career-readiness-defined/>

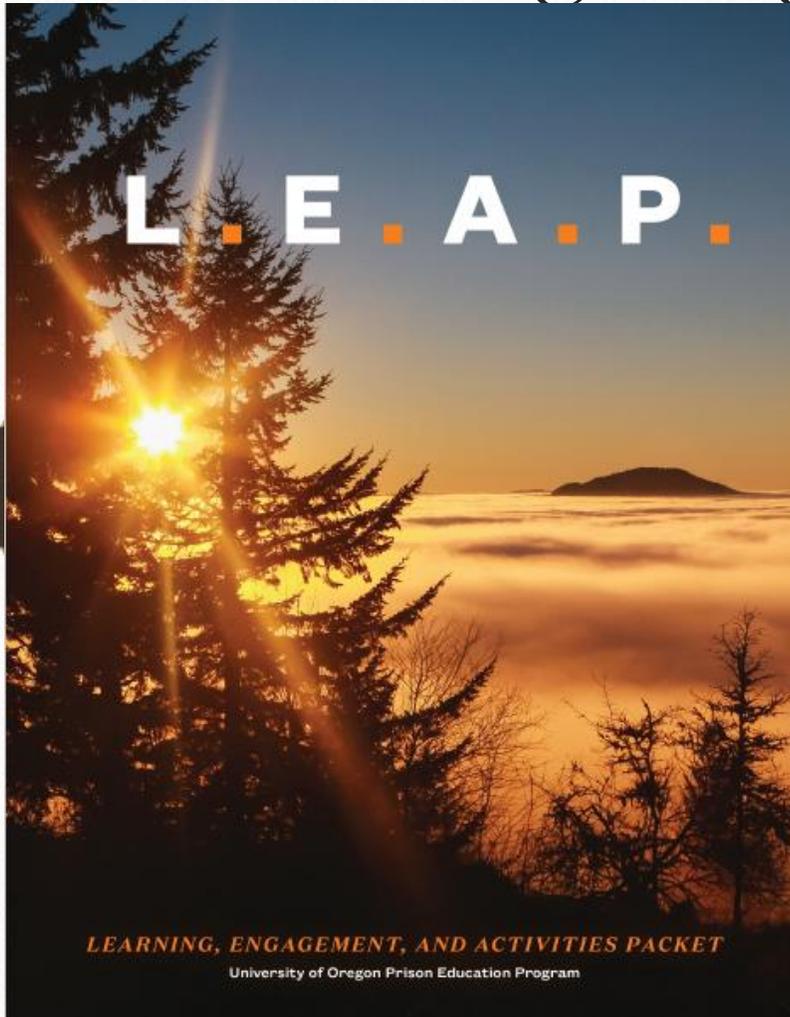


National Association of Colleges and Employers



NACE Center for Career Development and Talent Acquisition®

Learning, Engagement, and Activity Packets



3 Minute Theories

Theories are like puzzles. You can get absorbed in them, use them, and learn a lot along the way. This short section of “three-minute” theories explores ideas you can use every day.

First, what is a theory and what is philosophy?

A theory is an established explanation of things. The word theory comes from the Greek word *theoria*, which means “to look at.” I like to think of theories as tools that allow me to see and feel in new and creative ways. Theories explain all sorts of things, and we use them all the time whether we realize it or not. Applying theories to our lives brings us closer to understanding ourselves.

We also create our own theories, because each of us is a philosopher. That is, if you ask questions, then you are a philosopher. The word philosophy comes from the Greek *philo* (love) and *sophia* (wisdom), so it is literally defined as “the love of wisdom.”

An attitude of skepticism and the inclination to question is central to philosophy.

Many people trace modern philosophy back 2,500 years to the Greek philosophers Plato, Aristotle, and Socrates, but Chinese and Vedic philosophies go much further back.

3 Minute Theories

REFLECTION PROMPT:

What theory in this section feels most meaningful to you, and why?

WRITE, DRAW, CREATE A POEM AND REFLECT ON THIS PROMPT HERE

René Descartes' Theory of Existence: “I think, therefore I am”

A central question of philosophy is understanding knowledge, also known as epistemology. To understand knowledge, thinkers have proposed thousands of theories about reality. One of the most famous theories of reality came from a philosopher by the name of René Descartes. Descartes was very skeptical about everything and kept asking a “how do I know what is real?” At the end of his search, he arrived at the conclusion, that his questioning was real, and that in order to question, his thoughts and mind were the basis of existence. Thus, he concluded, “I think, therefore I am.”

Descartes gave us the idea that thinking is the foundation of human existence. No matter what, if you can think, then you exist.

OPTIONAL INQUIRY ACTIVITY (to do on your own)

What do you believe is the basis of existence? Do you agree or disagree with Descartes?

The Sapir-Worf Hypothesis: Language Shapes Thought

Edward Sapir and Benjamin Warf were linguists who studied language and consciousness. They developed the theory of linguistic determinism that, much like it sounds, proposes that the language we use determines how we think and act. They believed that the words we use will influence what we are able to see. A powerful example of this is in music and meditation. Have you ever repeated the lyrics to your favorite song and felt better? In meditation, a mantra is a word or phrase that is repeated to help with meditation. Mantras are an example of how language shapes thought.

OPTIONAL INQUIRY ACTIVITY (to do on your own)

What is a personal example you have of language shaping your thoughts? Is there a word or saying that shapes your thinking?

Standpoint Theory: Knowledge Is Based on Lived Experience

Developed by Patricia Hill Collins, a Black feminist scholar, standpoint theory argues that valuable knowledge and collective wisdom come from marginalized and oppressed communities. The dominant culture in which all groups exist is not experienced in the same way by all people or groups. Standpoint theorists argue that “outsiders” learn more about the dominant culture. For example, as an individual that is incarcerated, you have valuable knowledge about how society functions that the majority of society does not have.

OPTIONAL INQUIRY ACTIVITY (to do on your own)

What is standpoint knowledge that you have? This can be based on any of the identities and/or experiences you have had?

Future Directions

- ❖ Statewide East-side/west-side expansion
- ❖ DOC/University-College/VT coordination
- ❖ Inter-institutional/HECC credentialing and support
- ❖ OYA/DOC and DOC/Pre-release and re-entry collaborations
- ❖ Institutional support/focus areas:

- Expand existing programs and facilitate greater collaboration between programs, funding for new institutional program development including equity for incarcerated women.
- Collaboration and information sharing of opportunities for various kinds of education: non-credit, vocational, credit non-degree, and degree-granting opportunities.
- Create a standing educational committee with membership including colleges/universities, the HECC, DOC, and re-entry service providers.
- Address staffing, materials, technology, security, and space needs to accomplish these goals.



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For additional information, please email or visit the

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