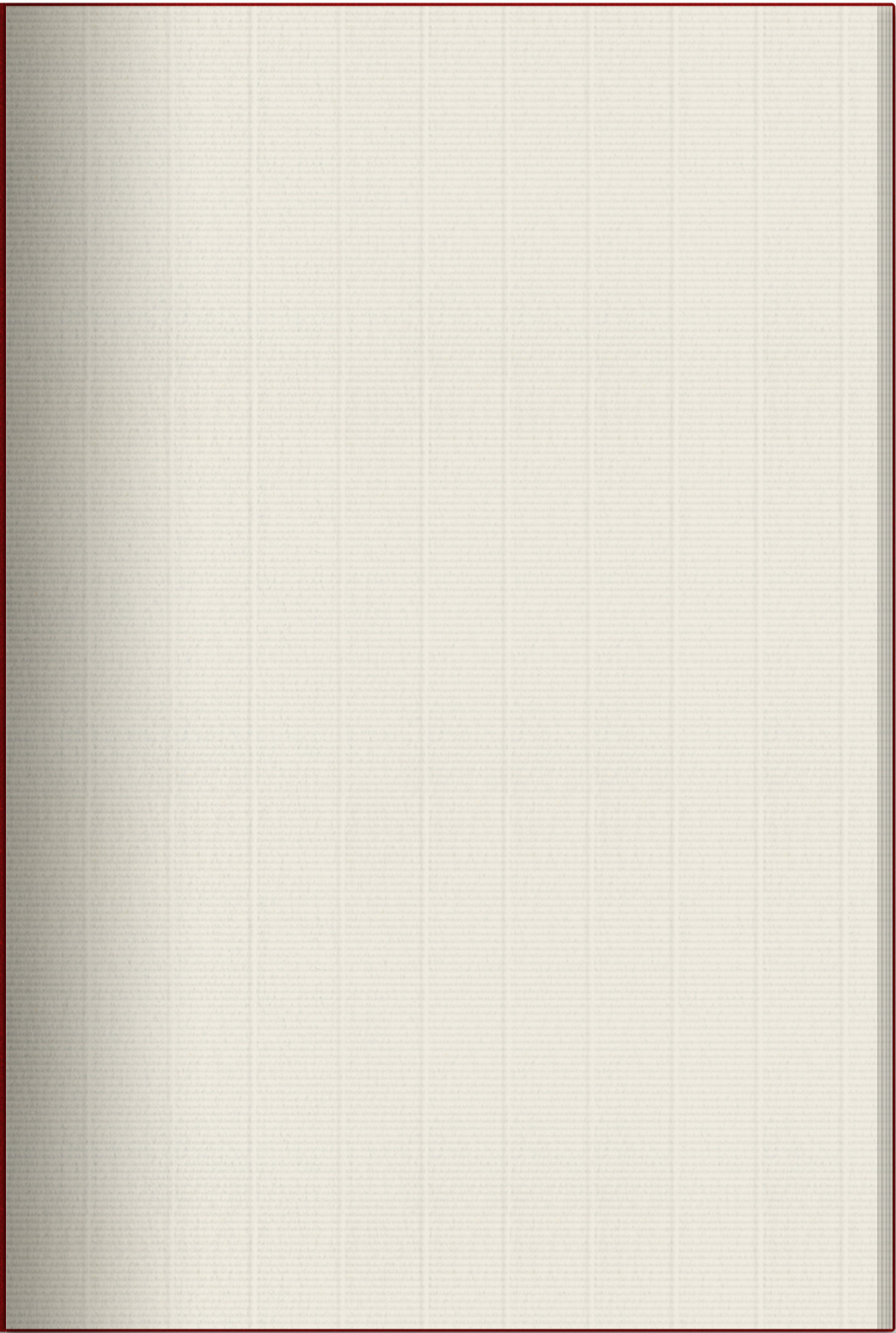


EDUC 471 MICHAEL LOCKETT

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FACULTY OF EDUCATION
SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY



We will only see things stark and dead if we see only things themselves and not the pattern that informs them.

— Jan Zwicky

The fixed point of view is the root of injustice. Plane geometry is an exercise in thought without a point of view.

— Simone Weil

INTRODUCTION

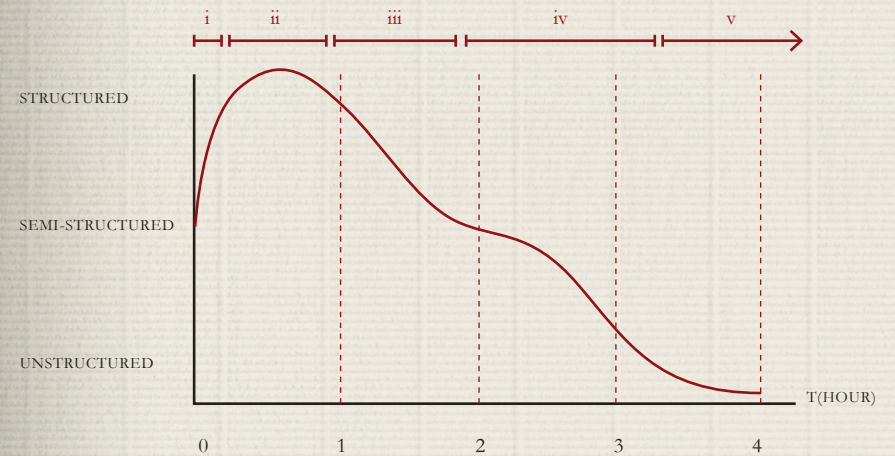
Welcome to *Education 471: Curriculum Theory and Practice*. Curriculum, our primary subject, is a vast and fraught and fascinating thing. In its most general form, it includes considerations of that which we intend to teach, how we teach, and our students experience thereof. Yet from that initial trio, myriad questions whirl.

Questions like, how is it that we determine what we ought to teach? Which voices, topics, and ideas should we include in our classrooms? And which are we excluding, intentionally or otherwise? How do we determine our pedagogic approaches and how do we organize learning in terms of temporal and disciplinary structures? What are the consequences of those choices for the individual student and the cultures and societies in which they participate? How do we observe and assess learning? What does it mean to say a practice is 'good' or 'bad' or 'best'? And what does it mean to say a student or teacher or school is 'succeeding' or 'struggling'?

We could go on. And we will. As the course unfolds, we'll respond to these questions and many more. We'll do that partly through our assignments but also by connecting our theoretical discussions to concrete experience, to the classrooms we've experienced already and those to which we aspire. To do this well, to expand our understandings of curriculum, we'll attend to perspectives far beyond our own, be they voiced by our fellow classmates or the texts we'll explore. In doing so, we'll respond with sincerity and patience and thereby enact our own curriculum, our own complicated conversation.

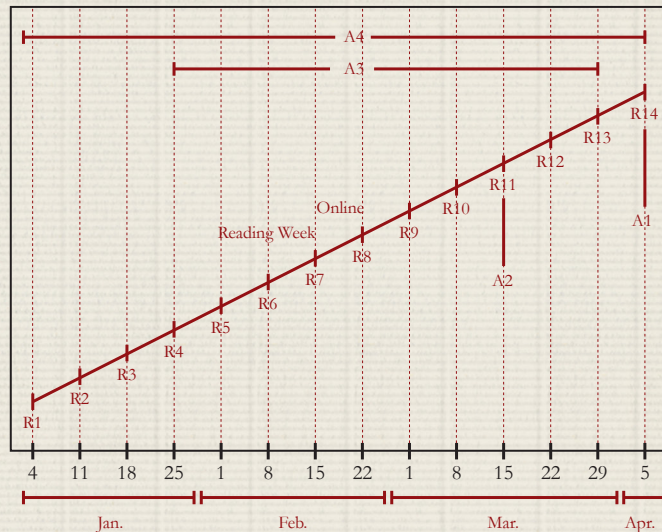
CLASS SCHEMATIC

Most classes, in terms of structure, will adhere roughly to the path illustrated on the opposite page. We'll often begin, after some introductory remarks (i) with a formal panel presentation (ii) followed by a semi-structured discussion (iii). Whereas the first half of the class will focus on assigned readings, the second will resemble a workshop comprised of classroom exercises (iv) and occasional opportunities to work with peers on major assignments (v). A short break will follow the panel presentations and a long break will precede the second half's workshop. Outside of those scheduled rests, you are welcome to leave and return at your discretion.



CURRICULUM MAP

The image below maps readings and assignments to the calendar. Please refer to the legend on the opposite page for details and note that the reading schedule is subject to change.



- A1 = Writing Assignment
- A2 = Course Design
- A3 = Panel Presentations
- A4 = Classroom Exercises

- R1 Jan 4 = N/A
- R2 Jan 11 = Noddings, *Philosophy of Education Before the 20th Century*; Kincaid, *Girl*.
- R3 Jan 18 = Kliebard, *The Rise of Scientific Curriculum-making and its Aftermath*; Bobbitt, *Scientific Method in Curriculum-making*.
- R4 Jan 25 = Dewey, *My Pedagogic Creed*; Tyler, *Basic Principles of Curriculum and Instruction*.
- R5 Feb 1 = Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*; Apple, *Controlling the Work of Teachers*.
- R6 Feb 8 = Greene, *Curriculum and Consciousness*; Irwin, *Toward an Aesthetic of Unfolding...*
- R7 Feb 15 = Dalton, *The Hollywood Curriculum*; Fleck, *Half Nelson*.
- R8 Feb 22 = Dalton, *The Hollywood Curriculum*; Fleck, *Half Nelson*.
- R9 Mar 1 = Britzman, *Is there a Queer Pedagogy?*; Pinar, *The Reconceptualization of Curriculum Studies*.
- R10 Mar 8 = Donald, *Edmonton Pentimento*; Kovach, *Situating Self, Culture, and Purpose in Indigenous Inquiry*.
- R11 Mar 15 = Popham, *Objectives*; Eisner, *Educational Objectives — Help or Hindrance?*
- R12 Mar 22 = Luce-Kapler, *Orality and the Poetics of Curriculum*; Sumara et al. *Canadian Identity and Curriculum Theory*.
- R13 Mar 29 = Noddings, *The Aims of Education*; Egan, *What is Curriculum?*
- R14 Apr 5 = TBD

ASSESSMENTS

There are four graded assignments in this course and they are each worth 25% of your final grade. You'll find brief descriptions below. More details for each assignment, including grading criteria, will be addressed in class.

Assignment 1: Writing (Due April 5th)

This formal writing assignment is flexible in terms of length, format, and topic(s). Submissions must be no fewer than 10 pages and no more than 20. At least half of the pages must contain original, expository prose and every page must connect with an idea, theme, artefact, quotation, or reading from the course proceedings. Prose sections should be composed in a 12-point serif font, standard margins, and should adhere to either MLA or APA citation standards. Non-expository prose pages may contain images, graphs, artefacts (or their two-dimensional facsimiles), or writing from a variety of genres (interview transcripts, screen or stage play, lesson plans, poetry, curriculum maps, schematics, newspaper clippings, etc.).

Assignment 2: Course Design (Due March 15th)

This assignment is an opportunity to develop a formal full-scale course of study. Submissions must include a one-page critical introduction, a sample lesson plan, assessment and evaluation schemes, and a curriculum map.

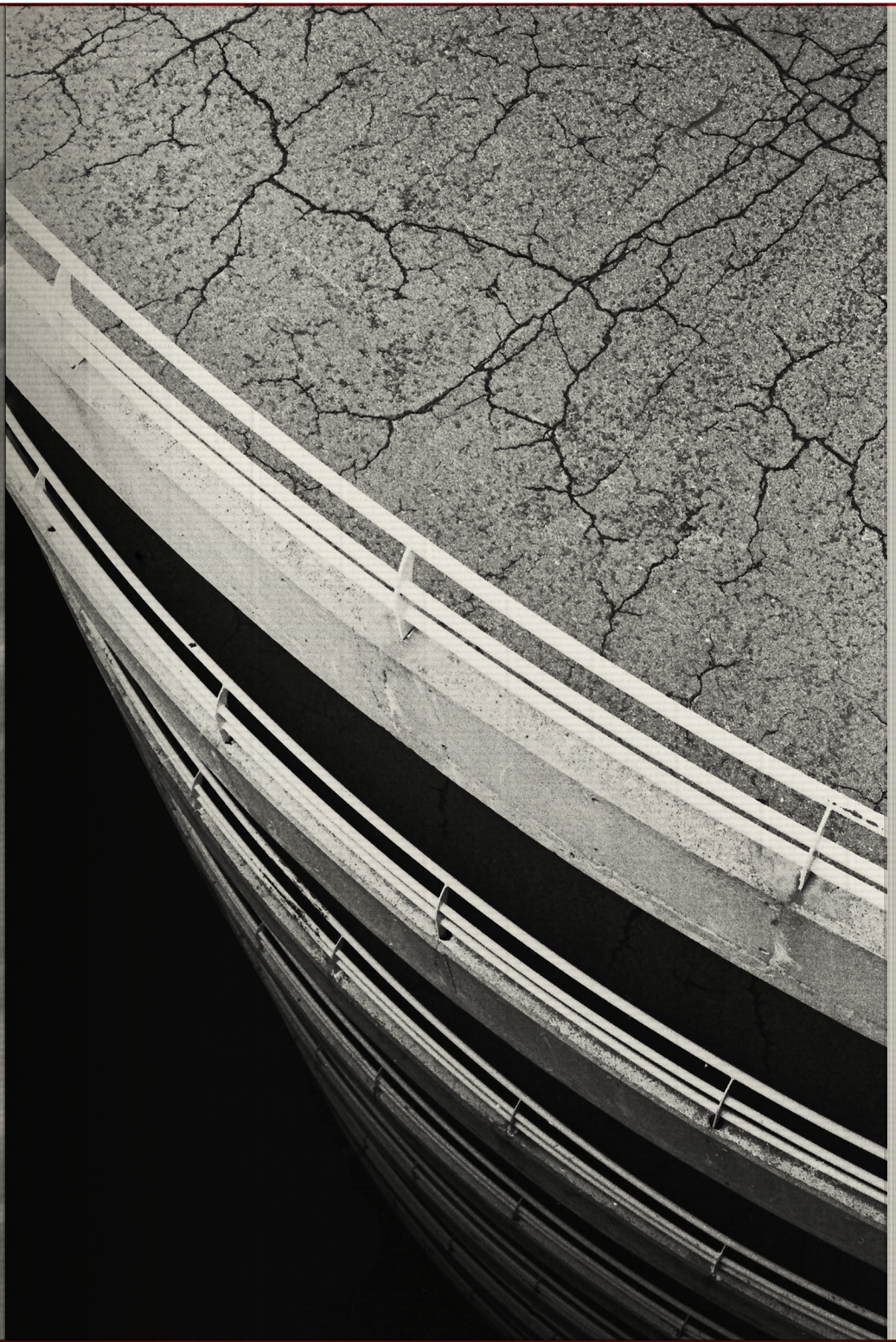
Courses of study can range from month-long unit plans to semester-length classes. Students will select levels and discipline at their discretion (for example, a grade seven unit on provincial politics, a grade twelve physics course, a grade three unit on arctic geography and cultures, a fourth-year university course on cryptography, etc.).

Assignment 3: Presentation (Rolling due dates)

Students will prepare a 5–10-minute presentation and participate in a panel discussion based on an assigned reading. Presentation formats are flexible (research paper presentation, video, multimedia, workshop, etc.). One week prior to their scheduled presentation date, students will submit a proposal that includes a three to five-sentence abstract and an outline of their session. Students may present with a partner (in which case the presentation time will be extended accordingly).

Assignment 4: Classroom Exercises (Due weekly)

Students are expected to attend each class and complete all reading and classroom exercises. Short responses and other submissions will be assigned on a weekly basis. Students can achieve a maximum of 2.5 percentage points per week, up to a maximum of 25 across the semester.



THEORY VERSUS PRACTICE

Theory and practice are sometimes discussed independently, as though their relationship can be severed. In this class, however, we'll often focus on their confluence, on the complicated ways they fuse and conflict and inform one another. Of course that doesn't mean that theory and practice will appeal to you equally. Depending on your experience and inclination, you may find yourself drawn to one or the other.

If you aspire to a career as a classroom teacher, for instance, practical lessons will, have an obvious utility. These are the general techniques and tips that tend to be useful in a variety of curricular contexts with only minor translation. Accordingly, they can be especially helpful when we're new to a discipline or school or the practice itself. Which is to say by developing some techniques, fundamental and otherwise, we can expand our repertoires and increase our confidence.

That said, developing technique by focusing solely on practical considerations would be a foolish way to proceed. Curricula, like the classrooms in which they unfold, are complex and dynamic and, accordingly, they can only be anticipated partially and even then with little, if any, accuracy. And because teachers have to act within these

dynamic contexts, training, in a didactic sense, can only take us so far. We cannot, for instance, be programmed to respond with z whenever student x asks y because the possible y 's are infinite and the x 's represent billions of possible people, all of whom are too complex and dynamic to be reduced to something like a x .

This is one reason why theory is useful. Theory can help us attend to this complexity not by simplifying it but rather by shifting the perspective from which we peer. It alters not what but how we see and, in doing so, it can inform our practice in profound ways. In that regard, its utility, compared to practical lessons, tends to be less immediate and obvious. Indeed, the perspectives a theory proffers might only be arrived at years or decades later, if at all. Do keep that in mind as you struggle and play with the ideas to come. Some of our activities and discussions will have clear connections with classroom practices while others might seem faint at first but brighten over time.

WHAT IS CURRICULUM?

A curriculum is more than a list of things to teach and how they ought to be taught. Despite the existence of concrete curricular artefacts, of things like syllabi and assessments, the concept itself is inherently abstract. And like any abstraction, it can be imagined and experienced in many, many different ways.

One way, then, to imagine curriculum is through metaphor. Metaphors for curriculum help us illustrate the notion by comparing and contrasting it with something else. And over the past century, the field of curriculum theorizing has been guided, in good and bad ways, by analogies of this sort, including Pinar's *complicated conversation* and Bobbitt's *factory model* (both of which we'll explore over the semester to come).

In preparation for those discussions, here's a short thought experiment to prompt your imagination and conceptualizations. After reading through the catalogue on the following page, reflect on your experiences as a student and your aspirations as a teacher. Do any of the metaphors resonate with a course or subject you studied? Do any of them resonate with the type of curriculum you'd like to craft for your own students? If so, in which ways are those metaphors true? In which ways are they false? And can you extend the list by creating your own metaphors for curriculum?

CURRICULUM IS...

... a recipe, blueprint, clockwork, game, obstacle course, awkward algorithm, epistemological cryptosystem, bureaucracy, *pyramid scheme*, hamster wheel, factory, prison, psychiatric hospital, colonial instrument, dystopiaphobic utopiantarianism, sex organ for cultural reproduction, appeal to the demands of an artist collective that dubbed itself *The Age*, opiate for the masses, womb, monastery, library, museum, symphony, lens, *complicated conversation*, web, ecology, disciplinary cartography, ...

HOW TO PLAY

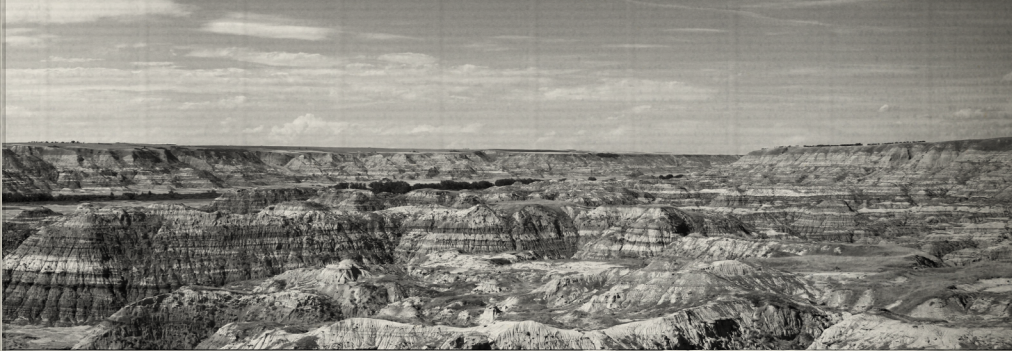
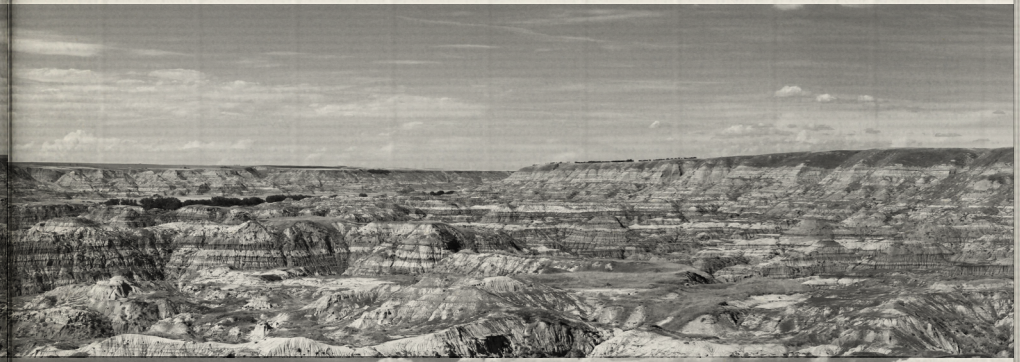
A curriculum is not a game. It's something that unfolds in reality with real people and real consequences. That disclaimer aside, if it were a game, if this particular course was a game, how would you play? Sometimes it can be helpful to imagine a course this way, especially at the outset, if only to focus our efforts and learning. In that spirit, here are some questions that might help you with your play.

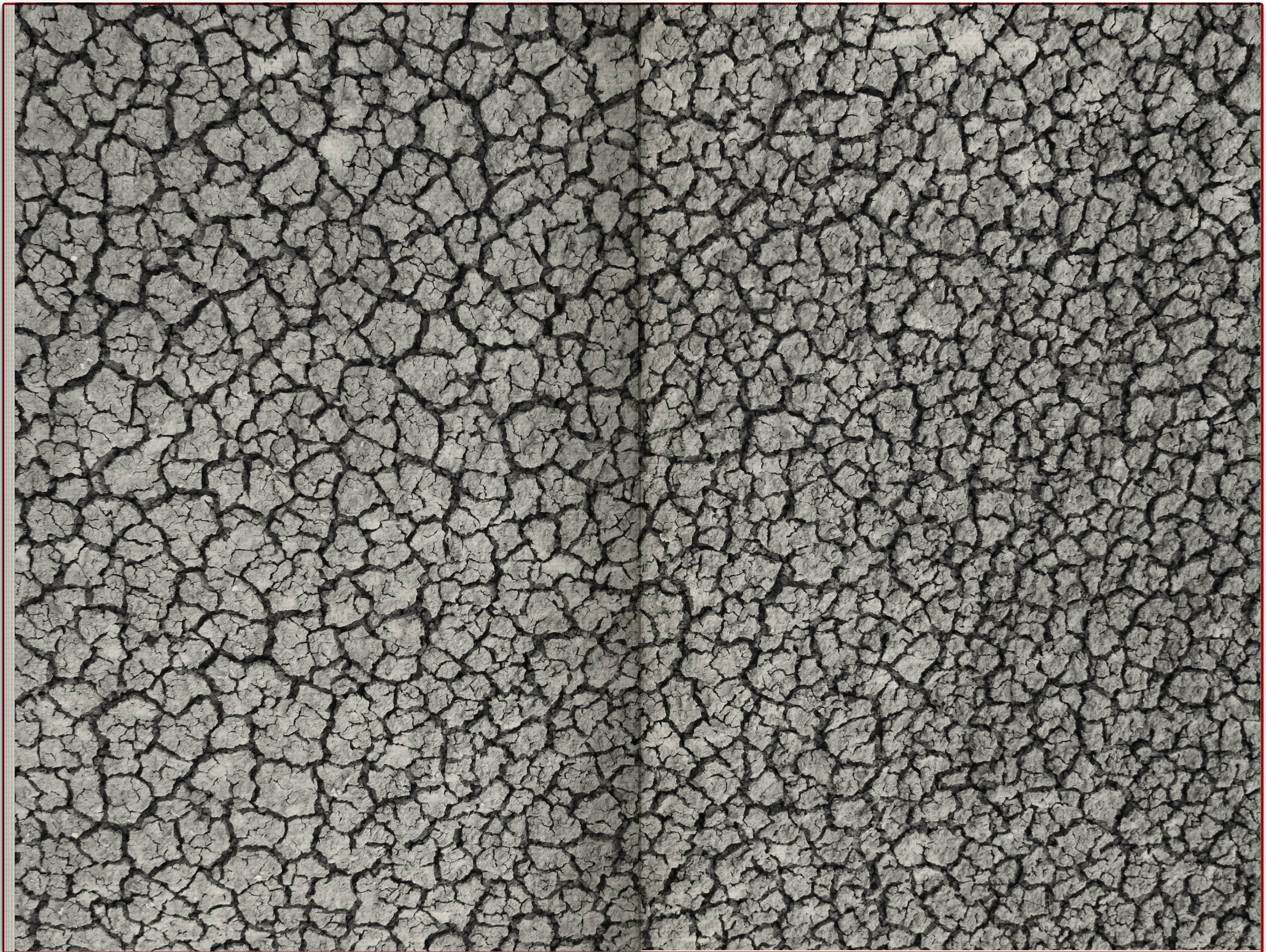
What are your objectives? Are some more important than others? Can you revise your objectives as the game unfolds? What will happen if you achieve your objectives? What will happen if you don't?

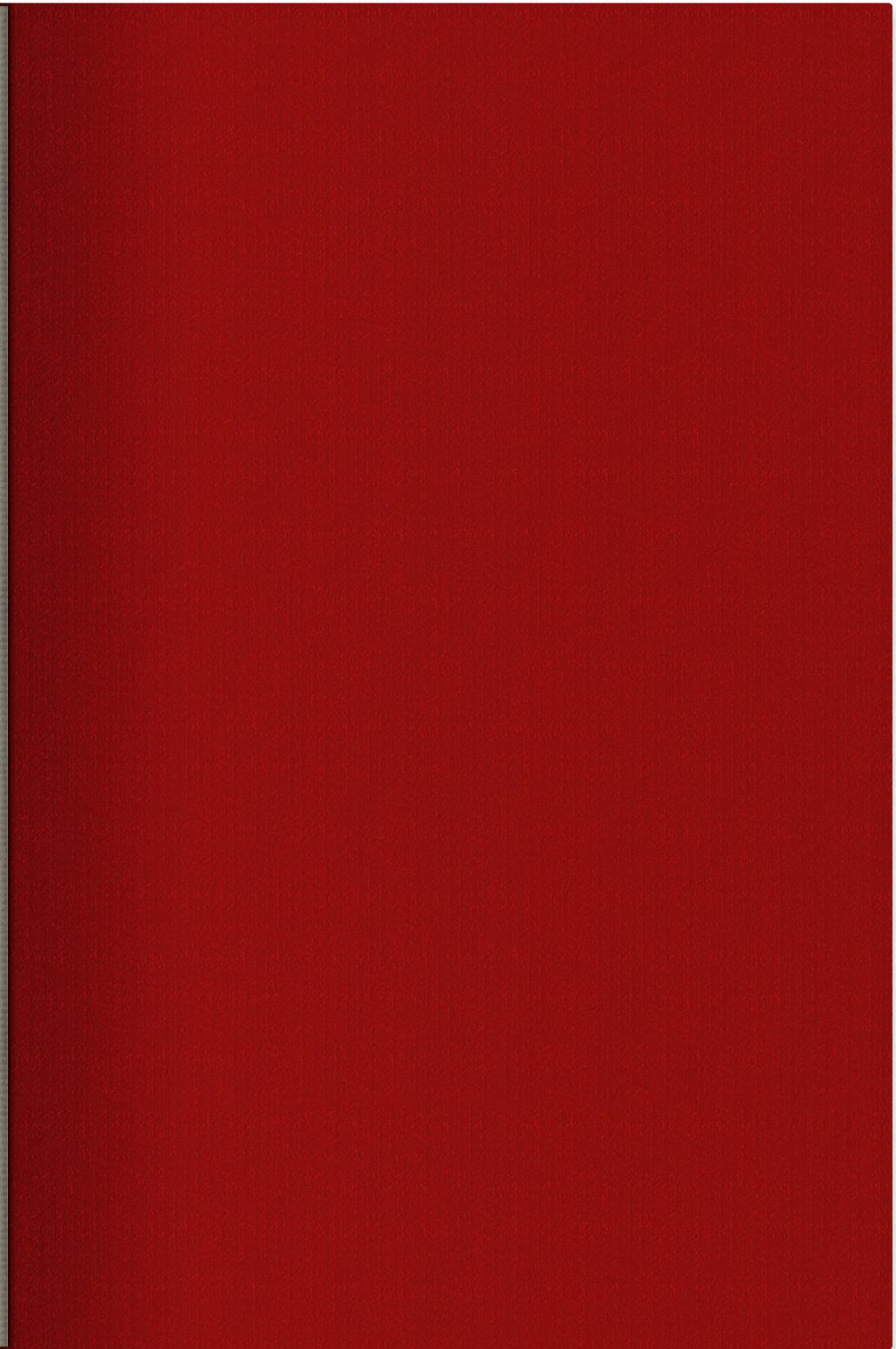
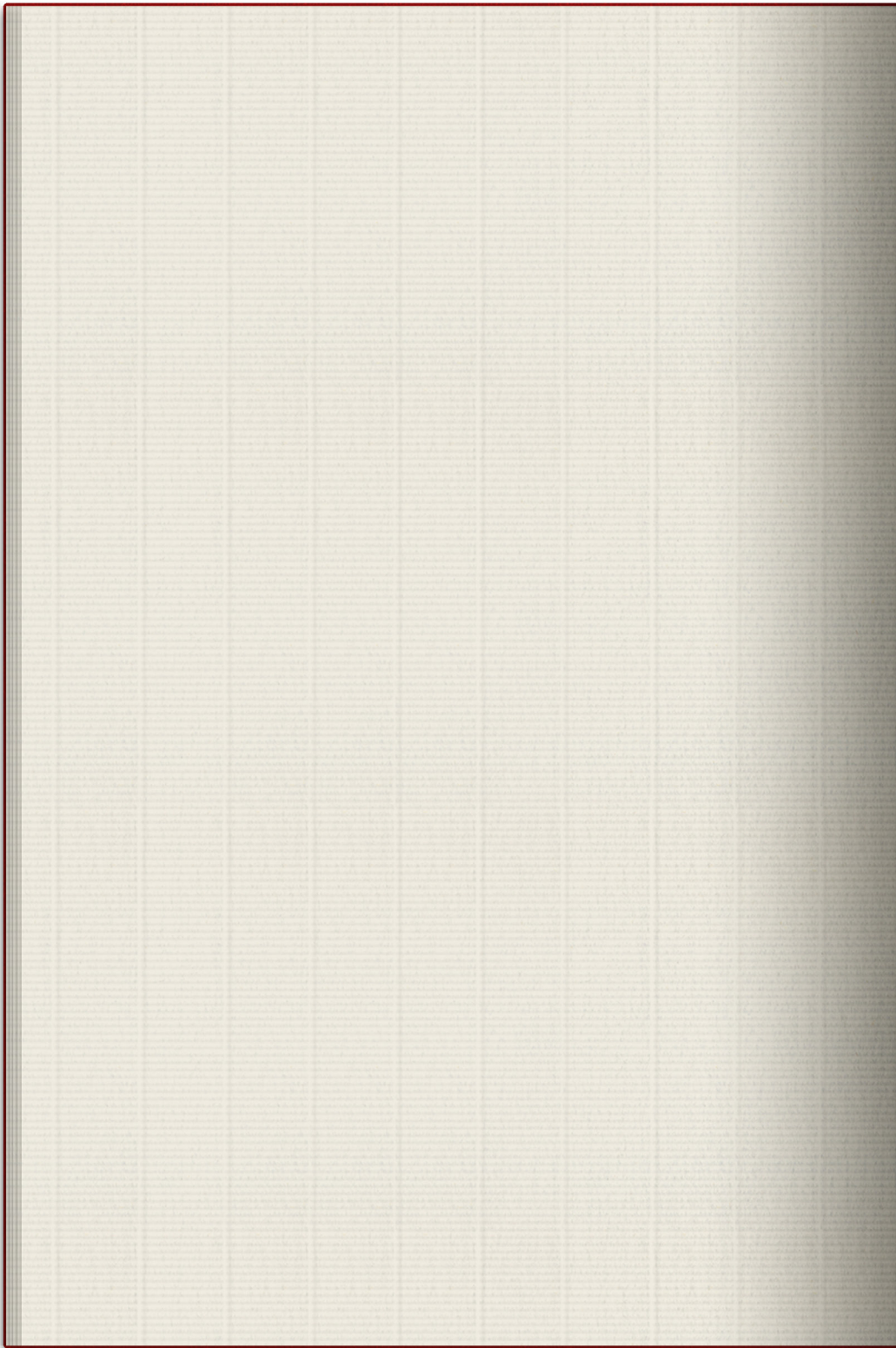
For whom are you playing this game? For yourself? For your family and your community? For your future students? For the people, taxpayers or otherwise, who subsidize your education? How might your gameplay affect these people?

What are the rules of the game? What does it mean to play fair? What role will nutrition and sleep play in your learning? In which places and under which conditions do you work swiftly? In which places and under which conditions do you think creatively? How much time can will you devote to this game?

What are the instructor's objectives? How will he or she pursue them? Are you playing with or against your instructor? Will your classmates share your objectives? And are you playing with or against them? Can this game be fun? How so?







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