

NHE Teacher Preparation Program

Notes from the Program Director, Dr. Kathleen Kesson



In June, we will complete the first year of courses in the 2-year program leading to an entry level certification in Neohumanist Education offered by Gurukula through the Neohumanist College of Asheville. The online program is focused on Early Childhood and Primary education, and is designed to prepare teachers to work in a neohumanist school or community-based educational program. Students and faculty together have worked super hard to make this vision a reality. One of the highlights of the program has been the opportunity for neohumanist educators from across the globe – Malaysia, Ghana, Portugal, Australia and points in between – to exchange ideas and develop professional relationships. Here is some of what they have to say about their experiences:

“I have been waiting for a program like this for a long time. When you have deep passion and fire inside to realize Neohumanist philosophy into a real project, but all the resources you have been exposed to are books, reading materials and Gurukul website, it's not enough. Once I joined the program, everything burst out. The philosophy is not lofty and sublime anymore, it has become very practical and within reach. The professors in the program will help you link Neohumanist philosophy with other common humanist and holistic philosophies so you can be "down-on-earth" to work with people in your community on a daily basis. Neohumanist Teacher Training Program does not teach you rigid steps to teach children, they will make you realize that teaching is actually an art and it's up to you how to bring out the best in a child. It's a very beautiful program.”

“I obtained a vast amount of new knowledge and feel comfortable to apply this new knowledge in an educational setting. I definitely look at early childhood development in a whole new and expansive light.”

“The NHCA Teacher Preparation Program has been a life changing experience. I applied for this program because I felt the need to find new tools for me as a mother, a wife and a community woman to deal with life and relationships around me. The program has given me way more than I was searching for. I now realize how important it is for an educator to understand the child through also understanding ourselves, to keep in mind that the "eye" of the teacher also needs to be trained in order to fully connect with the child in front of us. The beauty of this is that it extends to not only the way I relate with children, but also with all the people around me,

animals and nature. This program is a "deep dive" into a new way of education and connection between humans and the environment.”

“I found myself completely relaxed, eagerly awaiting every online meeting....It made me see how beautiful, encouraging and exciting education can be when done in a different way.”

“I see myself applying NHE knowledge in the classroom, in art therapy and with my staff and teachers. It helps me greatly to gain more and deeper understanding about the human being in general. I see myself becoming more empathetic, more understanding and less biased and judgmental.”

“The highlight of the week was always when we could share and discuss what we had studied and created. Those classes were so very meaningful and appreciated.”

“The NHCA Teacher Preparation Program is uniquely dynamic and inspiring. With the collaborative efforts of several outstanding teachers and staff, the program has offered me an opportunity to become a Neohumanist Educator with a strong understanding of what is necessary to embody the philosophy and values of Neohumanism.”

“This has been a wonderful experience of learning and discovery! Professionally it has confirmed, consolidated, and rejuvenated my understanding of Neohumanism in education, and personally it has been recharging my creative side as well. Well planned and thoughtful course outlay, it was inspiring to see the feedback received from students included to the curriculum too. Thank you!

The first point is that teachers must be selected carefully. High academic qualifications do not necessarily confer on a person the right to become a teacher. Teachers must possess such qualities as personal integrity, strength of character, righteousness, a feeling for social service, unselfishness, an inspiring personality and leadership ability. They are samája gurus,(leaders) and for this reason it is not possible to accept just anyone as a teacher. Because teachers have an extremely important role to play, their professional standards must be very high.

Shrii P. R. Sarkar

We include here brief excerpts from the course descriptions.

2021-2022

NHE 100: Introduction to Neohumanist Philosophy

This course provides an in-depth introduction to the Neohumanist philosophy that underpins the Neohumanist Education movement, primarily based on readings and reflections from foundational source texts.

NHE 104: Philosophy of Neohumanist Education

This course explores the main ideas of a Neohumanist philosophy of education, and serves as the foundation for subsequent learning in the program about the practical aspects of teaching and learning.

NHE 105: Child Development from a Neohumanist Perspective

This course explores and places child development concepts and theories in the context of a Neohumanism that helps children to recognize their ‘interconnectedness of being’ with the natural world and Planet Earth and to cultivate their spiritual potential.

NHE 107: Inside/Out: Personal Development

This course explores what it means to be a “contemplative practitioner,” with practical learning to achieve a better balance first with self and then with students and the social context that education encompasses.

NHE 109: Astaunga Yoga for 3-10 Year Olds

This course explores developmentally appropriate strategies for bringing the spiritual practices of the Astaunga Yoga lifestyle into the classroom, and demonstrates how to incorporate storytelling, drawing, music, drama, and the arts in Astaunga Yoga practices.

NHE 111: Descriptive Inquiry: The Art of Knowing the Child

This course explores an inquiry method to help educators develop their powers of educational observation, description, reflection, and intuition to better guide young people on their unique educational journeys.

NHE 113: Language and Literacy

This course examines the fundamentals of language and literacy development in preK-elementary grades with an emphasis on creating a culture of literacy that meets the unique needs of all students.

NHE 115: Arts-Based Curriculum Design

This course focuses on nurturing children’s diversity, individual talents, learning styles, and social-emotional development through the integration of the arts in the literacy curriculum

2022-2023 (courses under development)

NHE 117: Decolonizing Education: A Social Studies Curriculum of Place

This course explores the processes of culture, colonization and decolonization in particular places, and how the multidisciplinary social studies can align with a social justice mission.

NHE 119: Place-based Learning: Science, Technology, Ethics, and Math (STEM)

This course explores the role of STEM in a Neohumanist world and an ethics-based framework for teaching the sciences. It highlights multiple forms of science learning including Indigenous ways of

knowing and Western empirical science.

NHE 121: The Social Context of Learning

This course explores the effects of adverse childhood experiences and trauma and how to foster healing, social-emotional well-being, creativity and learning through classroom regulation skills, restorative practices, community building time and family/community partnership.

NHE 123: Towards a Neohumanist Future

Prout philosophy (the Progressive Utilization Theory) is aimed at the transformation of societies to become more just, more ethical, more sustainable and supportive of human development and spirituality. Neohumanist education is aimed at the cultivation of the character, knowledge and social commitment necessary to these transformations. This course explores the alignment of education, service and social change in a Neohumanist framework.

NHE 125: Capstone Projects (2 credits)

Students design a multi-faceted project that is of use to the community of Neohumanist educators (and the wider world). They compile a portfolio of their work in the program demonstrating competency in multiple areas and a commitment to lifelong learning and continuous professional development.

For more information about the NHCA Teacher preparation program and the new cohort beginning in 2023, contact Arete Brim, the Program Coordinator, at nhe@gurukul.edu.