

PEDAGOGIES & LITERACIES

SOCIOLOGY OF EDUCATION

THURSDAY
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WEBINAR SERIES
(CASE-ACSE/CSA-SOE)

AMIR KALAN

Dr. Amir Kalan is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Integrated Studies in Education (DISE) at McGill University. His work aims to create a sociology of literacy that provides insights into the cultural, political, and power-relational dimensions of linguistic and textual practices. He uses ethnography, action research, and arts-based inquiry to study the sociological dimensions of reading, writing, and language education. He is particularly interested in the experiences of minoritized and racialized students in multicultural and multilingual contexts. Dr. Kalan is the author of *Who's Afraid of Multilingual Education?* (2016) and *Sociocultural and Power-Relational Dimensions of Multilingual Writing* (2021).

DRAGANA PRVULOVIĆ

Dragana Prvulović is a sociologist and ethnographer whose work examines minority politics, post-conflict societies, and the everyday dynamics of belonging. She recently completed her PhD with a dissertation titled *Enemy Minority: Negotiating Ethnic Difference in Post-Conflict Vukovar*, a critical ethnography of Croatian Serb everyday life in the aftermath of war. Her research spans questions of language, education, gender, and migration, and has been supported by the SSHRC. She is currently employed at the Archive of Serbs in Croatia, where her research focuses on historical revisionism and minority institutions.



HOST:

JOHANNE JEAN-PIERRE,
PHD, YORK UNIVERSITY

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**AMIR KALAN, PHD,
MCGILL UNIVERSITY**

TOWARD POSTINSTITUTIONAL LITERACIES & AUTONOMOUS TEXTUAL COMMUNITIES

Over the past half-century, Pierre Bourdieu’s sociology—especially his concept of cultural capital—has profoundly impacted theorizations in language and literacy research. Bourdieu’s insights into the relationship between culture and social reproduction inspired a large range of reform-oriented theories that seek to pluralize our understanding of language and literacy. Concepts such as multiliteracies, multimodality, multilingualism, plurilingualism, and translanguaging emerged as attempts to expand the boundaries of what counts as literacy, emphasizing students’ diverse semiotic repertoires, funds of knowledge, and home-based literacies.

These pluralized concepts have been celebrated as progressive responses to institutional monolingualism and monoculturalism, building on the reformist spirit of Bourdieu’s sociology. Yet, as I argue, their reformist orientation—rooted in Bourdieu’s own sociological agenda for the transformation of educational institutions has reached its limits. Despite their theoretical sophistication, pluralized concepts have produced little tangible change in educational structures. Worse still, recent global political trends have witnessed a regressive backlash that reasserts standardized literacies, monolingual norms, and nationalist ideologies. This situation calls for a paradigmatic shift: a move beyond the reformist horizon of Bourdieu’s sociology toward what I term Postinstitutional Zones of Autonomous Textual Production grounded in Sociologies of Subaltern Cultural Autonomy. Rather than treating schools as the sole legitimate sites of literacy, this approach centers community and subaltern spaces—shatter zones, urban peripheries, and digital collectives—as loci of intellectual production.



**DRAGANA PRVULOVIĆ,
UNIVERSITY OF OTTAWA**

TEACHING BETWEEN THE LINES: SUBVERSIVE PEDAGOGIES & THE LIMITS OF INTEGRATION IN VUKOVAR'S DIVIDED SCHOOLS

This presentation examines the pedagogical practices of Serbian-language teachers in Vukovar’s ethnically divided schools, where the organization of education reflects and reinforces the city’s divisions. Nearly thirty years after the 1998 Peaceful Reintegration of Eastern Slavonia after the War of Croatian Independence, formal peace has failed to dissolve the city’s ethnic boundaries: Croat and Serb children attend parallel institutions and rarely interact. Drawing on sixteen months of ethnographic fieldwork, this study explores how minority teachers navigate a politicized educational landscape that institutionalizes separation while claiming to protect cultural rights.

I argue that these teachers employ subversive pedagogies—covert strategies that resist dominant state narratives and create safe spaces for students attending minority language schools. These practices include selectively omitting, rushing through, or complexifying historical content, downplaying nationalist commemorations, and foregrounding local experiences of Serb victimhood. Yet, while such tactics contest exclusionary state narratives, they also risk reproducing a parallel minority nationalism that reinforces division.

Theoretically, the paper engages with scholarship on spatial governmentality and the politics of post-conflict education, contributing to debates on how schooling is expected to mediate division and foster reconciliation. By situating divided education within broader structures of ethnic governance, this analysis reveals how teachers’ everyday acts of resistance illuminate both the limits and possibilities of educational justice in post-conflict societies. Participants will gain insight into how pedagogy operates as a subtle form of political action in contexts of entrenched ethnic division.