

# **Educational Psychology, Fall 2008**

## **Educ 234**

### **Contact Information**

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### **Course Description**

Welcome to Educational Psychology! This course is designed to develop your perspective on psychology and teaching so that you are better able to analyze situations and make decisions. In addition to discussing contemporary theories of the psychology of learning and teaching, you will have opportunities to apply what you are learning through class activities and participation in a classroom field experience. The goal of these activities is to help you examine and clarify your personal beliefs about education, and encourage you to integrate those beliefs with research-based theories and principles.

Research on teaching and learning offers a foundation upon which you can build decisions both in and beyond a classroom. I intend to help you develop a critical understanding of the application of educational psychology, inspire you to keep current of the research related to this field, and encourage you to become a teacher-researcher. My goal is to create an environment of diverse and stimulating activities that will help you on your way to becoming an informed, confident, and reflective student of the principles of teaching and learning.

### **Course Structure**

The course will provide a variety of learning structures including interactive lecture, small group activities, and whole class discussion. In addition to two weekly class meetings, you are required to tutor/observe in an elementary or secondary school classroom for a minimum of three hours per week.

### **Course Objectives**

This course will address the following Standards of Effective Practice as articulated by the Board of Teaching of the State of Minnesota:

1. The students understand how children learn and develop and provide learning opportunities that support the children's intellectual, social, and personal development.
2. The students understand how students differ in their approaches to learning and can create instructional opportunities that are adapted to diverse learners.
3. The students understand and use a variety of instructional strategies to encourage children's development of critical thinking, problem solving, and performance skills.

4. The students use an understanding of individual and group motivation and behavior to create a learning environment that encourages positive social interaction, active engagement in learning, and self-motivation.
5. The students understand and use formal and informal assessment strategies to evaluate and ensure the continuous intellectual, social, and physical development of the learner.
6. The students are reflective practitioners who continually evaluate, using qualitative and quantitative resources, the effects of his or her choices and actions on others and who actively seek out opportunities to grow professionally.

## Resource Materials

Text: *Educational Psychology*, Robert Sternberg and Wendy Williams.

Additional articles are available on Moodle and on reserve in the Educational Studies department curriculum library in 102 Willis.

- Please read the text chapters and/ or articles prior to the date(s) they are listed on the syllabus.
- Copies of all other course materials distributed in class will be available on the shelf in the Educational Studies office labeled **Gustafson**. (Go left into the library and look to the right wall.) It is your responsibility to obtain any materials distributed in class that you may have missed: I will not have such materials with me for a subsequent class session (so look on this shelf in the curriculum library).

## Student Responsibilities

The nature of this course depends on what you, as a student, wish to draw from it and contribute to it. At a minimum, course requirements include actively participating in class discussions, actively contributing to group projects, actively questioning your assumptions and challenging ideas, as well as the following:

1. Three interpretive essay questions (1-2 pages each) ..... 60 points
2. Two synthesis essay questions (1-2 pages each)..... 60 points
3. Lesson objectives and assessments ..... 25 points
4. Peer teaching ..... 40 points
5. Oral final exam questions ..... 5 points
6. Oral final exam ..... 20 points

210 points possible

**Please note I do not accept emailed submission of work unless I approve such a submission *in advance*. All written assignments and in-class presentations must be completed by the due dates to receive credit. Please plan accordingly. No late assignments will be accepted unless I approve such a late assignment in advance or unless a medical or Dean's excuse is provided. No exceptions.**

**Grading Scale** (% of total points): 93-100% = A; 90-92.9% = A-; 88-89.9% = B+; 82-87.9% = B; 80-81.9% = B-; 78-79.9% = C+; 72-77.9% = C; 70-71.9% = C-; 68-69.9% = D+; 60-67.9% = D

## Course Assignments

**1. Interpretive essay questions.** (20 points each, 60 points total). You will respond to problem-posing questions with individual, 1-2 page written papers. These papers should be concise and include specific educational psychology theories or concepts that substantiate your views.

➤ Evaluation criteria:

- |  |                    |
|--|--------------------|
| 1] Demonstrated understanding of educational psychology concepts | <b>0-10 points</b> |
| 2] Depth of your explanation                                     | <b>0-5 points</b>  |
| 3] Clarity of your explanation                                   | <b>0-5 points</b>  |

**2. Synthesis essay questions.** (30 points each, 60 points total). You are required to complete a minimum of 3 hours of observation and/or tutoring per week (beginning in week 3) in a Northfield area classroom to successfully complete this course.

Beginning in the third week of class, we will begin each Thursday class session with a 1-2 minute report about field experiences from 1 to 3 class members. Plan to speak to the class at least once in the term, to share what is occurring in *your* classroom. Prepare what you want to say ahead of class, concentrating on a brief description of what you have observed and its connection (or lack of connection) to what we have discussed in class. **Keep these reports brief,** thus allowing for input from your classmates and enough time for other reports as well. We will expect to hear from every class member at least once in the term within these sessions.

You will also respond to questions that ask you to integrate discussions of learning theory with what you observe in classrooms. These essay questions are in lieu of a midterm examination.

➤ Evaluation criteria:

- |  |                    |
|--|--------------------|
| 1] Demonstrated understanding of educational psychology concepts | <b>0-20 points</b> |
| 2] Depth of your explanation                                     | <b>0-5 points</b>  |
| 3] Clarity of your explanation                                   | <b>0-5 points</b>  |

**3. Lesson objectives and assessments** (25 points). The focus of this project is to explore how to adapt and create effective lesson plans. Good teaching can look easy: Thinking about preparing your own lesson can help you understand the amount of preparation required to “make it look easy.” For this assignment, you will find existing lessons created in a content area that interests you, and particularly, explore lessons or projects described on a website. You may do this project individually or work in teams of two to three people. (**Note:** Each team member must *sign* the lesson objectives and assessments project, verifying that the group shared the tasks to that team member’s satisfaction.)

Try to find an exceptional lesson or project (or multiple lesson plans or projects) in a content area and grade level of interest to you. The grade levels can be K-12, depending on your interest.

Make a copy of the lesson plan(s) (and the website, if possible) and include this copy with your project. Your project will be evaluated on your analysis and presentation of the following points.

➤ Evaluation criteria:

1] Identify the reasons you believe this lesson or lessons are important for students. That is, using the Wiggins approach and terminology, what is the overarching idea behind your lesson? What is it that you want students to learn? Identify 2-3 important reasons as to why this is an important lesson for students in your chosen grade level. **0-5 points**

2] Identify and describe at least 5 objectives for your lesson. \* Classify each objective according to Bloom's cognitive taxonomy. \* For each objective, also note an *essential question* that students should be able to identify to help them meet this objective. NOTE: Be sure you write the objectives from the students' point of view (that is, "Students will..." rather than "To teach...") identifying what the students will achieve. No credit will be given for objectives that do not describe what students will do or learn. **0-10 points**

3] Describe the assessments that will ensure students meet the objectives of your plan. How will students demonstrate that they have learned the important ideas/concepts/skills you identified in your lesson objectives? How will you know they can accurately answer the *essential question* for each objective? **0-10 points**

Your persuasiveness as to the logic of your choices and the polish of your presentation (i.e., grammar counts!) will be part of my evaluation.

One effective way to present this project is to use the planning templates distributed in class (during our discussion of Wiggins) and then organize your descriptions specifically around the three criteria outlined above. As you prepare this project, DO NOT assume that I am a teacher who knows everything you do; rather, assume that you must clearly convey your ideas so that I can understand them even if I don't have the training you do. (For example, don't write to me as if I am your instructor, write to me as if I am a colleague who you need to convince of the wisdom and appropriateness of your ideas.)

**Reminder: Include a copy of the original lesson plan(s) from which you are working!**

**4. Peer Teaching.** (40 points) Select a topic in educational psychology you wish to teach to your colleagues in this class. Your topic may cover any of the range we have included in this course, or be a related topic we have not directly discussed. In any case, it's important that what you teach to the class **extends beyond what we have already discussed or what is presented in the text.** The idea is to contribute to the level of expertise of your peers in this class, not teach them something they already know.

- Prepare instructional objectives for your lesson (i.e., "Students will ...")
- Prepare a lesson plan.

- Teach / conduct your lesson on your chosen topic. You will have approximately 10-12 minutes if you choose to do this individually and respectively more time if you team teach with a peer for this project.

At the time of your presentation, you must hand in a written description of:

- Team members and the roles/responsibilities each carried out
- Your overarching objective, instructional objectives, intended assessments and lesson plan (including measurable outcomes for your students, if that is possible within your lesson)
- Procedures (introduction, key points of content, how each instructional objective will be met, materials, evaluation/how you will monitor student learning)
- Learning and motivational theories underlying your teaching decisions
- If you are teaching as a team, each team member must also hand in a team evaluation form (I will provide one).

➤ Evaluation criteria:

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|--|--------------------|
| 1] Clarity of objectives   | <b>0-10 points</b> |
| 2] Lesson content and activities align with objectives                 | <b>0-10 points</b> |
| 3] Substantiation of decisions with learning and motivational theories | <b>0-10 points</b> |
| 4] Teaching (Specific criteria developed in class)                     | <b>0-10 points</b> |

**5. Oral final exam questions.** (5 points). In groups or as an individual (your choice), you will write 5 questions that are appropriate as comprehensive final exam questions. The questions developed by the class will be pooled, and from this pool of questions I will draw a set of questions to be used in the oral final exam. Your 5 questions should, therefore, be designed to elicit a thoughtful, verbal response from students and also assess learning that has occurred in this course. Credit is not given for questions that do not assess *learning* in this course (do not write a question that asks for opinions, for example).

**6. Oral final exam.** (20 points). The oral final will be comprehensive. Questions for the final will be drawn from a pool of questions created by you and your classmates (see above). You will be required to answer one question orally (15 points) and ask a clarifying, follow-up question of another student (5 points) during the final examination period. **[You must take the final exam even if you are registered S/Cr/NC.]**

## Course Calendar

- Tuesday, September 16 Introductions. Course overview.  
Deciding how we will work together.  
➤ Video: *Good Morning Miss Toliver*  
➤ Skim Ch 1
- Thursday, September 18 Analyzing and applying psychological research to education  
➤ Read “*In Search of ... Brain-based Education*” (Bruer)  
➤ Review [http://www.unh.edu/emotional\\_intelligence/](http://www.unh.edu/emotional_intelligence/), focusing on “Controversies in Emotional Intelligence”  
➤ Read “*Emotional Intelligence: What the Research Says*” (Cobb & Mayer)
- Tuesday, September 23 **Interpretive essay #1 due in class**  
**Sign up for classroom observations**  
Intelligence: What is it?  
➤ Read Ch 4  
➤ Read “*Intelligence: Knowns and Unknowns*” (Neisser et al)  
➤ Read “*Reflections on Multiple Intelligences: Myths and Messages*” (Gardner); “*Multiplying the Problems of Intelligence by Eight: A Critique of Gardner’s Theory*” (Klein)
- Thursday, September /25 Information Processing: Connections and Constructions  
➤ Read Ch 8, especially pp. 268 – 286

### **Foundational Theories of Learning and Development**

- Tuesday, September 30 **Interpretive essay #2 due in class**  
Cognitive Development: Piaget, Vygotsky  
➤ Read Ch 2, pp. 39 – 61
- Thursday, October 2 Cognitive Development  
➤ Read “*Social Construction in Piaget’s Theory*” (Youniss & Damon)  
➤ Video: *Private Universe*
- Tuesday, October 7 **Interpretive essay #3 due in class**  
Cognitive Research: Developments and applications  
➤ Read “*Why Minimal Guidance During Instruction Does Not Work*” (Kirschner, Sweller, & Clark)
- Thursday, October 9 Social Construction, Social Development: Bandura, Erikson, Marcia, Elkind  
➤ Read Ch 3, pp. 79 – 102
- Tuesday, October 14 **Synthesis essay #1 due in class**  
Social Construction, Social Development: Classroom Applications  
Cooperative Learning  
Peer Relations, Peer Rejections  
➤ Video: *Why Do These Kids Love School?*

### **Planning for Learning and Assessment**

- Thursday, October 16 Assessment: Traditional and alternative  
➤ Read Ch 14  
➤ Read “*Teaching to the (Authentic) Test*” (Wiggins)

Tuesday, October 21	<b>Synthesis essay #2 due in class</b> Assessment continued: Traditional and alternative ➤ Read Ch 13
Thursday, October 23	Lesson Planning: Instructional Objectives ➤ Read Ch 12
Tuesday, October 28	<b>Bring lesson plan to class for peer review</b> Lesson Planning: Opportunities and Objectives ➤ Read Ch 6, pp. 208 – 214 ➤ Read “ <i>The Having of Wonderful Ideas</i> ” (Duckworth)
	<b><u>Motivation and Efficacy in Learning</u></b>
Thursday, October 30	<b>Lesson plan due in class</b> Motivation and efficacy ➤ Read Ch 10 ➤ Read “ <i>Rewards of Learning</i> ” (Chance); and “ <i>Rewards versus Learning</i> ” (Kohn)
Tuesday, November 4	Motivation and efficacy ➤ Read “ <i>Praise for intelligence can undermine children’s motivation and performance</i> ” (Mueller & Dweck) OR ➤ Read “ <i>The relation between motivational patterns and achievement cognitions through the elementary school years</i> ” (Cain & Dweck)
Thursday, November 6	<b>Peer Teaching</b>
Tuesday, November 11	<b>Peer Teaching</b>
Thursday, November 13	<b>Peer Teaching</b> <b>Oral Final Exam Questions due</b>
Tuesday, November 18	<b>Oral Final Exam</b>

## References

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- Kohn, A. (1993) Rewards versus learning: A response to Paul Chance. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 74 (10), 782-787.
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- Neisser, U., Boodoo, G., Bouchard, T.J., Boykin, A.W., Brody, N., Ceci, S. J., Halpern, D.F., Loehlin, J.C., Perloff, R., Sternberg, R. J., Urbina, S. (1996). Intelligence: Knowns and Unknowns. *American Psychologist*, 51, 77-101.
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