

**EDP 382D: INSTRUCTIONAL PSYCHOLOGY**  
**Spring 2016, Unique #10720**  
**Wednesdays, 4:00–7:00PM, SZB 432**  
**The University of Texas at Austin**

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### **Course Objectives**

The purpose of this course is to give you a foundation in instructional psychology. We will focus on how theory and research in psychology can be applied to facilitate learning in educative contexts broadly construed. Each week, we will delve into new set of issues that all revolve around a particular theme (e.g., instructional approaches, assessing learning, technology, etc.). We will engage with both micro- and macro-level psychological theories as we analyze various aspects of educational practice. My hope is that you will develop an appreciation for the challenges and progress in this area of research, identify limitations to current work, and discuss possible directions for further research. Furthermore, I want you to acquire knowledge that enables you to foster educational innovation, regardless of your career path (e.g., teaching, designing curricula, crafting policy, etc.).

In addition to acquiring some content knowledge, a further goal is to provide you with opportunities to practice skills that will be valuable regardless of your career path:

- 1) Evaluating research and theories
- 2) Providing constructive criticism
- 3) Communicating ideas both orally and in writing
- 4) Facilitating discussion

As described below, you will have numerous formal and informal opportunities for practice. My hope is that this practice, along with feedback from your classmates and myself, will help you to further develop these skills.

Finally, I want the work that you produce for this course to be useful to you outside of the course. Thus, the main piece of work that you produce will be an educational intervention proposal that combines your interests with a topic from the course. Hopefully, the proposal will be something that you could pursue at some point — either in the near future or later in your career.

## **Website and Communication**

This course has a Canvas site associated with it (<http://canvas.utexas.edu/>). Canvas will be used to post announcements, course documents, assignments, supplementary materials, and lecture slides. Please check the site regularly for announcements, assignment reminders, and other messages.

The best way to reach me outside of class is via email. I try to respond to email as promptly as possible; if 24 hours have passed without a response, please feel free to re-send the message. Although I will not have set office hours, I would be happy to meet with you individually, so please let me know if you would like to talk. In particular, I encourage you to talk with me about both your educational intervention proposal and your plan for facilitating discussion.

## **Course Overview**

The majority of the course will be structured around discussing articles from the literature. You will be responsible for reading the assigned articles and thinking critically about them prior to class. All readings will be posted to our Canvas site, and they will be divided into core and supplemental articles. Each week, everyone in the class will read the core articles, which will generally consist of reviews and meta-analyses. In addition, you will select one of the supplemental articles to read (but feel free to read more); the supplemental articles will generally be reports of empirical research. To encourage thoughtful reading, I will require you to prepare two questions before class, one question about one or more of core articles and one question about the supplemental article that you chose.

Each class will be divided into three phases. First, we will have a face-to-face discussion of the core articles in a large group. Each week, two students will be assigned to co-lead of the face to-face discussion. Second, we will have three simultaneous online discussions of the supplemental articles using Drupal Chat, which can be accessed via Canvas. Students will participate in the discussion of whichever supplemental article they chose to read. At the end of the online discussions, we will come back together as a large group and share some of the take-away points that came out of each discussion. Third, I will prepare you for the readings for the following week by providing background on the next topic.

In addition to the assigned readings and class sessions, each student will independently develop an educational intervention proposal over the course of the semester; it is expected that this process will involve additional reading that is directly relevant to the proposal. Students will receive feedback on a full draft of their proposal from two of their classmates through a peer-review assignment. I will also provide feedback on the draft.

## **Evaluation**

The basis of evaluation is how much you learn and not how well you do in comparison to others in the class. Here are the key components:

### **Weekly Questions (10%)**

In order to facilitate discussion, you will be required to post two questions to Canvas by noon each Tuesday before class. One of the questions should focus on the core articles, while the other question should be about one of the supplemental articles. Everyone will be able to view all the questions (as well as who posted each question), so please review the questions generated by other students before you come to class.

### **Discussion Facilitation (10%)**

You will be responsible for facilitating discussion once during the course. Each student will co-lead one large group, face-to-face discussion of the core articles. Discussion leaders are encouraged to discuss their plans with me well in advance of the class, but at least two days before. You have a lot of freedom in how to structure and guide the discussion, so feel free to be creative. I also will help to facilitate discussion as needed.

### **Analysis Paper (20%)**

You will write a short analysis paper in which you will identify an aspect of educational practice and critique it. The specific focus of the paper is up to you, but possibilities include analyzing a pedagogical method, a technology-based learning system or tool, or an instructional resource (e.g., a textbook). The paper should be 2-3 double-spaced pages in length.

### **Educational Intervention Proposal (50%)**

You will develop a proposal for an intervention that combines your interests with a topic from the course. The proposed intervention can be framed as either a research study or a plan for implementation in educational practice. You will have numerous deadlines to help you stay on track (see Schedule below). The formal selection of a topic is required, but it will not be graded. You will hand in two drafts of the full proposal. Formal feedback will be provided on the first draft (see next section on Peer Review) and a tentative grade will be assigned. After revising the proposal to incorporate the feedback, you will submit a final draft and a final grade will be assigned that takes into account the degree of improvement. The proposal should be 10-12 double-spaced pages in length. If the proposal focuses on conducting a research study, then it should be written in APA style (see Resources for Writing folder in the files on Canvas).

**Peer Review (10%)**

You will be asked to write a formal review for two of your classmates' educational intervention proposals. Each review should be no longer than two double-spaced pages and provide constructive criticism to help improve the proposal. Reviews will be graded on a five-point scale.

**Policy for Late Assignments**

If you do not submit an assignment when it is due, then points will be deducted from the grade that you would have received had you turned in the assignment on time. 5% of the total points for the assignment will be deducted per day (or fraction thereof) that it is overdue; assignments that are more than 20 days overdue will receive a grade of 0. Extensions for individual assignments may be granted if you ask at least one day in advance.

## Schedule

Date	Topic	Major Assignments*
1/20	Introductions & Course Overview	
1/27	Evaluating Research & Theories	
2/3	History of Instructional Psychology; Theories of Learning & Motivation	
2/10	Teaching Approaches I — Strategies & Activities	
2/17	Teaching Approaches II — Pedagogical Methods	
2/24	Teaching Approaches III — Motivation & Emotion	
3/2	Teacher Knowledge and Practices	
3/9	Assessing the Efficacy of Instruction	Topic for Educational Intervention Proposal
3/16	<i>No Class (Spring Break)</i>	
3/23	Structuring Learning	Analysis Paper
3/30	Student Characteristics	
4/6	Technology I — Personalizing Learning	
4/13	Technology II — Multimedia & Virtual Environments	First Draft of Educational Intervention Proposal
4/20	Assessing Learning	
4/27	Curricula	Peer-Reviews
5/4	TBD	
5/11	<i>No Class (Finals)</i>	Final Draft of Educational Intervention Proposal

\* Readings can be found in Canvas.