Georgia Institute of Technology/School of Psychology

**PSYC 2130 INTRODUCTION TO EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY**

**(3 credit hours)**

**Instructor – Lizanne Destefano**

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Office: Cherry Emerson 231

Office hours: TBD

Class days/time/place: TBD

**Recommended Textbook:**

O’Donnell, A.M., Reeve, J., & Smith, J.K. (2012). Educational Psychology. Reflection for action. (3rd ed.). Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

**Additional sources:**

Other readings as assigned.

**Course Goals:**

Introduction to Educational Psychology applies the basic principles of child and adolescent development to the study of teaching and learning. By exploring research across the disciplines of both psychology and education, students gain a rich understanding of the dynamic nature of the classroom and the foundations of a professional knowledge base regarding the physical, social, and cognitive developmental influences on student learning. Students will also explore individual learner characteristics understand the necessity of differentiating instruction based on student traits. Through engagement with the course content and activities, students will explore the roles and responsibilities of teaching, and will reflect on the appropriateness of this career in light of their personal and career goals.

**Learning Objectives:**

By the end of the course, students will be able to:

1. Describe the strengths and limitations of key theories of cognitive development
2. Describe the effects of individual differences, including prior knowledge and cognitive ability on student learning
3. Characterize the role of motivation in classrooms and analyze the relationships between motivation and competence.
4. Describe various approaches to defining intelligence and explain the effects of these views on teachers and children.
5. Analyze instructional methods and designs using concepts from behavioral, social-cognitive, and information-processing theories of learning
6. Apply key concepts from behavioral, social-cognitive, and information-processing theories of learning to commonly occurring learning situations

**Prerequisites:**

None

**Course Requirements:**

Written assignments (20%)

Reflective journals (15%)

Online questions and discussion forums (10%)

Tests (30%)

Final Exam (10%)

Lesson plan (15%)

**Tests and final exam:**

The course will have three tests and a final exam. Out of the three tests, only two will count towards your grade (the grade of your lowest scoring test will be dropped). Each test will occur approximately third of the way through the semester. The tests will be comprised of multiple-choice and short-answer questions and they are intended to test knowledge of course content presented in lectures, assigned readings and group work. The final exam is cumulative and it includes multiple-choice items, short-answer questions, and one essay question.

**Written Assignments**

There will be two written assignments in the semester. As part of assignment #1 you will be asked to summarize an educational peer-reviewed empirical research article.

1. Empirical Article Summary

Instructions on how to find, read and summarize a peer-reviewed empirical article will be forthcoming.

1. Teaching Observation and Reflection Paper
2. *Teaching Observation:*

As part of this assignment you will be asked to spend 6 hours observing GT classes (not including classes you are currently taking). This experience is designed to help you reflect and understand the dynamics of a classroom from the perspective of a teacher.

**Take careful observation notes.** Things to keep in mind when taking notes:

* What level, subject(s) and teacher(s) you observe
* Climate (building, classroom, relationships within the classroom)
* The activities you are observing (small-group activities, whole-group activities, etc.)
* The demographic make-up of the class (gender, ethnicity—if known, etc.)
* When you talked with people (students and/or teacher), what did they say?
* What did you do during the observation?
* Layout of the classroom
* How the teacher interactions with his/her students and how groups are established
* How students interact with each other

1. *Teaching Observation Reflection Paper:*

The purpose of this paper is to allow you to reflect on your teaching observation and to more formally articulate how your perspective on teaching and learning has changed as a result of your observations. This paper should be grounded in your field notes and complemented by your understanding of the material that we have been discussing in class.

**Lesson Plan: Ted talk style**

At the end of the semester, we are asking each of you to give a 10-minute Ted talk to the class on a topic of your choice. We will talk more about this as the semester progresses.

**Reflective Journals**

As college students, you have spent somewhere around 15 years in school. You are also taking a number of other courses this semester. You have spent a lot of time learning, and a lot of time watching people teach (with varying degrees of effectiveness). Because this course focuses on the processes involved in teaching and learning, we’d like you to spend some time each week reflecting on how what you’re learning in this class relates to your experiences in other classroom. You will have 4 opportunities throughout the semester to journal about the connections you are seeing between the content we are covering and your previous (or concurrent) experiences in the classroom. You will be provided with prompts for these reflections. Journals should be uploaded to the course website before class, on the day they are due.

**Online questions and discussion forums:**

There will be a total of 4 discussion forums during the semester. For the forums, I will either post a question about your readings or a video related to the class content. The forums will be available online one week before they are due. Your participation in the forum involves reflecting on the topic and/or giving your opinion on the posted question, as well as responding and interacting with other classmates. The main purpose of the forum is to create an online debate on the topic at hand. Comments can be constructed based on what you have learned from the textbook, additional readings, or your experience as a learner. I would encourage you to take risks and voice your personal and professional perspectives, while also keeping a respectful interaction with your peers.

**The Grading Scale**:

A 90-100 D 60-69

B 80-89 F 59 and below

C 70-79

**Attendance:**

It is the student’s responsibility to be present for each class meeting. In case of inclement weather necessitating the close of school or the cancellation of class, you are responsible for keeping up with the schedule on the syllabus.

With regards to participation, you are expected to have read the assigned material prior to coming to class. Because this class is designed to be a discussion class, your participation is essential.

All assignments are due at the beginning of class.

In the event of a medical emergency or an illness that is severe enough to require medical attention, students are responsible for contacting the office the Office of the Dean of Students as soon as possible to report the medical issue or emergency, providing dated documentation from a medical professional and requesting assistance in notifying their instructors. The medical documentation will be handled confidentially within the Dean of Students Office and will inform a decision as to whether communication with that instructional faculty will honor a request from the Office of the Dean of Students to excuse a medical emergency or illness and allow make-up of the work missed, including homeworks, quizzes, presentations, examinations, or other class assignments.

**Academic Integrity:**

Students are expected to have a thorough understanding of the Georgia Institute of Technology academic honor code. All work submitted by the student—unless specifically noted in writing by the professor—must represent the individual effort of the student. Students are reminded of the obligations and expectations associated with the Georgia Tech Academic Honor Code and Student Code of Conduct, available online at www.honor.gatech.edu.

**Learning Accommodations**:

Students requesting accommodations as a result of a disability must provide a letter detailing the necessary accommodations from the Georgia Tech Office of Disability Services (<http://www.adapts.gatech.edu>).

**Schedule of Topics:**

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| **Date** | **Topic** | **Assignment Due** |
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| Week 1 | Introductions and course overview  Educational psychology as practice and field of study  Theories of development |  |
| Week 2 | Brain development and cognitive development (Piaget) | Journal #1 |
| Week 3 | Cognitive development (Vygotsky) and language development | Online forum #1 |
| Week 4 | Social development | Journal #2 |
| Week 5 | **Test 1** | Test 1 |
| Week 6 | Behavioral Learning Theory and classroom management | Online forum #2 |
| Week 7 | Cognitive Learning Theory- Theories and Memory | Written assignment # 1 (Summary of Empirical Article) |
| Week 8 | Cognitive Learning Theory- Complex cognition, knowledge construction and misconceptions | Journal #3 |
| Week 9 | Social learning Theory and collaborative learning | Online Forum #3 |
| Week 10 | Motivation and engagement and motivation to learn  **Test 2** | Test 2 |
| Week 11 | Variability in the classroom – Individual differences and diversity | Journal # 4 |
| Week 12 | Teaching and lesson planning | Written assignment #2 (Teaching Observation and Reflection Paper) |
| Week 13 | Learning assessment | Online Forum #4 |
| Week 14 | Lesson plan presentations  **Test 3** | Test 3  Lesson plan presentations |
| Week 16 | **READING PERIOD** |  |
|  | **FINAL EXAM** |  |