

EPSY 2020: Learning and Development in Education
Spring, 2003 Tuesday/Thursday 12:30-1:45pm

Basic Info:

Instructor: James Kevin Calhoun

Office: Rm 336, 542-4110; Email: through Web-CT mail

Office Hours: **11am-12pm** Tuesday and Thursday, and by appt.

Home Phone: 770/434-5298 (please use only in case of necessity)

Required Text: Woolfolk, A. E. (1995). Educational psychology (8th ed.).

Boston: Allyn & Bacon (available at bookstore):

Course Packet: The coursepak is available at Beljean's

What you may get from this course:

We are all in this course for a variety of reasons. For example, I am here because it is part of my job to teach courses like this, I am interested in how to make psychological theories useful to teachers and other educational practitioners, and I want to think more about how children's learning, development, and education are interrelated.

This course focuses on ideas about human learning and development, especially during the childhood years from preschool through adolescence, and what these ideas imply about education. This course will not tell you everything you need to know about child development or learning. It will not tell you the best way to teach all children, nor will it lay out an organized sequence of stages through which all "normal" children can be expected to pass at certain known ages. This is in part because nobody, including educational psychologists, yet knows all we need to know about learning and development, and in part because many people (including me) suspect that different children develop and learn differently, especially in different situations. This course does have four objectives:

1. Students will become familiar with common theories and ideas about child development and learning.
2. Students will develop the ability and disposition to examine such theories critically, in light of their other knowledge and experience.
3. Through examining these ideas, students will begin to formulate their own theories about learning and development.
4. Students will investigate potential implications of their own and others' ideas for their future practice, whether as educators, parents, or other professionals.

Your role:

You will be doing a number of different activities and assignments during this course. In all of them, I want you to *try to understand* what you hear and read, but also *think about* what you hear and read--to ask questions, to agree or disagree, to connect it with other things you have heard or read in your life and in this class. Finally, I will ask you to *share your thinking* both in class discussion and in writing. Sharing your thinking can feel very risky; we all have felt the fear that we will ask some stupid question (There are no stupid questions!) or put forward some naive interpretation or unpopular idea. But I will expect you to take those risks anyway. It may help to know that I will *not* expect you necessarily to agree with your classmates or me or with any of the writers we read. If you find yourself disagreeing (and I myself disagree with some of the ideas we will be discussing), I ask only that you disagree with respect for others' ideas and do your best to explain *why* you disagree--that is how you will help the rest of us learn. Also, many assignments will have elements of choice, and you are always free to propose alternative methods, topics, or readings to those I have set up.

More specifically, the course requirements include:

In-class Midterm – **February 18, 2003** (80 points)

Final Exam – **To be announced** (80 points)

Outreach project – **(TBA)**(80 points) - This project is intended to help you extend your learning beyond the boundaries of this class. There are many different ways to do this--see the attached handout.

Exams will be essay questions only. They will focus on applying the ideas we have been discussing in class to various real-life classroom situations. That is, you will not be asked to *remember* a specific "right" answer from your readings or class discussions, but rather to *construct* and *support* reasonable explanations of and solutions for common classroom problems. You will be given all exam questions ahead of time, and all questions will be either open book or take-home format.

Hint: Therefore, as you read, do *not* try to memorize or take traditional notes on what you read; remember, the exams will not ask you to regurgitate facts from memory. Instead, as you read, I want you to do two things. First, try to *understand* what the author is trying to say and why he or she is trying to say it. Second, "talk with" the author in your head: ask questions where the author seems to be unclear; notice the ideas that seem particularly interesting or horrible to you; remember things in your own life, or that you have read or heard elsewhere, that seem to support or contradict what the author is saying. Be open to new ideas or inspirations that come to you, even if they are only indirectly related to what you are reading. *As you read, note down these thoughts briefly in the margins* (or on separate paper, if you really prefer). These notes will be your initial record of the "conversation" you had with this author. By the way, the same technique applies to note taking in class. By all means, write down anything someone else says in class that really strikes you, but also be sure to write down the questions you develop, the ideas you have, and the connections you make.

Daily Class Participation (80 points) - My own theory of learning includes the idea that people understand things best when they have a chance to talk or write about them, preferably both; so I consider your participation in class discussions and activities to be an important part of your learning. Therefore, you will be doing some in-class activities each week, often in small groups; each activity will count 4 points toward the class participation portion of your grade.

Journals - Due alternate Thursday (80 points) - You will be writing eight biweekly journals about the readings and/or discussions we have had in class. These journals have two purposes: to give you a specific occasion to think more deeply about particular aspects or issues we have covered in the previous week, and to help me get an idea of what you are thinking about, what interests you, what seems confusing, etc. To these ends, in each journal entry I will ask you to do two things:

1. Address a specific question that I will pose for each journal. Every student will address this one question, which will be posted on the class Web-CT site.
2. Discuss issues or examples or ideas that really struck you in the previous two week's readings or discussion. In discussing these, talk about why they seemed significant to you and whether and why you agreed/disagreed with the authors/speakers. Many times you will want to draw connections between the idea you are writing about and things we have already read or discussed, things you have read outside of this class, or your own personal experiences. NOTE: Real life experiences are *at least* as important to consider in discussing the ideas we will study as other academic writings or theories.

These journals are partial records of your thoughts on the class; I do *not* want a summary of the readings. I will read and comment on these journals every two weeks. In this way, I hope to be able to address questions you still have and also to get to know each of you better than I can during class discussions. Each of the eight journals you will write is worth eight (10) points. I will give the full ten points to every journal entry that *thoughtfully* addresses *all* of the requirements outlined above. I expect most people will get 10s on most journals. Journals that do not address all the requirements or seem to show only perfunctory thought in addressing them will given less than the full eight points. Although there is no official page limit, I think it would be very hard to write a decent journal entry that was under two pages.

NOTE-NOTE-NOTE! Class assignments, grades, (**reflections, if you are doing this**) and all Email will be handled through the class Web-CT site, which you will need to access. If you do not know how to access or use Web-CT, you can probably find a classmate who does. You can also check <https://webct.uga.edu/www/student/guide/for> tutorials and help, and get individual help via the OIT help desk, 2-4357, or Rm. 231 Aderhold.

Journals (reflections), in-class activities, and exams will NOT be evaluated for grammar or other mechanics of writing. As long as I can tell what you were trying to say, your formal writing ability will not affect these grades. **Also, journals (reflections) and class activities CANNOT be made-up or turned in late.** I will not take these late in part because they are most useful for your learning when done right after the readings, and partly because I simply won't be able to keep up otherwise. If you miss class on a day that we do a class activity, you will simply miss the points for that day. If you know you will be missing class on a Monday/Tuesday, you may have someone else bring your journal (reflections), turn it in to my mailbox in Room 329 or even Email me your entry--as long as I receive it by class time on the day they are due. Exams can be taken early by arrangement; they can only be made-up in the case of documented emergencies.

My role:

I am responsible for the basic structure of the course. I am here to help you think about the ideas and theories presented in this course. I also will share with you my own ideas and some of my experiences, as I hope you will share yours with me. I am not here to tell you the one right way to teach or learn--no one knows that.

Helping students: My office hours are listed above. I will also be available outside these hours by appointment, if you simply cannot come in during regular times. During these times I will be happy to discuss, explain, or argue about any of the ideas that have come up in the readings or in class. I will also be happy to clarify my ideas on the various assignments, give you a "leg-up" in thinking about how to get started, or discuss my feedback on any completed assignments. I will not pre-read completed assignments in detail or proofread, as I think this would be unfair to other students, although you should certainly feel free to ask a question about a particular phrase or point you want to make. You also have my home phone above, and I do not mind at all if you call me with brief questions about assignments, etc., although I am not open to helping you construct an entire assignment or having long debates over the phone. If Web-CT goes down or there is some other emergency, you can also Email me at Jcalh@arches.uga.edu, but, except for such circumstances, please send all class-related Emails through Web-CT mail.

Grading: As you can see, a total of 400 points are possible. Your grades so far and point totals will be listed as I do them on the class Web-CT site. Incompletes are rare and are only given with the advice of Student Affairs. Withdrawals will follow the University policy. I anticipate using the following grade distribution for final grades:

A = 360 and over
B = 320-359
C = 280-319
D = 240-279
F = below 240

You will *not* be competing against each other on either assignment grades or final grades. I will be perfectly happy to give out all A's; indeed, that would be the ideal outcome, if you and I are both doing our jobs. Also, although for my self-preservation, I am going to stick closely with the late paper policies outlined above, obviously if you end up in the hospital with double pneumonia, something will have to be negotiated. Just please talk with me as soon as possible! Please note that the University's policies on academic honesty are followed scrupulously in this course. Please consult "The Student Guide to Academic Honesty" to refresh yourself on these guidelines.

Learning: I am always learning when I teach this class, from each of you and from the discussions we will have together. I will try to compile some of the ideas you generate in small groups and journals to share with the class as a whole. So if you see me scribble something down while you're talking, don't worry--it's probably just because it was such a good idea!

***If you have a question concerning a grade you receive, please notify me **within a week** so that we may discuss it.

