ITLS 6540: Learning Theory
Fall 2017

Instructor	
Professor: Jody Clarke-Midura	
Office: EDUC 214	
Office Hours: By appointment	
Phone: 435-797-0571	
E-Mail: jody.clarke@usu.edu	

Course Description

Instructional Technologists and Learning Scientists alike are centrally concerned with how to design for and support *learning*. This course provides an overview of major theoretical perspectives that attempt to describe how learning works. It also explores some contemporary learning and learning environment issues of interest to instructional technologists and Learning Scientists.

Course Objectives

The course is designed to explore the following core questions:

- *What constitutes learning? How do prominent theories of learning frame learning, its processes and mechanisms? What are the relationships and disconnections among different learning theories?*
- *What are the similarities and differences between the behaviorist, cognitivist, and sociocultural paradigms of learning and how do these affect teaching practices?*
- *What are some of the basic concepts and findings from cognitive research and how do these concepts apply to the design and implementation of learning environments?*
- *How do these constructs relate to your own experiences as a learner and educator?*

At the end of the course, you will be asked to complete an IDEA evaluation and report on how you think the class met the learning objectives. The table below presents the three objectives and how the assignments are designed to meet them:

IDEA Course Objective	Assignment/Activity	Description
Learning fundamental principles, generalizations theories.	Course readings, course discussion, Presentations	Through the readings and discussions you will become familiar with prominent theories of learning.
Learning to apply course materials to improve rational thinking, problem solving and decisions.	Reading guides, presentation, learning blogs, observation project, final project	You will reflect on the readings and various learning theories and apply them to your own personal

IDEA Course Objective	Assignment/Activity	Description
		learning and evaluate a learning context.
Developing specific skills, competencies and points of view needed by professionals in the field most closely related to the course.	Course readings, course discussion, presentations, reading guides, learning blogs.	Through active involvement in the course (reading, blogging, reflecting) you will become aware of the prominent learning theories in the field.

Required textbooks and materials

There is no required text for the course. I am using a mixture of articles and textbook chapters that will be available through canvas.

Course Format

Online
Delivery of this course is online, through the Canvas learning management system. Each week of the course begins and ends on Wednesday, although some assignments will have deadlines on Thursday or Friday (those assignments usually involve leaving feedback on others' work – peer review, discussions, and commenting on others' posts).

You can expect the following from the instructor:

Weekly overviews or mini-lectures that will offer you some background on the week's readings.

Quick responses to requests to meet with the instructor by phone, in person, or in a virtual conference room (within 48 hours but more quickly on weekdays). Should there be multiple student requests (at least 1/3 of the class), a formal conference day and time will be scheduled and an announcement encouraging others to participate will be made on the course site.

Because this course is online, you will be doing a fair amount of independent reading and need to be a self-motivated and independent learner. Please be aware that the mini-lectures and the course readings are complementary. You will not be able to succeed in this class if you only watch lectures or overviews and skip the readings.

Course Requirements

1. Reading-guide responses Due: Weekly   Group Assignment

Purpose: The purpose of this assignment is to get you to reflect on the readings and become familiar with the concepts.
Percent of course grade: 15%
Type of assignment: Group

Throughout the semester, you will need to complete 6 **reading guides**. There are 2 extra guides for weeks 12 and 13 that are optional extra credit. Each reading guide is a set of challenging questions about the readings or the main ideas for the week. Each reading guide is completed and submitted by a group. See Canvas for how to find and create a reading partner.

Reading guide responses are a combination of short answer and design challenges. Short-answer format require a minimum of a few sentences up to a few paragraphs in response. These are designed to help you reflect about the material and aid in your preparation for assignments and the final project.

I recommend you read the reading guides *before* you do your weekly reading.

Reading guides are due Thursday evenings at midnight.

2. Learning Blog Due: Weekly Individual Assignment
Purpose: The purpose of this assignment is to use your own experience as a learner together with the insights you are gaining through readings and class discussions to examine a case of learning—your own.
Percent of Course Grade: 25%
Type of Assignment: Individual

This is a class about learning. You will learn something new and write and reflect on the process. You should apply what we read and discuss in class to your own experience.

3. Observation Project Individual Assignment
Purpose: To observe learning in context.
Percent of Course Grade: 10%
Type of Assignment: Individual

You are to observe at least 40 minutes of teaching that is not your own and write up your observations in specific ways. This can be from nearly any teaching situation. If you are a classroom teacher you may want to observe another classroom teacher. You can also think out of the box and observe: exercise class, Sunday School, human resources class, a course at REI or Home Depot, ... think creatively!

Get permission from the instructor before you do this, especially if you're observing in a school classroom or space where you stick out!

Write a 1-page (single-spaced) summary of the activities you observed in enough detail that someone who is not familiar with classroom practice could visualize what was happening based on your description. For example, if someone were to take what you

observed and make a movie of it, they should have enough information in your summary to do a decent job of replicating what you saw. In your summary, you should include the activities, some of the discourse, some of the student behaviors, the materials, and of course the content.

Following this page long description, write at least a paragraph explaining what paradigm(s) of learning (i.e., Behaviorism, Cognitivism, Constructivim, Socioculturalism) you believe are at work in the teacher's design and delivery of instruction and citing your evidence for that from your observation and your understanding of the readings.

Then you are to rewrite your observation assuming the events had unfolded in such a way that implied the teacher was strongly associated with a different learning paradigm. (3a) In roughly half of a page or more, describe the other paradigm of learning, and then (3b) produce a new page describing the how the observed instruction would look given a firm commitment to the other paradigm for learning.

Your total document should be separated by headers and be 3-5 pages single-spaced. This assignment is due TBD.

This assignment will also be peer reviewed. You will need to review another person's assignment (randomly selected!) and submit that by the following week.

4.Take on a Theory- Design a Class Lesson-Theory into Practice (TiP)
Purpose: To learn a theory deeply and apply it to a learning context
Percent of course grade: 10%
Type of Assignment: Group

You will develop an instructional application of a learning theory. During the first week, you will find a **partner** with whom you will collaborate with to develop a class activity on a particular theory. For example, you sign up for Motivation and then during that week, you lead a class activity that engages students in the theory. The activity must be hands on and involve discussion. No lectures. The activity should demonstrate your knowledge of the theory and how it informs design of learning (either formal or informal). What does the theory look like in action? Face-to-face students should plan on 45-60 minutes (including discussion). Online students should plan an activity and then discussion prompts that you will monitor throughout the week.

You must meet with the instructor at least 5 days before you present. I have some materials that you may want to use.

5. Online participation or Class attendance
Purpose: To gain a better understanding of the readings and course content.
Percent of Course Grade: 20%
Type of Assignment: Individual

ONLINE:

Throughout the term, you will be asked to participate in some short activities online. These activities may, for instance, take the form of an experiment that was actually done in learning or psychology research and will help you to understand the readings or topics being covered. They will be announced within each learning module.

You will also be required to post questions and comments on weekly discussion boards. These are *ungraded* but *required*. Be thoughtful, ask questions, provide answers, really dig into the texts and ideas!

Your overall participation in the discussion boards and completion of the short online activities will be considered when determining your level of participation at the end of the semester. Also, note that Canvas maintains automatic records of what resources you use on the website. Your use of online materials will be considered when determining your level of participation.

FACE TO FACE:
Class presence and participation points are given to encourage your active class participation and discussion. You will be rewarded with a perfect score as long as you come to class and actively contribute to the class discussion and activities.

Please send me a brief e-mail to explain any absence in advance. Students who repeatedly arrive late to class will have their Class Participation grade lowered.

6. Final Project: Design Instruction
Purpose: To reflect on your learning in the course and apply 2-3 theories to design of instruction (either formal or informal)
Percent of Course Grade: 20%
Type of Assignment: Group

Each student is required to complete a final project for this course. The final project is about application— applying what you learned about principles, theories, and frameworks to develop an instructional activity. The final project has two parts: (1) a design document (or lesson plan) for your instructional activity and (2) a written, two-page discussion of how the learning theories we covered during the past semester informed the design of your instructional activity. Understanding that many of you come from different professional backgrounds, the instructional activity can occur within a classroom, outside the classroom, in after-school programs, community-based organizations, museums, libraries, business settings, or at home.

The design document is an outline, or roadmap, of what your learning audience needs to learn and how learning will be done effectively throughout your instructional activity. It can be structured as a lesson plan.

The written portion of your final project must include a detailed discussion of your instructional activity and describe how multiple learning theories informed the design of your instructional activity. The written assignment must be at least two pages. It also must

be formatted to be single-spaced, 12-point font, Times New Roman font, and 1 inch margins. The following grading rubric discusses the criteria for the writing portion of your final project. Please review the rubric in canvas before you start the project so you are aware of what to include and what we will be grading you on.

Class Schedule

Week	Dates	Topics	Assignments Due
1	*8/28-9/3*	*Introduction-* Read L&C chapter 1, Wortham, 2003.	1. Learning Confessional 2. Pick a topic to teach with a partner 3. Discussion Response to Wortham-
2	*9/4 – 9/10*	*Behaviorism-* Readings: L&C Ch. 2, pp 6 to top of 25. Stop at section: Behaviorism challenged *Ertmer & Newby pp 45-50* *Need to understand more:* *Omrod part 2: Covers Operant conditioning (Skinner)* *Omrod part 1: Covers classical conditioning (Pavlov)* *Schunk, Operant Conditioning, p.88-116*	1. Reading guide on behaviorism 2. Discussion on behaviorism 3. Learning blog proposal
3	*9/11-9/17*	*Cognitivism-* *Readings:* *Nussbaum Paper* *Possibly Chapter 7 in Text:* Eggen and Kauchak: Cognitive Views of learning *Mayer (1996). Learners as Information Processers* https://quizlet.com/143618044/edu-psy-chapter-7-eggen-kauchak-flash-cards/	1. *Reading guide on Cognitivism* 2. *Discussion on cognitivism* 3. *Learning blog proposal*

Week	Dates	Topics	Assignments Due
4	9/18-9/24	*Constructivism-* *Readings:* 1. *Jonassen, D. (1994). Thinking Technology: Toward a Constructivist Design Model* 2. *Schunk. Chapter 6: Constructivism. (warning this is a long chapter).*	1. *Reading guide on constructivism* 2. *Discussion on constructivism* 3. *Learning blog 1*
5	9/25-10/1	*Review of Behaviorism, Cognitivism, Constructivism* *Readings:* *Ertmer & Newby(2013). Behaviorism, Cognitivism, Constructivism: Comparing Critical Features.* *Cooper (1993). Paradigm Shifts in Designed Instruction.* I may add some summaries for you.	1. *Chart on 3 paradigms* 2. *Discussion* 3. *Learning blog 2*
6	10/2-10/8	*Social Cognitive Theory* *Readings:* [Schunk. Chapter 4.](#) Paper that may help you understand it better: Pajares, F. Overview of Social Cognitive Theory and of Self-Efficacy Bandura (2005). Evolution of Social Cognitive Theory	1. *Reading guide* 2. *Discussion* 3. *Learning blog 3*

Week	Dates	Topics	Assignments Due
7	10/9-10/15	*Situated Cognition/Sociocultural Approaches* *Readings:* Brown, Collins, & Duguid (1989) Wenger 1998 Prologue: 1-39	1. *Reading guide* 2. *Discussion* 3. *Learning Blog 4*
8	10/16-10/22	*FALL BREAK: NO Class* *PLEASE NOTE YOU STILL HAVE TO DO YOUR LEARNING BLOG THIS WEEK!*	*Think about observation project* *Think about final project* **Learning blog 5**
9	10/23-10/29	*Vygotsky, Mediation, & Artifacts* *Readings:* *Vygotsky, L. S. (1978). Mind in society. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press. (Chapters 2, 3, & 6, pp. 79-91).*	1. *Reading guide* 2. *Discussion* 3. *Learning blog 6*
10	10/30-11/5	*Problem Based Learning* *Readings:* Hmelo Silver 2004 Kirschner, Sweller, Clark 2006	1. *Discussion* 2. *Learning blog 7*
11	11/6-11/12	*Metacognition* *Readings:* *L&C p. 119 – 122* *Flavel (1979) Metacognition and Monitoring* *White & Frederiksen (1998)*	1. *Discussion* 2. *Learning blog 8*

Week	Dates	Topics	Assignments Due
12	*11/13-11/19*	*Motivation* *Readings:* Dweck (2007). Mindset Ryan & Deci (2000) Intrinsic and Extrinsic Motivations: Classic Definitions and New Directions	1. *Optional reading guide* 2. *Discussion* 3. *Observation project due*
	11/20-11/26	*THANKSGIVING*	
13	*11/27-12/3*	*Constructionism* *Readings:* Kafai (2006) Harel (1990)	1. *Optional Reading guide* 2. *Final project draft due*
14	*12/4-12/10*	*Review*	
15		*FINAL PROJECT DUE*	*Final project due*

Grading

Your final grade will be computed based on the following percentages. There is no curve for the class. Grades will be assigned based on the scale below, with your final grade rounded to the nearest tenth of a percentage point. Further below are a few notes about grading policies and procedures.

Grade Weightings

Reading Guides	30%
Learning Blog	30%
Online Discussion- online only	20%
Observation Project	10%
Final Reflection Paper	10%

Grading scale	
A	93 – 100%
A-	90 – 92.9%
B+	87 – 89.9%
B	83 – 86.9%
B-	80 – 82.9%
C+	77 – 79.9%
C	73 – 76.9%
C-	70 – 72.9%
D+	67 – 69.9%
D	63 – 66.9%
D-	60 – 62.9%

Reading guides and reading partners

Each week, you are expected to communicate and collaborate with a reading partner you choose at the beginning of the semester. You may work with your reading partner in any way you see fit as long as you are *collaborating* and *helping each other*. For example, you might set up a weekly meeting in your office or at the library, email each other regularly, have regular phone calls, or post messages to each other in a private discussion board. You should consider doing a combination of these, not just one.

Reading guides will be graded based on a randomly selected subset of questions in your reading guide. If you wish for feedback on a specific question, you may make a request for the instructor to provide comments. However, if that question was not randomly selected to be graded, it will not count toward your assignment grade.

Your two lowest reading guide grades will be dropped. If you are especially busy one week, you can take a grade of zero and get that grade dropped when your final grade is calculated.

Late submissions

Reading guides are not accepted late. You may submit your summaries or abstracts up to 1 week late with a 50% penalty on your total possible grade. For example, for an assignment worth 20 points, 10 points will be subtracted off of your total grade if it is submitted within 1 week after the deadline. **You may not submit any assignment more than 1 week late.** Late midterm or final papers will not be accepted. Late presentations are not allowed.

Plagiarism

As stated in the USU Student Code, plagiarism is "the act of representing, by paraphrase or direct quotation, the published or unpublished work of another person as one's own in any academic exercise or activity without full and clear acknowledgment. It also includes using materials prepared by another person or by an agency engaged in the sale of term papers or other academic materials." Plagiarism is harmful both for the author of the original work and for the plagiarizer. Any individuals involved in plagiarizing work will receive an automatic fail for the assignment or project and will be immediately reported to the university administration.

Persons with Disabilities

Students with documented disabilities who are in need of academic accommodations should immediately notify the instructor and/or contact the Disability Resource Center at (435) 797-2444 and fill out an application for services. Accommodations are individualized and in accordance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1992.

Incompletes

In accordance with University policy, incompletes are not to be given for poor performance. There will be no incompletes given except for conditions beyond the student's control, including:

- Incapacitating illnesses that prevent a student from attending classes for a period of at least two weeks
- A death in the immediate family
- Financial responsibilities requiring a student to alter course schedule to secure employment
- Change in work schedule as required by an employer

Other, *unexpected* emergencies may be considered on a case-by-case basis. Regardless of the cause for the incomplete, appropriate documentation of the circumstances is required for an extension to be considered.