

**EDHD 722**

**LEARNING THEORY AND THE EDUCATIVE PROCESS**

Dr. Patricia A. Alexander

Fall 2019  
Tuesday 4:15-7:00  
EDUC 3236

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## **Course Description:**

In EDHD 722, we engage in the advanced study of theories, issues, and research in several categories of cognition and learning applied to education and the helping professions. In this course, we will explore some of the emerging theories of cognition and learning that are increasingly referenced in the literature. Among those theories are situated cognition, social cognition, social constructivism, and radical constructivism. For each of the theoretical orientations, we will read and discuss some of the philosophical and psychological writings that have been foundational to the movement, as well as several recent works in which the theory is articulated or applied. In addition, ramifications of these theories for learning and teaching will be considered.

## **Course Readings:**

The readings for this course consist of book chapters and journal articles that underlie, outline, or apply to current learning theories. A selection of readings will be assigned on a weekly basis and students will be expected to react verbally and in writing to these various readings.

## **Theoretical Expertise:**

Students are to develop expertise in any one of the targeted learning theories. Part of that expertise development requires the identification, critical analysis, and summary of at least 4 primary outside readings within that chosen theoretical framework. Critical analysis of those readings entails consideration of the basic tenets, strengths, and limitations of that theory or the research framed within that theory. Further, it is expected that the judgments and insights garnered from this analysis will be contributed to class discussion. An annotated bibliography of your outside readings will be provided to the class members.

## **Culminating Activity:**

As a culminating activity, students will present their personal theory of learning. That personal theory may be consistent with an established theoretical model (e.g., situated cognition or information-processing theory), or it may represent a unique perspective on human learning. The presentation, which will be accompanied by a written product (e.g., model with explanation or summary description), should address the basic tenets and parameters of the theory.

## **Course Evaluation:**

Students' performance in this course will be judged in the following manner:

4 Reaction Papers (1 or 2 pages each)	40
Theoretical Expertise Activity	20
Culminating Theory Presentation	40
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100</b>

## CLASS POLICIES\*\*

**Academic integrity:** The University of Maryland, College Park has a student-administered Honor Code and Honor Pledge. For more information on the Code of Academic Integrity or the Student Honor Council, please visit <https://www.studentconduct.umd.edu/>. The code sets standards for academic integrity at Maryland for all undergraduate and graduate students. As a student you are responsible for upholding these standards for this course. It is very important for you to be aware of the consequences of cheating, fabrication, facilitation, and plagiarism. The code prohibits students from cheating, fabrication, facilitating academic dishonesty, and plagiarism. Instances of this include submitting someone else's work as your own, submitting your own work completed for another class without permission, or failing to properly cite information other than your own (found in journals, books, online, or otherwise). Any form of academic dishonesty will not be tolerated, and any sign of academic dishonesty will be reported to the appropriate University officials.

**Special needs:** If you have a registered disability that will require accommodation, please see the instructor so necessary arrangements can be made. If you have a disability and have not yet registered with the University, please contact the Counseling Center's Office of Accessibility and Disability Services at <https://www.counseling.umd.edu/ads/start/eligibility/> as soon as possible.

**Religious observances:** The University of Maryland policy on religious observances states that students not be penalized in any way for participation in religious observances. Students shall be allowed, whenever possible, to make up academic assignments that are missed due to such absences. However, the student must contact the instructor **before** the absence with a written notification of the projected absence, and arrangements will be made for make-up work or examinations.

**Course evaluations:** As a member of our academic community, students have a number of important responsibilities. One of these responsibilities is to submit course evaluations each term through CourseEvalUM in order to help faculty and administrators improve teaching and learning at Maryland. All information submitted to CourseEvalUM is confidential. Campus will notify you when CourseEvalUM is open for you to complete your evaluations for fall semester courses.

**Missed single class due to illness:** Once during a semester, a student's self-authored note will be accepted as an excuse for missing a minor scheduled grading event in a single class session if the note documents the date of the illness, acknowledgement from the student that information provided in the note is correct, and a statement that the student understands that providing false information is a violation of the Code of Student Conduct. Students are expected to attempt to inform the instructor of the illness prior to the date of the missed class.\*

**Major scheduled grading events:** Major Scheduled Grading Events (MGE) are indicated on the syllabus. The conditions for accepting a self-signed note do not apply to these events. Written, signed documentation by a health care professional, or other professional in the case of non-medical reasons (see below) of a University-approved excuse for the student's absence must be supplied. This documentation must include verification of treatment dates and the time period

for which the student was unable to meet course requirements. Providers should not include diagnostic information. Without this documentation, opportunities to make up missed assignments or assessments will not be provided.

**Non-consecutive, medically necessitated absences from multiple class sessions:** Students who throughout the semester miss multiple, non-consecutive class sessions due to medical problems must provide written documentation from a health care professional that their attendance on those days was prohibited for medical reasons.

**Non-medical excused absences:** According to University policy, non-medical excused absences for missed assignments or assessments may include illness of a dependent, religious observance, involvement in University activities at the request of University officials, or circumstances that are beyond the control of the student. Students asking for excused absence for any of those reasons must also supply appropriate written documentation of the cause and make every attempt to inform the instructor prior to the date of the missed class.

\*\*Please see the University's website for graduate course-related policies at:  
<https://gradschool.umd.edu/course-related-policies>.

## Bibliography

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## WEEKLY TOPICS

DATE	TOPIC	READINGS	ASSIGNMENTS
Aug. 27	Course Overview: What Good is Theory Anyway?	Alexander; Plato	
Sept. 3	Knowledge, Learning, and the Educational Process	Alexander, Schallert, & Reynolds; Sford	
10	Pragmatism and Its Relation to Current Theories	James (Talks; Chaps 1, 2, 9, and 10)	
17	Pragmatism Continued	Dewey	<b>Reaction Paper 1</b>
24	Social Views of Cognition	Vygotsky <sup>1</sup> (Context, Chaps 2 & 7); Piaget <sup>2</sup> (Response)	
Oct. 1	Other Influential Roots	Bandura; Gibson; Watson & Rayner	<b>Reaction Paper 2</b>
8	<b>NO CLASS</b>		
15	What is Constructivism Anyway?	Cobb <sup>1</sup> (1994); Phillips <sup>2</sup> ; von Glasersfeld <sup>3</sup> (1996);	
22	Radical Constructivism	Bereiter (1994); Woods & Murphy	
29	Is Cognition in the Mind or In the Environment?	Anderson et al.; von Glasersfeld (1995);	
Nov. 5	<b>NO CLASS</b>		
12	Is the Mental Re-Presentation of Information Necessary?	Greeno & Moore <sup>3</sup> ; Norman <sup>1</sup> ; Vera & Simon <sup>2</sup>	<b>Reaction Paper 3</b>
19	Situated Cognition	Brown, Collins, & Duguid; Greeno; Robbins & Ayede	
26	Positioning Learning in the Sociocultural Context	*Lave	
Dec. 3	Sociocultural Views Continued	*Rogoff	<b>Reaction Paper 4</b>
10	<b>DINNER</b>	<b>Personal Theory and Annotated Bibliography Due</b>	

\* Denotes required texts for the course.

<sup>1</sup>Indicates the recommended order of reading.