

U315-301: Human Abilities and Learning

Course Format: Online

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Course credits: 3

Pre/Corequisites: None; Appropriate for second-year or higher college students.

Course Description: This course will provide you with a developmental framework and analysis of pertinent educational research on human abilities and learning along with opportunities to practice critical thinking and application based on case study examples and collegial discussions. The emphasis in this course is on understanding the developmental processes in learners and the psychological principles related to effective teaching and learning. In addition to the developmental framework for learning and teaching, this course offers thoughtful consideration of the impact of sociocultural differences among students, such as ethnic background, family environment, and socioeconomic status. Also, this course emphasizes positive and creative approaches to address learning differences and abilities. You will be learning, analyzing, and creating applications for many important aspects of educational psychology, including theories of social development, emotional development, parent and peer relationships, sociocultural differences, cognitive development, perspective taking, moral development, motivation, productive learning environments, intelligence, learning differences, classroom management, instruction planning, and assessment.

Required Course Materials

- Bohlin, L., Cisero Durwin, C., & Reese-Weber, M. (2011). EdPsych: Modules (2nd ed.). McGraw-Hill Education.
- Abbeduto, L. S., & Symons, F. (2009). Taking Sides: Clashing Views in Educational Psychology (6th ed.). McGraw-Hill/Dushkin.

Course Learning Objectives

- Describe the varied contexts of human development and plan appropriate applications for a specific multicultural classroom setting.
- Explain and evaluate theories of human social, emotional, and moral development and construct effective application for specific classroom settings and/or cases.
- Describe and evaluate theories and research on learning and cognitive development and develop applications for an effective, encouraging, and creative classroom environment.
- Describe and contrast theories of classroom management and plan creative implementations for a specific classroom setting and/or case study.
- Describe learning differences and develop plans for an effective and encouraging learning environment for students with these differences.
- Contrast and compare different assessment strategies and plan effective assessments for specific purposes in the classroom.

Course Overview

UNIT #	UNIT TOPIC	EVALUATED ACTIVITIES
1	Introduction and Personal Development	Reflection Assignment 1 and Essay Assignment 1
2	Personal Development, continued	Reflection Assignment 2 and Essay Assignment 2
3	The Developing Learning	Reflection Assignment 3 and Essay Assignment 3
4	Learning Theories	Reflection Assignment 4 and Essay Assignment 4
5	Cognitive Processes	Reflection Assignment 5, Essay Assignment 5, and Midcourse Reflection Application Paper 1
6	Motivation	Reflection Assignment 6 and Essay Assignment 6
7	Classroom Management and Instruction	Reflection Assignment 7 and Essay Assignment 7
8	Classroom Management and Instruction, cont.	Reflection Assignment 8 and Essay Assignment 8
9	Learner Differences: Programming Models and Methods	Reflection Assignment 9 and Essay Assignment 9
10	Learning Differences Continued	Reflection Assignment 10, Essay Assignment 10, and Midcourse Reflective Application Paper 2
11	Classroom Assessment: Management and Communication	Reflection Assignment 11 and Essay Assignment 11
12	Standardized Testing: Teaching for Learning	Reflection Assignment 12, Essay Assignment 12, and Final Summary Reflective Application Paper

Evaluation Methods

Your final grade will be based on your performance on the following:

- 1) Reflection Assignments (6 graded) = 30 points.
- 2) Essay Assignments (31 total) = 124 points
- 3) Midcourse Reflection Application Papers (2 total) = 50 points
- 4) Summary Reflection Application Paper (1 total) = 50 points

Reflection Assignments (5 points each)

You will be asked to engage in discussions about topics from the readings (grounded in textbook content but derived primarily from the assigned *Taking Sides* readings) and then write a reflection. Discussion questions will be provided as well as general reflection guidelines. The discussions will be conversations between professional colleagues or community members but also “conversations” with the theorists and researchers from the course content. As this is an asynchronous course, you may need suggestions for a conversation partner for some units.

The reflection discussions and assignments will reflect your ability to contrast and compare ideas, think of pros and cons of applications of these ideas, and reflect on what you have learned and on what you contributed to the conversation. The reflection assignments can also help you prepare for the application papers, and ideas for the papers will be provided at the end of each reflection assignment.

Essay Assignments (4 points each)

In each unit of the course, you will be asked to answer approximately three essay questions for each textbook module. The number of textbook modules included in a unit will range from two to three. Each essay topic will typically take several paragraphs and one to two pages to answer. The essay question sets will guide you to

demonstrate your comprehension of a specific module topic, analyze and evaluate the theory or research on this topic, and describe a creative classroom application. You will be assessed on all thirty-one module essay topics.

Midcourse Reflection Application Papers (25 points each)

You will be asked to submit two midcourse papers that will be a compilation of the course content (including the case studies) and the ideas generated in the discussions and in your reflection assignments. You will be given guiding questions to help you write a design for an effective learning environment (elementary, middle school, high school, youth service, or environments of your choice) based on the topic clusters 1 through 4 for the first midcourse paper and topic clusters 5 through 7 for the second midcourse paper. You will be asked to explain some important aspects of a theory from each cluster topic that you will be implementing, describe a lesson design that takes into account these theories, explain your means of evaluating the effectiveness of your lesson design, and consider how you might change your lesson design based on this evaluation.

Summary Reflection Application Paper (50 points)

You will be asked to submit one final paper, which will be similar to the midcourse reflection application papers in every respect, except that it will be cumulative in that all the topic clusters will be included. You will be given guiding questions to help you choose carefully among all the topics that you would like to bring together for this final paper. There should be at least one topic from Clusters 1-4, one topic from Clusters 5-7, and one topic from Clusters 8-9. These can be topics that interest you particularly or topics that you have explored or applied in the past, or topics that you have had success with in the discussions and in your reflection journal entries. Again, you will be asked to explain some important aspects of a theory from each cluster topic that you will be implementing, describe a lesson design that takes into account these theories, explain your means of evaluating the effectiveness of your lesson design, and consider how you might change your lesson design based on this evaluation.

Exam Method: There are no exams in this course

Grading Scale

The following grading scale is used to evaluate all course requirements and determine your final grade:

A = 93–100	B = 83–87.9	C = 70–77.9	D = 60–69.9
AB = 88–92.9	BC = 78–82.9		F = Below 60

Pass/Fail Option

Students who enroll in an Independent Learning (IL) course under the pass/fail option will receive a final grade of S in place of a final grade equivalent to an A, AB, B, BC, or C and a final grade of U in place of a final grade equivalent to a D or F.