

TENTATIVE
PG 7120: The Teaching of Psychology
COURSE SYLLABUS
Spring, 2009

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Office Hours: Anytime you need to see me—just call or e-mail me!

Course Objectives: This course serves two primary and equally important functions:

1. The first objective of this course is to help you learn the basic principles of good teaching within the context of your graduate teaching responsibilities. These tenets include, but are not limited to, adequate preparation, proper organization, student-teacher rapport, effective use of class time, clear communication of topical ideas and issues, and fair evaluation of students' understanding of the subject matter. Thus, this course provides background and support for all aspects of your graduate teaching responsibilities.

2. The second objective is to help you consider and explore issues central to your professional development. As a psychologist, your work will center on fundamental elements of teaching regardless of whether you work in the public or private sector, and whether you become research psychologist or a practitioner. As such, a key aspect of being a professional psychologist is the ability to communicate ideas clearly and succinctly—in both speaking and writing. Thus, this course will help you develop the basic skills necessary to become an effective communicator.

Texts

McKeachie, W. J., & Svinicki, M. (2006). *McKeachie's teaching tips: Strategies, research, and theory for college and university teachers* (12th ed.). Boston: Houghton-Mifflin.

American Psychological Association. (2001). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association* (5th ed.). Washington, DC: Author.

Text Selection Rationale: McKeachie's book is considered by most college professors to be the "Bible of College and University Teaching." It covers all the basics of effective teaching and therefore serves as an excellent introduction to what really matters in teaching college students. It is extremely well written, with short, but information-packed chapters. The *APA Style Manual* is the standard by which editors and authors judge all scientific writing in psychology. Because all of us will be writing as a part of our education and work, it is important that we know the style manual's basic elements. We will not read the book per se in class, but I will expect all of your work to conform to APA style.

Recommended Web site and Listserv

Teachpsych.org

This site is the home page for the Society of the Teaching of Psychology (STP), Division 2 of the American Psychological Association. It provides links to many in-house resources that you may find valuable in your assistantship this year as well as in any courses you might teach in the future.

<http://list.kennesaw.edu/archives/psychteacher.html>

This listserv is hosted by STP and you can receive postings in either digest or individual delivery formats. This listserv has moderately heavy traffic, but it is a moderated discussion list, so it does not contain much, if any, irrelevant or unprofessional posts.

Web site and Listserv Selection Rationale:

STP is devoted to the advancement of excellence in teaching and provides new and experienced teachers alike with a vast array of e- and print resources, including one of the premier journals in college pedagogy, *Teaching of Psychology*. All of these resources provide cutting edge information on the developments driving the teaching of our discipline.

Course Activities

None of the course activities this semester will be graded, although I will give you plenty of feedback on your course performance related to them. My goal is to provide you a low-stakes environment in which you can focus on the quality of your work rather than your anxiety about a grade. Be assured, though, I have very high expectations for your performance in this class and in your assistantship duties.

We will have two types of assignments in this course for the spring semester—written and presentation assignments. The writing assignments will focus on creating a final draft of your professional portfolio. All of these assignments will be brief (1-2 pages). The presentation assignments will focus on both the teaching of psychology and your professional development and will be used primarily as an opportunity for you to develop your teaching/presentation style.

Writing Assignments

Your Choice— Sample Course Syllabus, Study Tips Guide, or 2010 GTA Handbook

Assignment Rationale: Some of you will go on to teach in our Teaching Fellows Program and may want to gain some experience in developing your own course by creating a sample syllabus for a course in our undergraduate curriculum that you may like to teach. Others among you will not choose this trajectory so would rather participate in a different sort of assignment. Two

particular assignment that we have talked about are (a) creating a “*Study Tips Guide*” and (b) assembling a “*2010 GTA Handbook*” that would serve as a compendium of useful information about being a GTA for Introductory Psychology.

So, you have your choice as to which of these three writing assignments you would like to do. Creating a sample syllabus is a solo venture whereas creating the *Study Guide* and *Handbook* are group projects, for which I would like to ask Kristin Cullen, our Head GTA, to serve as point person. We’ll choose projects on the first day of class. If you have the time and inclination, you may volunteer for more than one project.

Study Tips Guide

Assignment Rationale: Many of our introductory psychology students have poor study skills, or worse, no study skills appropriate to learning at the college. Many of these students seek our guidance in preparing for their quizzes and exams. To put ourselves in a better overall position to help these students, we will create a PG 2010 Study Guide.

The *Study Guide* will contain items such as a description of tried and true techniques such as the SQ3(4)R method, “best practices” in the words of current and former students, and any other sorts of information we might gather from, for example, the professional literature.

The *Study Guide* is due Wednesday, 8 April.

Sample Syllabus

Assignment Rationale: One of the several key goals of this course is to prepare you to teach your own course in psychology. An important step in reaching this goal is to learn about course design as reflected in developing a course syllabus. Toward this end, you will develop a syllabus for any undergraduate course that you might like to teach sometime in the future. The syllabus must contain THOROUGH DESCRIPTIONS of the following—

Instructor Information

Text (2005 or more recent; if introductory psychology, it cannot be any of the books used this year; please see me if you need an exception to this date)

Course Objectives

Your Teaching Philosophy as it Pertains to This Course

Grading Scale

Attendance Policy

Academic Honesty Policy

Accommodations Policy

Make-up Policy

Tests (including the final exam), Quizzes, and/or Term Papers

Any Other Graded Activities

Course Calendar for Fall 2009

The syllabus will be evaluated according to the adequacy/thoroughness of the descriptions offered for each of the syllabus components, its neatness and formatting, and according to spelling, grammar, and usage. **The sample syllabus is due Wednesday, 8 April.**

GTA Handbook

Assignment Rationale: It would be very useful to have some sort of manual or catalog to hand brand new first-year students to help them get a jump start on the important details that I have left new GTAs to discover on their own. Accordingly, this potential assignment give you the opportunity to contribute to an effort that will allow you to tell future GTAs everything you wished you knew from the outset being a GTA but no one bothered to tell you!

Here is a “start” list that Kristin and I put together in the fall semester:

- Scantron Information
- Tornado/Weather Information
- Maintaining Records/ Grades
- Creating a Paper Trail for Problem Students
- Dealing with Problem Students
- Locked Doors
- Technical Problems
- Getting Technology for non-Tech rooms
- TF Information
- Writing Tips for 7120
- Program for Students with Disabilities
- Key Contacts/Referrals
- Sona System

The first draft of the Handbook is due Wednesday, 8 April.

Teaching Incident Reflection:

Assignment Rationale: You will experience some interesting things as a new teacher, or for that matter, as a seasoned teacher. It is often valuable to take time to reflect on these incidents, as such reflection will inform your future teaching. By taking the time to write teaching reflections, you will start your journey to become a truly reflective teacher—a person who takes a thoughtful approach to any all aspects of teaching.

Last semester you wrote two reflections, this semester you will write just one. It will be due on **Wednesday, 18 February**. These brief, 1-page essays will be evaluated according to APA style and the rules of usage that I gave you at the beginning of the fall semester.

Professional Development Portfolio:

Assignment Rationale: Beyond preparing you for a potential future role as a psychology teacher and to assist you with your teaching assistant responsibilities, another key goal in this course is to prepare you more broadly to become a professional psychologist. Regardless of what kind of professional psychologist you might become, you will likely be faced with responsibilities touching on public speaking, research, service, and outreach. To be sure, almost any interview you might have for a future job will likely touch on most or all of these areas. Thus, an important step in your professional development is to think carefully about your beliefs and values as they relate to these areas.

Moreover, every job to which you might apply once you obtain your masters or PhD will ask you to submit a wide range of written documentation including many of the items listed below, depending of course, on the nature of the position opening (i.e., different employers ask for different combinations of materials). Thus, a practical first step in your professional development is to get an early start in thinking about and indeed, creating these materials. The professional development portfolio becomes a dynamic and growing storehouse of essential information related to your education, training, and professional development over the span of your graduate training and professional career.

Each of you will assemble a professional development portfolio. These portfolios should be formative and reflective in nature. The items that I note below to be included in your portfolios are among the most common materials requested by job advertisements.

You have already turned in most of the components during the semester for ungraded feedback and revision. **Your final draft is due on Wednesday, 11 March, although you may turn in your portfolio earlier if you like.** Please assemble all of your portfolio materials (see below) in a ½ inch to 1 inch thick **BLACK three-ring binder. Separate each section with TYPED tabs.**

I will be very happy to meet with you individually to discuss any questions or concerns you have about any section of the portfolio.

In order, your portfolio must contain the following **tabbed** sections:

Table of Contents

Vita

Statement of Educational and Career Goals (1 page)

Statement of Research Interests (2 pages)

Statement of Teaching Philosophy (2 pages)

Statement of Service/Outreach Interests (2 pages)

Statement of Professional Development Strategies (1 page)

Teaching Evaluations (in order in which you received them)

Teaching Incident Reflections (1 page each; 3 total)

I will evaluate the technical aspects of the portfolio according to the *APA Style Manual* (5th edition) and the “Writing Tips” handout I provided you. Please use a 12 point Times New

Roman font with a 1 inch margin all the way around for all typed work. Each of these items will be due as per the course calendar given at the end of the syllabus. As the time draws close to these due dates, we will discuss the nature of the assignment for each section.

Presentation Assignments

Your Choice—5-Minute Demonstration or Difficult Concept Explanation

Assignment Rationale: We often come across concepts that are very difficult to explain to our students. In some cases a demonstration works well in bringing to life the meaning of the concept, and in other cases, analogies, metaphors and so on are useful in clarifying the concept. Thus the purpose of this assignment is to have you create an original demonstration or clear explanation of a concept that you think students have a difficult time understanding. If you choose to give a demonstration, your presentation must include a handout providing instructions for the carrying out the demonstration. If you choose to explain a difficult concept without using a demonstration, then your handout must include an outline of your explanation. We will select demo/concept days early in the semester and we'll most likely have 3-4 demo/concepts per class period on days when we do these presentations.

20-Minute “Professional” Presentation over Topic of Your Choice

Assignment Rationale: Key to your development as a professional psychologist is your ability to speak in public about your psychological research as well as your broader interests in psychology. You will have many opportunities to speak about your research and work in public—thesis and dissertation proposals/defenses; MAP defense; local, regional, and national conferences; professional workshops and seminars; and to the general public.

Each of you will deliver one 20-minute “professional” presentation during the spring semester. This presentation may cover any topic that you wish so long as it is related to a professional interest of yours: research area, clinical training area, consulting area, teaching area, and so on. The presentation **must** include a handout that is incorporated into the presentation.. Although the presentation per se will last 20 minutes, you should plan to use another 5 minutes for class discussion. **I expect ALL class members to participate in this discussion.** You will also be expected to dress professionally—just as you would if you were to present at a conference or other professional venue. We will discuss the order of presentation and the method for evaluating the presentation, including peer review, early in the semester.

Other Course Activities

Your Choice—Faculty, TOR, Peer Observations or Some Combination:

Assignment Rationale: Observing others teach, particularly those who have reputations for being outstanding teachers is an excellent way for you learn about becoming a better teacher and public speaker. Thus, this semester we will give you the opportunity to observe faculty members, graduate student Teachers of Record and/or your fellow GTAs teach in their classrooms.

At the end of this syllabus is a list of faculty and TORs who have volunteered to be observed by you this semester. Also included is the name of the courses that these faculty members are teaching, teaching schedule, and their room locations. You will do two observations this semester and turn in a one-paragraph summary of your observation to me afterwards. The summary should focus on two or three points that you thought were particularly instructive about your observee's teaching or teaching style.

To schedule your observation, simply e-mail the person you wish to observe and find out what date(s) will work out best for your observations. I expect you to stay in the observation for the full duration of the class period. Because I am asking you to devote approximately 1.5 hours outside of class to this activity, we will cancel two of our classes in 7120. (These classes will be determined early in the semester, as will our regular presentation schedules.)

GTA Teaching Observations:

Assignment Rationale: The primary purpose of the teaching observations is to visit your class to see you in action and to provide feedback that may be useful in helping you to become a more effective teacher/presenter/public speaker.

I will come to each of your Friday discussion sections to observe you in action. I will observe your teaching for about 15-20 minutes. Shortly afterward, we will meet to review my notes and critique your teaching. We will begin these observations in late January.

Teaching Evaluations:

Assignment Rationale: To help you see a wider perspective on your teaching/presenting/public speaking skills other than what I might offer you, we will ask your undergraduates to evaluate your teaching.

About a third to mid-way through each semester, you will ask your students to provide written evaluations of your teaching. You may create whatever sort of feedback form you like or you can use the TBC. A classmate will administer these evaluations to your class. I will meet individually with you afterwards to review your students' comments. You will also administer the TBC for your end-of-the-semester evaluation.

Class Discussions:

Assignment Rationale: By popular demand, many of you have offered suggestions regarding topics for class discussion because (a) we weren't able to discuss these topics last semester or (b) you would like to continue discussion of some of our earlier topics. We will devote several class

periods or parts of class periods to these discussions. Topics suggested for these discussion include:

Ethics in Teaching

Boundary Issues (Teacher-Student Relationships)

Issues in Text Selection

Tailoring Teaching Styles/Techniques to Specific Topics

I will lead these discussions (to give you all a well deserved break!!); be aware that I may ask for volunteers to engage in some role playing exercises with Ethics and Boundary Issues. There will be NO reading assignments per se over these topics, although I will bring in a list of references, where they exist for each topic.

Class Attendance:

Assignment Rationale: In order for you to benefit from this particular class, it is important that you attend class regularly and participate frequently in class activities, including discussion.

I expect you to be present at each class meeting and to participate in all aspects of class discussion. Only valid university excuses will be accepted as legitimate reasons for missing class. These include illness (need a written medical excuse), personal and family emergencies, and university-related travel. Missing class with 3 or more unexcused absences will result in your earning an “F” in this course.

Other Course Information

Academic Honesty: Students who do not comply with Auburn University’s academic regulations (i.e., those concerning cheating and plagiarism) will be dealt with in the manner outlined in the *Tiger Cub*.

Accommodations: Please immediately notify me if you are a student with a University-recognized disability. I will see to it that any special arrangements you may need are made as soon as possible.

Class Calendar

<u>Day</u>	<u>Class Activity</u>
1/7	Determine days off (exact dates) and presentations order (but not the exact dates) Select Projects: Sample Course Syllabus, <i>Study Tips Guide</i> , or <i>2010 GTA Handbook</i>
1/12	Kristin Cullen—Creating a Statement of Teaching Philosophy
1/14	Kristin Cullen—Creating a Statement of Teaching Philosophy
1/19	No Class—Martin Luther King Day
1/21	Bill—Catch Up and Boundary Issues Statement of Teaching Philosophy Due
1/26	Demo/Diff Concept: Lauren
1/28	Demo/Diff Concept: Melina & Kaneen Ethics
2/2	Ethics
2/4	Demo/Diff Concept: Greg & Ross Text Selection Issues
2/9	Demo/Diff Concept: Rob, Andy, Clarissa, & Ashton
2/11	Demo/Diff Concept: KC, Christy, Meg, & Arash
2/16	Course Design Issues
2/18	Course Design Issues Third and Final Teaching Incident Reflection Due
2/23	Principles of Learning Applied to Teaching
2/25	Demo/Diff Concept: Libby Principles of Learning Applied to Teaching
3/2	Teaching Styles and Teaching Particular Topics
3/4	Professional Presentation: Robb and Gregg
3/9	No Class—By Class Choice
3/11	Topic Open Final Draft—Professional Development Portfolios Due
3/16	No Class—Spring Break
3/18	No Class—Spring Break
3/23	Professional Presentation: Andy & Melina

3/25 Professional Presentation: Libby & Ross

3/30 Professional Presentation: Kaneen & Lauren

4/1 Professional Presentation: Arash and Christy
GTA Handbook/Sample Syllabus Due

4/6 Professional Presentation: KC and Meg

4/8 Professional Presentation Ashton and Clarissa

4/13 Topic Open

4/15 Topic Open

4/20 Topic Open

4/22 Topic Open

4/27 Topic Open

4/29 No Class—By Class Choice

