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C&I 510.01: Advanced Educational Psychology

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**The University of Montana-Missoula
Department of Curriculum and Instruction**

**ADVANCED EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY
ED C&I 510
FALL 2007**

Instructor: H. Mark Krank, Ph.D., office MH 301 on the Western campus in Dillon, telephone 683-7547. Please leave a message on my voice mail if there is no answer. My e-mail address is m_krank@umwestern.edu. Like many of you, I find electronic messaging has become almost overwhelming. It isn't unheard of for me to receive over 50 messages a day. When that happens, there isn't enough time in the day to respond. For that reason, please use the Blackboard messaging function rather than my office phone or campus email account. Only you have access to Blackboard. I'll check it first and check my campus account only if I have time.

I am a professor of psychology at The University of Montana-Western. Though I have a wealth of experiences in the public schools, I bring to this class the perspective of a behavioral scientist. Briefly, that means we will operate as good empiricists and spend our time dwelling on the scientific basis of an understanding of learning and learners rather than philosophical discussions regarding teaching.

You might find that approach to be disconcerting at times. For example, many of you are well versed in constructivism. What we'll find during the semester is that constructivism does not stand the test of rigorous empiricism. It is a philosophical position rather than a scientific theory of learning.

That is not to say that a discussion of constructivism doesn't have its place. On the contrary, constructivism is a fertile and stimulating topic for a philosophy of education course. It just doesn't fit what we'll be doing in this course. I hope you find the orientation of the course to be stimulating and interesting.

Office hours: Because my office is located in Dillon face-to-face visit will be difficult if not impossible to arrange. If you need to talk with me, I'm usually in my office each day from 2:30 a.m. to 3:45 p.m. Please use Blackboard to let me know when you'll be calling and I'll do everything possible to make sure I'm free at that time or I'll suggest an alternative time.

Course Purpose: This course is designed to assist practicing members and potential members of the helping professions to generate a theoretical and practical foundation that can be used to assess, predict, and construct psychological environments intended to nurture and celebrate learning. This foundation will include, but is not necessarily limited to:

- (A) an investigation of cognitive learning theory,
- (B) an investigation of social learning theory, and
- (C) an investigation of developmental theory.

Specific topics of interest include intelligence, meta-cognitive processes, cognitive apprenticeships, expert-novice performance, and language as a symbolic communications system.

In addition, this course is designed to encourage in-service and pre-service teachers to become critical consumers of the complex array of information and the resources available to serve the cognitive, affective, and psychomotor needs of their clientele. This course is appropriately viewed as one step towards gaining a scholarly competency as an authentic member of the helping professions.

Credit Awarded: Three (3) credits

Prerequisites: (a) graduate standing, and (b) introductory educational psychology.

Required Texts and materials: (a) Bruning, R. H., Schraw, G. J., Norby, M. M., and Ronning, Royce R. (2003). *Cognitive psychology and instruction* (4th Ed.), NY: Prentice Hall; (b) Kail, R. V., & Cavanaugh, J. C. (2007). *Human development: A life span view* (4nd Ed.). Belmont, California: Thompson Wadsworth, ISBN 0-495-09304-1, and (c) *Publication Manual* (5th ed.) of the American Psychological Association.

Description of instructional procedures: The delivery of this course will rely on reading assignments, homework, problem-solving activities, asynchronous on-line discussions between instructor and individual students, and video review. Problem-solving activities will range from brief to intensive. Course activities will be completed on-line.

After teaching several online classes, I've decided to avoid use of the Blackboard discussion function due to past experiences. In some cases students enroll in online courses because they require a flexible schedule. It makes no sense to restrict that flexibility anymore than is necessary. I've also found that course discussions ultimately go awry. When that happens it becomes necessary to publicly correct the misinformation. There is no way to humanistically tell students they are wrong in a public forum. Therefore, I've chosen to avoid putting students in that position.

Please feel free to post messages to your classmates. I encourage you engage in informal, voluntary discussions. You'll find from time to time I'll post an informal message about psychological topics found in the public media. I encourage you to do the same.

Course requirements: Our reading rate for this course will not be overly demanding, but the material will generally be challenging and will require some prerequisite knowledge. We'll start with the Kail and Cavanaugh text and then move on to the Bruning text, but only after we've had a chance to do some review.

As all of you know, at some point you'll sit for comprehensive examinations and the topics for your examination will be drawn from the courses you've completed. The best time to prepare for comps is during each course. To that end I strongly recommend you keep a set of

notes from your course activities. In addition to taking notes over your reading, it is in your best interest to outline each chapter. An outline will help you make sense out of the morass of information you'll collect. In the event your reading is ahead of the temporal arrangement of the course it will be possible to review using reading notes and chapter outline. Taking notes over your reading and outlining chapters is a necessity for most students to achieve at an excellent level. If you're out of practice and need a brief review on how to outline, let me know.

There will be four (4) general homework assignments during the semester. Your writing style for all writing assignments and activities must follow the accepted conventions of scholarly discourse. Make sure the format of your homework assignment adheres to the APA academic style format. Examples and details are always critical to a successful writing assignment. Under no circumstances will you use references or citations nor will you include quotations in your assignments. Use of a reference or citation or inclusion of a quotation will result in the assignment of a **F** grade.

Homework assignments are worth 25 points each for a total of 100 points or 17% of the final grade.

Homework topics are as follows:

- a. Autobiography of a learner-8/28/07
- b. Earliest memory-8/29/07
- c. Intelligence-8/30/07
- d. The top ten reasons why it's harder to be a woman/man than it is to be a man/woman in 21st century USA-8/31/07

Homework Descriptions

The autobiography of a learner will include two parts. Part one is intended to allow you to reflect on why you are seeking a graduate degree, what you hope to achieve by the time you graduate, and what your intellectual influences were. Describe in some detail what influenced your decision to attend The University of Montana (UM-M), why you are attending, and who your intellectual mentors were. As you reflect on what to write, be sure that you consider your favorite authors, scholars, teachers, students, or college classes. Also consider what things you want to study, why you want to study them, and what you hope to learn about your area of interest.

NOTE: This is not an autobiography; it is an *intellectual* autobiography. The formative experiences of your life are not important for this assignment. The formative influences for your scholastic identity and for attending UM-M are important.

In part two I want you to describe your self-assessment in six areas as it relates to your academic performance: (a) your ability to think critically, (b) your ability to work independently, (c) your academic skills, (d) your need for supportive interaction with the professor, (e) your need for supportive interaction with your peers,

and (f) how well you adapt to novel situations. Keep in mind that this self-assessment is specific to academic tasks and not tasks outside the university environment.

Critical Thinking

For our purposes, critical thinking is defined as your ability to decide what to believe or do in an academic situation by using: (a) logical inquiry, (b) evaluative decisions, and (c) suspending judgment until adequate evidence is available for a decision. For some students, it is easy to independently tackle ill-defined problems by setting a goal, formulating a plan, checking their progress as they proceed, and (d) critically deciding whether or not they've been successful. These students would never attempt to solve a problem in a trial and error fashion. Instead, they spend extraordinary amounts of time in the planning stage. Once a plan is in hand, they use direct evidence to assess progress toward a goal, never relying on luck or guesswork.

Other students have the ability to independently tackle well-defined problems, but require structure, assistance, and feedback when attempting ill-defined problems. When it comes to ill-defined problems they are not independent.

An additional group of students need structure and feedback when attempting all academic problems, either well-defined or ill-defined. Absent support, they tend to rely on trial and error strategies and fall prey to impulsive behaviors.

Keeping the above in mind, assess your own abilities. Are you independent in all cases or do you need help with ill-defined problems? Maybe well-defined problems also? Or maybe something in between?

Field Independent/Field Dependent

Students vary in their ability to work independently. Logically, some are independent, some are dependent, and most are in-between. Presented with a task, problem, or dilemma, the independent style individual readily demonstrates the analytic abilities necessary to select an appropriate processing strategy, to select relevant information from the environment, and to self-evaluate performance. Independent style individuals thrive when working alone.

By contrast, the dependent style individual requires social environments that provide considerable structure, regulation, feedback, and supportive interaction. Dependent style individuals thrive in empathetic, cooperative social environments. Dependent style individuals do not thrive in an environment where they work as isolates. The primary problem faced by the dependent style is deciding what is relevant and what isn't.

Keeping the above in mind, assess your own abilities. Are you an independent style in all cases or do you need help with ill-defined problems? Maybe well-defined problems also? Or maybe something in between? Given an option of working with others, would you rather work with your peers, your professor, or work alone?

Academic Skills

In terms of your academic skills, are you confident or are you uncertain? An academically confident individual will tend to persist when faced with a difficult or ill-defined task even when experiencing a lack of success. An academically confident individual will not require extensive emotional support during difficult academic tasks and is resistant to experiences of failure. The academically confident learner will keep plugging until successful.

Uncertain individuals tend to start an academic task assuming that they are going to fail no matter what they do. Given the slightest difficulty, they usually resign, give-up any attempt at independent work, and turn to others for help. Often, they won't even make an attempt when faced with a difficult, ill-defined task. In those cases, avoidance is their typical response. Though an uncertain individual requires considerable emotional support when attempting academic tasks, it may not be enough to motivate them to persist even when engaging in well-defined tasks.

Keeping the above in mind, describe your assessment of your abilities as a scholar. Are you a confident learner in most cases or do you need help with ill-defined problems? Maybe well-defined problems also? Or maybe something in between?

Coping with Novelty

Some students tend to be extraordinarily independent when solving ill-defined problems that require adaptation. Still others tend to adapt independently when they encounter changes in a familiar environment, but require support when asked to adapt to a novel situation or environment. In other words, they can handle a change in routine, but is uncomfortable in completely new situations. Still another category of individuals have an inability to independently adapt to both familiar and novel situations. When required to adapt, they need structure, feedback, and interpersonal interactions from either professors or other students.

Keeping the above in mind, assess your own abilities. Do you like classes that are highly structured with few surprises? Are you good at thinking on your feet and enjoy classes that have a little unpredictability to them? Do you hate those classes where you aren't sure from one day to the next what might be coming your way? Are you highly adaptive in all cases or do you need help with ill-defined problems? Maybe well-defined problems also? Or maybe something in between?

Your earliest memory assignment will include the following: It is important that you do this homework assignment independently. Do not talk with anyone before you begin. It is important that you only report what you remember. Do not use a memory episode that has been an ongoing topic of conversation among you and others. If you consult with someone prior to completing the assignment it will void the purpose of the assignment. In terms of your grade, the consequence

should be obvious.

1. What is your earliest memory? Think back as far as you can to your earliest, detailed memory that involves at least one adult who is still living and was central to the memory. It is critical that this be a memory that includes ample detail.
2. How old were you?
3. Describe the physical environment of the memory. Be as detailed as possible. For example, if it happened in your bedroom, describe the floor, walls, furnishings, lighting fixtures, time of day, etc. If it happened outside, describe the vegetation, sky, temperature, time of day, etc. Include as much detail as you can remember.
4. Describe the event or events that took place. Again, be as detailed as possible.
5. Describe your emotional state during the event. Details.
6. Describe the behaviors or actions of any other people in the memory. Details.
7. Describe your assessment of their emotional state. Were they happy? Sad? Angry? Details.

For the intelligence assignment I'm interested in what you think, not what you can find in a reference book. Without talking to anyone or accessing any reference materials or sources, give me the following:

1. Your definition of intelligence
2. Describe 5 intelligent behaviors for an individual at the following ages: 2 years, 10 years, 20 years, 50 years, and 80 years. Each set of five behaviors must be unique; you cannot use a behavior more than once.
3. Give me one exceptional example who everyone in the class will know and one that you know personally for the following kinds of intelligence:
 - a. linguistic-writing
 - b. scientific-natural sciences
 - c. kinesthetic-athletic
 - d. artistic-painting
 - e. artistic-music
 - f. interpersonal-the ability to motivate others to act spiritual

For each of the above tell me why you think the individual is an exemplar. In other words, offer empirical evidence for your selection.

An example of someone high in linguistic-writing intelligence that everyone knows is William Shakespeare. As evidence I'd offer the facts that his work is required reading in university English classes; though he wrote his plays 400 years ago we still read and produce them; his work has been translated into several different languages; and he continues to have a worldwide audience.

An example of someone I know personally that is high in linguistic writing intelligence would be Alan Weltzien, Professor of

English at UM-Western. Evidence would include the fact that Professor Weltzien has published three books and several scholarly articles.

You cannot use Shakespeare or Weltzien (if anyone knows him) to complete your assignment.

For the top ten reasons assignment men will list the top ten socio-cultural reasons why it is harder to be a man than a woman in 21st century United States. In other words, you'll be casting your list in terms of societal or cultural expectations for your behaviors, not how you view your behaviors or the behaviors of others. Women will list the top ten reasons why it is harder to be a woman than a man. The reasons offered must be substantive and non-trivial. Again, do not access resource materials. I want to know why you think it is harder to be a man or a woman.

Format your assignment by numbering your list, 1-10, giving a 10 to the least challenging reason and 1 to the most challenging reason. Each item on your list should explain both what and why.

There will be thirteen (13) video summary assignments during the semester. In lieu of formal lectures to establish the prerequisite knowledge we'll need to read the course textbooks you'll be watching videos available online. Each program is about one-half hour long. Go to the address: <http://www.learner.org/resources/series138.html#> and you'll find a page titled *Discovering Psychology*. As you scroll down the page you'll find a set of individual program descriptions. On the right of each description is an icon that says "VoD." The first time you click on that icon it will take you through a process of signing you up to have access to a set of videos (don't forget to write down your password!). After you're registered, each time you click on the VoD icon a video will play. The series was originally broadcast on public television. The host, Philip Zimbardo, is one of the world's prominent social psychologists.

You'll write a brief summary of each episode, but each assignment will include two episodes. Your summary should include a description of the episode topic and the important findings regarding the topic. Starting on August 29th you'll watch two videos per day and send me your summary. That means we'll be finished with the videos by September 18. On September 19 we'll start our discussion of the Miller text.

If you're already steeped in psychology, this assignment will be a refresher. On the other hand, if you are not as familiar with psychology as you need to be to read the course texts, this will get you up to speed in a fairly painless fashion.

Each program is about one-half hour long. Some of the course dialogs (see below) will blend content from the programs and the texts. For those of you who wish to participate in an informal course chat with your peers, the videos should offer ample material for the basis of an informed discussion.

Because you'll be watching two videos per day you'll submit 13 summaries. You'll submit your first summary over episodes 1 and 2 on September 4. After that, you'll submit your assignments every other day until you've worked your way through all 26 episodes. For example,

episodes 3 and 4 will be due on September 6, episodes 5 and 6 on the 10th, 7 and 8 on the 12th, and 9 and 10 on the 14th. Your summaries, covering two episodes, are worth a ten (10) points each for a total of 100 points (we'll take your 10 highest grades) or 17% of your final grade.

Students will summarize each chapter in the Kail and Bruning texts.

The summaries may take the form of an essay or an outline. I'd recommend you use the outline format because it gives you a useful tool for future review, but the decision is up to you. We'll start with the Kail text. You'll complete a chapter summary each day of the week, except Friday, starting on October 9th. We'll skip November 12th and November 19-23 due to holidays. Each summary is worth 10 points or a total of 300 points or 50% of your final grade.

There will be 5 activities during the semester. The activities will be used to primarily extend your reading assignments, my messages (some get very long), video reviews, and your homework. They are intended to demonstrate each student's ability to recall and apply declarative information. The activities are worth ten (10) points each for a total of 50 points or 8% of the final grade.

Students will complete one autobiographical case study during the semester. Because some of you haven't completed the research methods course, we won't attempt a formal research paper or even attempt to review the research literature. Instead, we will develop an autobiographical case study based on Eric Erikson's theory of psychosocial development. The autobiographical case study is worth a total of 50 points or approximately 8% of the final grade.

Grading: The grading scale is as follows:

270 points-300 points	= A
240 points-269 points	= B
210 points-239 points	= C
180 points-219 points	= D
179 points and less	= F

Instructor expectations: It is expected that the individuals enrolling in this course are either pre-service or in-service members of the helping professions. Graduate standing would predict the self-directed behaviors of industriousness, individual accountability, reliability, and a desire to excel. As graduate students, I expect your writing to be accomplished. Anything less than the baseline stated above will be viewed with great dismay by the instructor.

Academic misconduct is expressly forbidden by UM-M policy. Any incident of academic misconduct will be reported to the appropriate UM-M office. In addition to UM-M sanctions, the student will be given a failing grade for the course.

Students with special needs-Any student in this class who has a documented

special need that may prevent full demonstration of ability should contact the UM-M Disability Services to make an official request for academic accommodations. In addition, it is the responsibility of each special needs student to personally contact the course instructor before the end of the first week to discuss the accommodations that will be necessary to ensure full participation in the course.

Concerns or questions regarding the information contained in this syllabus are to be brought to the instructor's attention before the end of the first week of class.