EDUC 591 – LEARNING ABOUT HOW PEOPLE LEARN
Fall 2017; Tuesdays; 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.
Room 2229 in the School of Education Building

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Office Hours: by appointment

Canvas: We will use Canvas for our course management system. I will use our Canvas site to post course materials (e.g., weekly readings, class PowerPoints, assignment guidelines). It is your responsibility to check the Canvas site regularly. Please let me know if you do not have regular Internet access.

COURSE DESCRIPTION
There are various perspectives about how people learn. What are some major perspectives that have shaped educational practice? Why have these perspectives been so influential? Whose perspectives on learning have not been as central to educational practice and why (and why should we worry about that)? How do these various perspectives currently undergird our own work – whatever that may be (e.g., curriculum development, K-12 and/or post-secondary teaching, museum exhibit design, assessment development, development of educational technologies, educational policy)? How might these perspectives influence our work moving forward?

These are the types of questions we will explore in this course. The course is meant to provide an introduction to some of the major ideas about learning and how they have guided educational practice historically and currently. We will read texts to explore some of these ideas, and we will analyze educational artifacts and learning environments (e.g., curricula, assessment, software, pedagogical strategies, museum programming) to look for traces of these various ideas about learning. In addition, we will investigate how existing educational artifacts and learning environments might be altered to better align with one or more of these perspectives on learning. Your interests and past learning-related experiences will help guide decisions about the education-related artifacts and learning environments that we choose to analyze.

COURSE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES
This is a seminar-style, survey course with an emphasis on: (a) analysis of texts and other artifacts, (b) thorough and thoughtful in-class discussion, and (c) in- and out-of-class explorations related to course themes. Given the sheer breadth of information related to this course and its themes, it should be obvious that you will not become an expert on the topic of “how people learn” in 15 weeks. However, through course readings, discussions, and explorations, my hope is that you will have a much more detailed understanding of various perspectives about how people learn, how those perspectives have shaped educational practice, and how they might be useful to you with respect to your current and future work.
Course Evaluation
Grades are based on total points earned. No curve is used. Note that I do not give grades of A+ in graduate-level courses because as noted above, no one is going to be “expert” with respect to any of these ideas after one, 15-week course. The course grading scale is as follows:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percent Range</th>
<th>Corresponding Grade</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>94% - 100%</td>
<td>A</td>
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<td>90% - 93%</td>
<td>A-</td>
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<td>84% - 87%</td>
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<td>80% - 83%</td>
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<td>Below 60%</td>
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NOTE: See “Course Assignments and Projects” for a list of course assignments and their accompanying points.

Additional Policies and Expectations
1. Academic and Professional Integrity
   It is expected that all members of this learning community will conduct themselves with integrity related to all aspects of our academic and professional lives. This includes making certain that plagiarism never occurs. If you are unsure about how to correctly attribute ideas, words, work, etc. to others, please ask. Please refer to the following website for specific policies and procedures related to academic and professional integrity.
   http://www.soe.umich.edu/file/academic_integrity/

2. Accessibility & Access
   Every member of this learning community has the right to full participation. If you need extra support for any reason, please do not hesitate to contact me and have a discussion with me. I want to support your learning as fully as I can. I will, of course, keep our discussions private and confidential. For example, if you need an accommodation(s) for any type of disability, please let me know at your earliest convenience. We can work with Services for Students with Disabilities (http://ssd.umich.edu/) to ensure that your learning is fully supported.

3. Discrimination/Harassment
   No member of this learning community should be subject to discrimination of any kind and/or harassment. Please refer to the following website for University policies related to discrimination and harassment:
   http://www.rackham.umich.edu/current-students/help/discrimination
4. Diversity, Inclusion, Justice, and Equity
As you know, the University of Michigan School of Education is guided by twin imperatives, as we call them: a focus on education practice (writ large) and a commitment to diversity, inclusion, justice, and equity. In this course, we will explore how these twin imperatives currently surface in discussions about how people learn, and what this might mean for our educational practice (e.g., teaching, policy, design) moving forward.

5. Classroom Community
Our work together relies on honest, open, and respectful dialogue so that all participants feel free to express their views and ask questions. Disruptive behavior (e.g., inappropriate language, talking over others, harassing others) has no place in our course and will result in the loss of participation points at the very least. Here are a few guidelines to help facilitate our conversations and activities each week:

a. **There is no such thing as a stupid question.** Please ask any and all questions that you have and remember that by asking your questions, you are allowing us to learn as a community because you are helping to make ideas and wonderings visible.

b. **Be respectful of others’ ideas and experiences** even if they are different from your own. We do not have to agree but we do owe it to each other to listen to and consider each other’s points of view. On a related note, please **respect confidentiality** related to this course.

c. **Listen to others** by trying not to interrupt until whoever is talking is finished and until you have heard and considered what others have said. **Do not assume that silences are unproductive.** Give others time to think, consider, and formulate ideas.

d. **Monitor your participation.** If you are outgoing and tend to dominate conversation, use this course as a chance to practice allowing others a space to participate. If you are less outgoing and tend to let others do the talking, use this course as an opportunity to practice speaking up and adding to the conversation.

e. **Please turn cell phones off or to vibrate** before each class session out of respect for our community. On a related note, **use laptops appropriately** (e.g., note taking, presentations). Unless directly related to this course, please **refrain from texting, visiting Facebook, etc.** Please **turn off all MP3 players.** Please be mindful of your technology use because it can be quite offensive to others if they are speaking and you are texting or checking email.

6. Attendance, Participation, and Communication
Regular, on-time attendance and thoughtful participation during class discussions and other activities are essential not only to your individual performance but also to the success of the course and our community. We all share responsibility for the learning and teaching in this course. Because you will not be able to participate in the class community if you are not present, **excessive absences will result in the loss of participation points,** except in cases of extreme circumstances (e.g., family emergency, illness). If you know that you have to miss a class session, **please notify me PRIOR to your absence.** You are responsible for obtaining all materials (including summaries of class activities and discussions) and making up any missed work. **I expect excellent communication** (e.g., notifying me prior to any absence, notifying me about any issues regarding assignments).
7. Late Work and Extension Requests
LATE WORK: Unless I state otherwise, all assignments are due on the dates listed in the syllabus. You may submit your work via email to me directly, or by uploading it to the course’s Canvas site. Submitting an assignment late without any communication will result in a loss of points.

EXTENSIONS: I understand that we are all busy people and sometimes we are not able to adhere to stated due dates. If you need an extension, please contact me via email. Make sure you contact me PRIOR to any given due date or I may not be able to grant your extension request. Please do not abuse my liberal extension policy.

8. Format for Assignments & Assignment Submission Guidelines
Unless I note otherwise, all assignments must be typed. Please double-space your work, use 1” margins all around, and use 12 point Times New Roman font. I expect you to attend closely and carefully to spelling, grammar, and other conventions. When referencing course and other materials, please follow the American Psychological Association style guidelines (APA – 6th edition). You can access the APA style manual through University of Michigan’s libraries or online at http://www.apastyle.org. Purdue University also has a very helpful online APA guide: http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS
NOTE: When applicable, more detailed assignment guidelines and evaluation criteria will be posted to Canvas in a timely fashion.

1. Participation – 15 points total – 15% of final course grade
You are expected to participate in all aspects of this course. Participation will take many different forms throughout the semester. For example, I might ask you to bring questions to class, design an activity that relates to the readings, and find web sites and other resources to share. You are expected to come to class having already done the readings and ready to participate in discussions and other activities. I want to see you sharing your expertise, debating various perspectives, questioning ideas and arguments, and proposing practical applications for the ideas we are exploring.

2. Learning Paper – 10 points – 10% of final course grade
Due Date: September 12; upload to Canvas or email this paper to me directly
In no more than 5 pages (typed and double-spaced), write about a time where you felt like you truly learned something. You can write about something you learned in a school context, or you can write about something you learned elsewhere (e.g., in a museum, as part of a hobby, as part of a previous job). Make sure to fully describe the event; where you were, what you were learning, why, how, with whom, etc. Why do you think this learning event is so vivid for you? Why do you think you learned whatever you learned so well? When you say you “learned” whatever it is that you learned, what does that mean to you (i.e., how are you defining learning as tied to this event)? Additionally, pose three-four questions that you have about learning (in general, as tied to your previous work before you came to grad school, etc.). Please do not include citations in this first paper. Linking your ideas and experiences to course literature will
come later, as part of your final course project. Presently, I am interested only in hearing about the learning experience you wish to describe. We will revisit these papers, and your ideas, at the end of the semester.

3. Learning Analysis – 25 points -- 25% of final course grade

Due Date: on or before October 24, 2017

A large part of this course is identifying where and how aspects of the ideas about learning we explore show up in current practice. We will have these types of discussions each week and analyze example educational artifacts, learning environments, instruction, etc. together in class. Using this analysis assignment, you will have a chance to explore how aspects of some ideas about learning inform an area of your own practice. For example, perhaps you want to analyze an educational artifact (e.g., a set of lesson plans, a museum exhibit, a policy document), an educational-related film, etc. What you decide to analyze is your choice. We will talk in detail about my expectations for this project in class.

4. Final Course Project – 50 points -- 50% of final course grade

Due Date: on or before Dec. 5, 2017

Your final course project will involve three different pieces. Part 1 will involve you interviewing an educational practitioner (e.g., teacher in K-12 or post-secondary institution, curriculum designer, museum educator) to better understand how they think about learning, how that informs the work that they do, and how their ideas link to various perspectives about learning we will read this semester. Part 2 will involve you returning to your Learning Paper (see assignment #2) and linking elements of the learning experience you describe in that paper with ideas we will read about this semester. Part 3 will involve you reflecting on how you are going to use ideas about learning that we will study in this course in your work moving forward. We will talk in detail about my expectations for this project in class.

COURSE SCHEDULE*

*I reserve the right to revise this schedule whenever necessary and useful for us based on our progress in the course.

WEEK 1 – SEPTEMBER 5, 2017 – COURSE INTRODUCTION: WHAT IS YOUR LEARNING "STORY"?

READING:

ASSIGNMENT:
1. Your Learning Paper is due before class next week. Upload to Canvas or email it to me directly. Make sure you have described a learning moment AND make sure you have posed 3-4 questions that you have about learning.
WEEK 2 – SEPTEMBER 12, 2017 – EXCERPTS FROM THE NRC’S HOW PEOPLE LEARN

Readings:
→ Chapter 1: Learning: From Speculation to Science
→ Chapter 3: Learning and Transfer

Assignments:
1. Begin to think about what artifacts, environments, educational films, educational-related memoirs, etc. you want to analyze for your analysis assignment. Your choice should be guided by your interests, your past or current work/career, and/or what you wish to do next after you finish your degree. We will discuss the details of the assignment next week in class.
2. As you read for next week, identify some examples of behaviorism that you have experienced or used in an educational setting. Be ready to discuss these in class.

Ideas about Learning: Major Theorists and Theoretical Terrains

WEEK 3 – SEPTEMBER 19, 2017 – BEHAVIORISM

Guest Speaker: Ms. Anna Shapiro

Readings:

Assignments:
1. Remember that we meet next week from 9:00-10:00 in Prechter (Room 2202). After that, Professor Tony Bryk will join us. Come prepared with questions related to the Learning to Improve book.
2. Continue to think about what artifacts, environments, educational films, educational memoirs, etc. you want to analyze for your analysis assignment. That assignment is due on or before Oct. 24.
3. As you read for next week, identify some examples linked to ideas about intelligence that you have experienced or used in an educational setting. Be ready to discuss these in class.

WEEK 4 – SEPTEMBER 26, 2017 – INTELLIGENCE (PRECHTER; ROOM 2202)

Readings:
ASSIGNMENTS:
1. Continue to think about what artifacts, environments, educational films, educational memoirs, etc. you want to analyze for your analysis assignment. That assignment is due on or before Oct. 24.
2. As you read for next week, identify some examples linked to ideas in the readings that you have experienced or used in an educational setting. Be ready to discuss these in class.

WEEK 5 – OCTOBER 3, 2017 – EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHIES AND CONNECTIONS TO LEARNING

READINGS:

ASSIGNMENTS:
1. Continue to work on your analysis assignment. Remember that it is due on or before Oct. 24.
2. Start to think about who you might want to interview as part of your final course project. We will talk about the details of the final course project next week in class.
3. As you read for next week, identify some examples linked to ideas about constructivism that you have experienced or used in an educational setting. Be ready to discuss these in class.

WEEK 6 – OCTOBER 10, 2017 – CONSTRUCTIVISM

GUEST SPEAKER: MR. ADAM BENNION

READINGS:

ASSIGNMENTS:
1. Remember that we do not have class next week due to U-M’s Fall Study Break.
2. Your analysis assignment is due on Oct. 24 (upload to Canvas or email to me directly). Be prepared to talk about elements of your analysis in class on Oct. 24.
3. Continue to think about who you might want to interview as part of your final course project.
4. As you read for class on Oct. 24, identify some examples linked to ideas about learning from sociocultural historical perspectives that you have experienced or used in an educational setting. Be ready to discuss these in class.

**WEEK 7 – OCTOBER 17, 2017 – NO CLASS (U-M FALL STUDY BREAK)**

**READINGS:**
Start reading for class on October 24th.

**ASSIGNMENTS:**
1. Remember that your analysis assignment is due next week (upload to Canvas or email to me directly). Be prepared to talk about elements of your analysis in class.
2. Continue to think about who you might want to interview as part of your final course project. You will want to schedule that interview at some point in November so that you have enough time to analyze the details of the interview and link details to course readings. Remember that the final course project is due on or before December 5.
3. Remember that as you read for next week’s class, you should identify some examples linked to ideas about learning from sociocultural historical perspectives that you have experienced or used in an educational setting. Be ready to discuss these in class.

**WEEK 8 – OCTOBER 24, 2017 – SOCIOCULTURAL HISTORICAL IDEAS ABOUT LEARNING**

**READINGS:**


**ASSIGNMENTS:**
1. Set up your interview if you have not already done so. Before you interview the person whom you have selected, make sure you create interview questions that you want to ask. It is always a good idea to try those out on someone else before your interview so that you can revise your questions if you need to do that.
2. As you read for next week’s class, identify some examples linked to ideas about cognitive science that you have experienced or used in an educational setting. Be ready to discuss these in class.
WEEK 9 – OCTOBER 31, 2017 – COGNITIVE SCIENCE
GUEST SPEAKER: PROFESSOR CHRIS QUINTANA

READINGS:
   Read both prefaces (the one from 1960 and the one from 1977) & the Introduction. 
   Sciences, 7(3), 141-144. 
   and W.M. Ramsey (Eds.), The Cambridge handbook of cognitive science (pp. 112-130). 
   Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

ASSIGNMENTS:
1. Conduct your interview. Begin to analyze that interview using ideas from course 
   readings. In addition, you should be using November to work on the other elements of 
   your final course project (due on or before Dec. 5). 
2. As you read for next week’s class, identify some examples linked to ideas about critical 
   theories that you have experienced or used in an educational setting. Be ready to discuss 
   these in class.

WEEK 10 – NOVEMBER 7, 2017 – CRITICAL THEORIES OF LEARNING
READINGS:
   to poststructuralist feminism to critical theories of race (pp. 74-93). New York, NY: 
   Routledge.

ASSIGNMENTS:
1. Use this month to work on the elements of your final course project (due on or before 
   Dec. 5). 
2. As you read for next week’s class, think about what theoretical perspectives about 
   learning you would like to put in dialogue with each other given your own work. Be 
   ready to discuss your thinking about that in class next week.

WEEK 11 – NOVEMBER 14, 2017 – THEORIES IN DIALOGUE
GUEST SPEAKER: PROFESSOR ANNEMARIE PALINCSAR

READINGS:
   the Second Congress of Socio-Cultural Research honoring Vygotsky’s and Piaget’s 
   centennial. 
Nasir, N.S., & Hand, V. M. (2006). Exploring sociocultural perspectives on race, culture, and 

**Assignments:**
1. Keep working on the elements of your final course project (due on or before Dec. 5).
2. As you read for next week’s class, identify some examples linked to ideas about situated learning and intent participation that you have experienced or used in an educational setting. Be ready to discuss these in class.

**Week 12 – November 21, 2016 – Situated/Situative Learning and Intent Participation**

**Readings:**

**Assignments:**
1. You should be well into analyzing your interview against ideas from course readings. You should also be looking back at your learning paper that you wrote in Sept. What perspectives on learning that we have discussed and studied seem most applicable to your story and why? What questions do you now have about learning that you want to continue to explore? What question(s) did you pose in that paper that you now can propose a response to given what we have read and discussed? Lastly, you should be thinking about how you plan to use elements of some of these perspectives on learning in your own work moving forward. Final course projects are due in two weeks (on or before Dec. 5).
2. As you read for next week’s class, think about examples from your own life that you could describe in life-long, life-wide, and life-deep ways. Be ready to discuss these in class.

**Week 13 – November 28, 2017 – Life-Long, Life-Wide, & Life-Deep Learning**

**Readings:**
ASSIGNMENT:
1. Final course projects are due next week. We will discuss elements of your final course project in class on Dec. 12. Be ready to share.
2. As you read for next week’s class, identify some examples linked to ideas about learning through collaboration that you have experienced or used in an educational setting. Be ready to discuss these in class.

WEEK 14 – DECEMBER 5, 2017 – LEARNING THROUGH COLLABORATION
READING:

ASSIGNMENT:
1. We will discuss elements of your final paper in class next week as part of our course wrap-up. Look back over your final course project (interview, response to your original learning paper, and reflection) so that you are ready to share.

WEEK 15 – DECEMBER 12, 2017 – WHAT’S NEXT? (COURSE WRAP-UP)
READING:
**ADDITIONAL EXAMPLE TEXTS TO READ IF INTERESTED**

*NOTE: We’ll add to this list throughout the semester. For additional readings that we end up adding during the course, see the “Additional Readings that Might be of Interest” folder on Canvas.*


Dewey, J. (1896?). John Dewey’s original letter to the Trustees of the University of Chicago, arguing for the creation of a laboratory school.


