Motivation in the Classroom  
Education 709-001/ Psych 958-003  
Fall 2011  
Wednesdays 2:30 – 5:30

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Course Overview

This course provides a general overview of the topic of motivation from a psychological perspective. The course focuses on different theories of motivation and how the environment influences students' motivation. Motivation for intellectual and academic performance will be emphasized. Applications of theory in educational settings will be considered. First, we will examine major theoretical approaches to motivation (e.g., self-efficacy, expectancy-value, attribution, intrinsic motivation, achievement goal theory, interest). Subsequently, we will examine the role of peers, parents, classroom climate, school transitions, interventions and gender and ethnicity in relation to motivation and achievement.

Course readings are predominantly a combination of graduate level textbook chapters, theoretical articles and original empirical articles. Class format will be a mixture of lecture and discussion, primarily discussion. Readings will stress the theoretical and empirical work and our discussions will focus on the analysis and synthesis of the different theories and research findings. In general, class discussion will focus on five issues:

1) **Theoretical** What are the different psychological theories or models for the phenomena of interest? Are they compatible with each other? What are the important constructs? Are these constructs relevant to the classroom context, and if so, how might they operate in the classroom?

2) **Empirical** What are the empirical findings for the phenomena? What is the utility of the research given the internal and external validity of the research design? What types of empirical studies are needed in the area?

3) **Developmental and Cultural** How does the phenomena emerge developmentally and how might it vary across cultural groups? How does the theory or model treat developmental or cultural issues? If there are relevant developmental and cultural differences in the phenomena, what are the implications for the model and pedagogy?

4) **Pedagogical** What are the implications of the psychological theories and research findings for classroom teachers and their instructional behavior?

5) **Synthesis** What new psychological models can be developed to explain the phenomena? Given these new models, what are the directions for future research?
Requirements

**Reading Responses and Class Participation (30% of final grade)**
Each week, you should formulate 2-3 discussion questions from the readings to share in class. Along with your questions, you should write a response to each question (a paragraph is sufficient). Your response will not be graded but will be used to begin a conversation within the class and for occasional feedback from the instructor. The discussion question and response should focus on mastering an understanding of key concepts and ideas that appear in the reading. Your questions may be related from week to week as themes emerge in the course. Good discussion questions require participants to apply knowledge, elaborate on ideas, relate concepts, and evaluate perspectives that we study. Please send to me via email by **Wednesday 9:00 am** each week.

**Co-facilitation (15% of final grade)**
Once or twice during the course students will be asked to take responsibility for summarizing and synthesizing key points from a reading to the class. This will be a mechanism to cover key issues, especially when the weekly reading assignment is lengthier.

**Group Project (15% of final grade)**
In pairs or small groups students will be asked to do a group project focusing on recent research trends in motivation. We will discuss this more fully in class and student interests will be important in shaping the focus and direction of the group project.

**Final Paper (40% of final grade)**
You are required to write one "research" paper that deals with some aspect of motivation from a psychological perspective. The topic can be an extension of one the readings for class or from another area of motivation not specifically addressed in-depth (e.g. learned helplessness, self-concept, risk-taking, motivation in special education students, teacher motivation, etc.) The final paper is due **Friday, December 9th**. There are a number of possible formats for this final paper. Formats include:

(a) Research proposal: Develop a proposal for a study that you think would be interesting and important on a motivational issue. The proposal should include a statement of research questions, a rationale based on relevant motivational theory and a description of methodology to be used.

(b) Research review paper: Write a comprehensive paper summarizing, reviewing, and critiquing a specific topic in motivation. This could involve analysis of what is lacking in extant theory or research, or a synthesis of different conceptualizations or methods in regards to a motivational issue.

(c) Classroom application paper: a paper summarizing, reviewing, and a specific topic in motivation with discussion of how motivational concepts relate to classroom practice.
Grading Scale
A: 90% - 100%; B: 80% - 89%; C: 70% - 79%; D: 60% - 69%; F: < 60%

Required Readings  (Readings listed for each week should be done before that class.)


(2) Articles on c-tools.

September 7  Introduction to the Course

Schunk, Pintrich, & Meece text, chapter 1, Introduction and Historical Foundations.

September 14  Self-efficacy

Schunk, Pintrich, & Meece text, chapter 4, Social Cognitive Theory (pp. 126-153).

Bong, M. (2006). Asking the right question: How confident are you that you could successfully perform these tasks? In F. Pajares & T. Urdan (Eds.), Self-efficacy beliefs of adolescents (pp. 287-305). Greenwich, CT: Information Age.


September 21 Expectancy-Value Models of Motivation

Schunk, Pintrich, & Meece text, chapter 2, Expectancy-Value Theories of Motivation


**September 28 Attribution Theory**

Schunk, Pintrich, & Meece text, chapter 3, Attribution Theory.


**October 5 Intrinsic Motivation**

Schunk, Pintrich, & Meece text, chapter 7, Intrinsic Motivation


**October 12 Goals and Achievement Goal Theory**

Schunk, Pintrich, & Meece, chapter 5, The Role of Goals and Goal Orientation.

Optional reading:


Required Reading:


**October 19  Theories of Intelligence or “Mindsets”**


**October 26  Interest and Emotions**

Schunk, Pintrich, & Meece, chapter 6, Interest and Affect

As a class we will decide what articles to read from a special issue (2011) in Contemporary Educational Psychology volume 36 edited by Lisa Linnenbrink-Garcia and Reinhard Pekrun.

**November 2  Peers and Families**


**November 9 Gender and Ethnicity**


**November 16 Social-Psychological Interventions, Motivation and Achievement**


**November 23 Individual Meetings about Final Projects**

We will not have class on 23rd but instead schedule individual meetings on 21st or 22nd to discuss your final project.

**November 30 Schools, Classrooms and Motivation**


**December 7 Student Presentations on Final Projects**

**December 9 Final papers due by 5:00pm**