

Psychology 795, Fall 2011

Teaching Practicum

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Course Description:

Students develop skills in the design and conduct of undergraduate courses in psychology through observation and supervised experiences; acquaints students with university, college, and department policies and resources in support of instruction; familiarizes students with disciplinary resources; assists students in evaluating personal strengths and weaknesses.

Course Objectives:

1. Learn about university resources for teaching
2. Become familiar with department advising policies and resources
3. Develop course materials that you will use in the future
4. Develop a teaching portfolio that can be used for job applications
5. Seek out resources that will support your present and future teaching
6. Reflect on your strengths and weaknesses when it comes to teaching
7. Discover strategies for enhancing students' experience in your classroom
8. Develop some familiarity with the literature on college teaching

Blackboard:

Course materials and readings as well as elaborated information on course requirements will be available for download from Blackboard. Students are expected to check Blackboard regularly for announcements.

Textbook:

Forsyth, D. R. (2003/2004). *The professor's guide to teaching: Psychological principles and practices*. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

University Policies and Deadlines:

Sep. 9th is the last day to provide advance written notification to instructors with intent to observe religious holidays.
Nov. 4th is the last day to withdraw with a grade of "W." If you have a physical or mental limitation that requires an academic adjustment or an accommodation, please contact me at your earliest convenience.

Attendance and Participation:

The value of a seminar primarily is a function of the quality of your informal contributions to the shared intellectual atmosphere. Accordingly, I expect that you not only will have read the assigned readings prior to each session, but that you also will have given serious thought to the readings and general topic (how it relates to other topics covered in the seminar, your present or future experiences in the classroom, other content areas in the field of psychology, etc). Also, we will be inviting guest speakers to share valuable insights that will help us. If you have to miss more than one class, you should consult with me about appropriate make-up work. Your participation in class discussions will be key to the success of the class; my expectation is that each student will participate during each class period.

Reflection Papers (due Sept. 16, Sept. 30, Oct. 28):

You will write three short papers (2 pages, plus reference page) in response to three reading assignments of your choosing (but not on your own class presentation topic). Alternatively, you could write about a CTE session you've attended or a class that you've observed; you should link your experiences to a reading. The objective for the assignment is to apply concepts from the reading or experience to past, present, or future experiences in the classroom. In what way was the reading/experience useful or thought-provoking for you?

Class Presentations:

You will give a 10 min presentation on a journal article on teaching (see the course web site for more information). The article may be selected from the index of Forsyth (2003/2004) or not. Examples of acceptable journals include: *Teaching of Psychology*, *Journal of Graduate Teaching Assistant Development*, *Review of Educational Research*, *Journal of Educational Psychology*, *Journal of Instructional Psychology*, *Research in Higher Education*, *Educational Psychologist*.

Activities:

As this course is a *practicum*, you will engage in activities that support the objective of the course outside of class time. You and I will work together to develop an appropriate and useful set of activities for you. Some activities will be common and *required* for all students: observing at least two different classes taught by someone else, attending two training sessions (e.g., CTE sessions) related to teaching, developing some type of online collection of teaching resources or materials, and meeting with me to develop your goals in this practicum. Other activities will vary depending on student interests; examples of such activities include: identifying and meeting with someone who is an appropriate mentor for teaching, applying course concepts to current teaching assignments, identifying and sharing resources for teaching materials, videotaping a course session or getting feedback from a live observer (guest lecture if necessary), developing a lecture to deliver to our class for practice, developing course materials for a current teaching assignment, learning about teaching-related issues from a helpful web site.

Projects (Teaching Portfolio due Nov. 11, Final Project due Dec. 2):

You will complete two projects: (1) a teaching portfolio and (2) a project of your choosing. Projects will vary among students and may include: developing course materials for a future course, developing a web site or Blackboard pages for a future course, writing a research paper synthesizing information from research articles on teaching, developing orientation materials for new teachers in our department. You and I will work together to develop an appropriate and useful project for you. Development of a teaching portfolio will be required of all students.

Plagiarism (see University Honors Policy, http://www.provost.vcu.edu/pdfs/Honor_system_policy.pdf):

Any form of cheating or plagiarism will be dealt with severely. When you write papers, you should (a) use your own words to express your own ideas; (b) use your own words to express someone else's ideas and cite the source; and/or (c) put quotes around someone else's words and cite the source. If you violate any of these rules, your work will be submitted to the Academic Integrity Office (Honor Council). Possible sanctions include receiving a zero on the assignment or failing the class, depending on the severity of the infraction. I encourage you to ask for help before turning in a paper (the Writing Center would be a good resource, www.vcu.edu/uc/writingcenter).

Grading Policy:

Possible Points	Your Points	Grading Scale	
Reflection Papers	30	_____	Divide your points by the possible points: * In order to receive a grade in the course, you must fulfill the Activities requirement.
Class Presentation	30	_____	
Activities*	100	_____	
Projects	100	_____	
Participation	40	_____	
TOTAL POINTS	300	_____	

Course Outline (check Blackboard for updates)

Date	Topic	Reading
August 22 and 23, 1-4	Pre-semester class sessions; Prepping: Planning to teach a college class	Chapter 1
September 2	Guiding: Student-centered approaches to teaching	Chapter 3
September 9	Journal article presentations	
	Innovating: Using technology creatively in teaching	Chapter 7
September 16	Journal article presentations	
September 30	Lecturing: Developing & delivering effective presentations	Chapter 2
	Managing: Fostering academic integrity, civility, & tolerance	Chapter 6
October 14	Documenting: Developing a teaching portfolio	Chapter 9
October 28	Journal article presentations	
November 4	Journal article presentations	
	Evaluating: Assessing and enhancing teaching quality	Chapter 8
November 18	Journal article presentations	
December 2	Testing: Strategies and skills for evaluating learning	Chapter 4
	Grading (and Aiding): Helping students reach learning goals	Chapter 5

Note: No class will be held Sept. 23, Oct. 7, Fall Break (Oct. 21), Nov. 11, Thanksgiving Break (Nov. 25), or Dec. 9