Psychology 795, Fall 2015
Teaching Practicum

Instructor: Dr. Jody Davis
Office: 820 W. Franklin St, room 205
Email: jldavis@vcu.edu
Phone number: 804.828.8227 (email preferred)

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. Create a teaching portfolio that can be used for job applications
5. Explore at least one type of online learning tool
6. Seek out resources that will support your present and future teaching
7. Reflect on your strengths and weaknesses when it comes to teaching
8. Discover strategies for enhancing students’ experience in your classroom
9. Develop some familiarity with the research literature on college teaching

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

Textbook:

University Policies and Deadlines (see Blackboard for more detail):
Sep. 4 is the last day to provide advance written notification to instructors with intent to observe religious holidays. Oct. 30 is the last day to withdraw with a grade of “W.” If you are approved for academic accommodations through VCU’s Disability Support Services office, 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. 11, Oct. 2, Oct. 23):
You will write three short papers (2 pages, plus reference page) reflecting on a journal article or chapter of your choosing (one source is required); the reading could be from the assigned reading list or one that you find yourself (but not on your own class presentation topic). Alternatively, you could write about a training session that you’ve attended or a class that you’ve observed, but you should still 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 5-7 min presentation on a journal article on teaching and then facilitate a class discussion of the article (see Blackboard for more information). 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: (1) observing at least two different classes taught by someone else, (2) having a conversation about teaching with an experienced psychology GTA or a faculty member, (3) developing some type of online teaching skill/product, and (4) meeting with me to develop your goals in this practicum. Other activities will vary depending on student interests; examples of such activities include: visiting the ALT Lab, 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), seeking out a guest lecturing opportunity, developing course materials for a current teaching assignment, learning about teaching-related issues from a helpful web site.

Projects (Teaching Portfolio due Oct. 30, Final Project due Nov. 20):
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 VCU Honor System):
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 System). 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).

Grading Policy: Possible Points Your Points Grading Scale
Reflection Papers 30 ___ Divide your points by the possible points:
Class Presentation 30 ___ A 90-100%
Activities* 100 ___ B 80-89% * In order to receive a
Projects 100 ___ C 70-79% grade in the course, you
Participation 40 ___ D 60-69% must fulfill the Activities
TOTAL POINTS 300 ___ F <60% requirement.

Course Outline (check Blackboard for updates and additional readings)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Reading</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>August 17 and 18, 1-4</td>
<td>Pre-semester class sessions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August 28</td>
<td>Prepping: Planning to teach a college class</td>
<td>Chapter 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 4</td>
<td>Presentations; Lecturing: Developing &amp; delivering effective presentations</td>
<td>Chapter 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 11</td>
<td>Presentations; Innovating: Using technology creatively in teaching</td>
<td>Chapter 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 2</td>
<td>Documenting: Developing a teaching portfolio</td>
<td>Chapter 9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 16</td>
<td>Presentations; Guiding: Student-centered approaches to teaching</td>
<td>Chapter 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 30</td>
<td>Presentations; Evaluating: Assessing and enhancing teaching quality</td>
<td>Chapter 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 6</td>
<td>Presentations; Testing: Strategies and skills for evaluating learning</td>
<td>Chapter 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 13</td>
<td>Presentations; Managing: Fostering integrity, civility, &amp; tolerance</td>
<td>Chapter 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dec 4</td>
<td>Presentations; Grading (and Aiding): Helping students reach learning goals</td>
<td>Chapter 5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: No class will be held Aug. 21, Sep. 18, Sep. 25 (Reading Day), Oct. 9, Oct. 23, Nov. 20, or Thanksgiving Break (Nov. 28).