# EDFI 6770: Contemporary Theory & Research in Classroom Learning
## WORKING SYLLABUS

**Instructor: Julia Matuga, PhD**
**Office Hours: By appointment Mondays, Tuesdays, & Thursdays**
**Office: Education 442 (Mailbox in Dean's Office 444)**
**E-Mail: jmatuga@bgsu.edu**
**Phone: 372-7317 (Please try e-mail first!)**

**COURSE PURPOSE & DESCRIPTION:**
The purpose of this course is to engage all members in the creation of a community of active learners focusing on the study of theories, principles, strategies, and concepts pertaining to the learning process and variables associated with classroom learning. All aspects of learning (i.e., learning theories, motivation, classroom management, evaluation, and computer-assisted learning) will be investigated, analyzed, and discussed with specific emphasis placed upon recent theory and research related to classroom learning problems and current practices and innovations in the educative process. This course is designed to provide you with opportunities to question, discuss, and critique contemporary theory and research with others in the hope that members will leave this seminar with a better understanding of classroom learning and the knowledge and skills needed to address classroom learning problems.

**EDHD CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK & DISPOSITIONS:**
*Educational personnel must be well prepared with regard to content knowledge and practical skills as well as understanding of learners and the influences on them. Educators must understand the factors that impact educational success, be sensitive to cultural, linguistic and socio-economic factors as expressed in the diverse individuals they encounter, work to construct inclusive environments in which all can succeed, skillfully utilize the educational and technological tools available to them, collaboratively engage with colleagues and the community, and systematically reflect and act on the effectiveness of their practice. They must exhibit appropriate professional dispositions, concern themselves with the ethics of their actions, be accountable for their performance and be committed to ongoing improvement of their own personal capabilities. The BGSU goal is to empower our educator candidates to act in various capacities to positively impact the future of learners, clients and colleagues. Toward that end, we hold the following statements as guiding core concepts:*
- **P** = An effective educator is broadly and thoroughly ***prepared***.
- **R** = An effective educator is a ***reflective*** practitioner.
- **E** = An effective educator is actively ***engaged*** within the larger educational community.
- **P** = An effective educator is foremost a ***professional***, with a lifelong commitment to learning and to all learners.

*Professionalism*
- It is expected that you will demonstrate professionalism throughout this course/experience. For educator candidates and educator personnel participating in professional development activities this means compliance with the BGSU Academic and Student Codes of Conduct (see Student Handbook) as well as evidencing accepted behaviors and attitudes appropriate to the educational circumstances, including but not limited to punctuality, personal appearance (dress, hygiene, etc.), speech, preparation, and/or quality of work.
- As a professional, it is your responsibility to pursue remediation of any deficits revealed in your performance on Key Assessment(s) assignments completed as part of this course.

*Technology*

Aspects of this course require evidence of students' technology competency and utilization. Should you encounter difficulties with technology knowledge/skills it is your responsibility to consult with the instructor and/or assistants in the student technology center.

*Diversity/Exceptionality*

- Any student who requires accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact the instructor privately to discuss specific needs.
- Educator candidates/professionals are expected to respect all individuals, regardless of characteristics or background, and endeavor to accommodate communications and actions to learning differences arising from cultural, linguistic, and disability origins.

*Collaboration*

During course lectures, activities, and field assignments, you will be expected to work and communicate with faculty, other students, and school/agency partners in an effective, collegial, and professional manner at all times.

**EDFI DEPARTMENTAL COURSE EXPECTATIONS:**

Five values identified by the Center for Academic Integrity (CAI, 1999, p. 7-9) serve as the framework for EDFI expectations:

*Honesty*

- See Code of Conduct defined in the *BGSU Student Handbook*.

*Trust*

- Clear guidelines for assignments and evaluating student work
- Students prepare work that is honest and thoughtful
- Schools set clear and consistent academic standards
- Support honest and impartial research

*Fairness*

- EDFI faculty will communicate course expectations and criteria for student evaluation prior to assigning papers/projects.
- Faculty and students have the right to expect fair treatment.

*Respect*

- EDFI faculty respect diversity of opinion, individual differences, and personal experiences.
- Students demonstrate respect by attending and participating in class, actively listening to multiple perspectives, meeting academic deadlines, and performing to one's best ability.

*Responsibility*

- "Every member of an academic community—each student, faculty member and administrator—is responsible for upholding the integrity of scholarship and research" (CAI, 1999, p. 9).
- Graduate students enrolled in an EDFI course should be prepared to:
  o Complete at least two hours of outside work per week per credit hour;
  o Complete a major inquiry/research paper/project;
  o Utilize campus resources (i.e., library, Writer's Lab, Math Lab, etc.) as needed or required;
  o Recognize that the faculty member is the primary source for questions regarding the course requirements, student expectations, and evaluation; and
  o Adhere to APA style, citation, and ethical principles of research and writing.

**STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES:**
The following learning objectives are required of all students who wish to successfully complete this course. Assignments will provide you an opportunity to illustrate your mastery of all student learning outcomes.

*Research*
- Students will be able to identify primary and secondary resources describing educational theory and research.
- Students will be able to read, translate, and summarize educational research.

*Learning Theory & Research*
- Students will be able to describe and paraphrase key contemporary theories of learning. Specific Topics covered in this course include:
  - Learning Theories (Behavioral, Cognitive, & Constructivistic)
  - Instructional Theories (Student & Teacher Centered)
  - Motivational Theories (Behavioral, Social Cognitive, & Humanistic)
  - Classroom Management Theories and Strategies
  - Evaluation and Assessment Methods and Tools
- Students will be able to apply and connect educational theory and research to classroom practice and student learning.
- Students will be able to compare and contrast educational theories and their influence on classroom practice and student learning.
- Students will be able to identify, analyze, and evaluate the diverse factors that impact individual student learning *(Diversity).*

*Application & Professionalism*
- Students will be able to cite, synthesize, and evaluate educational theory and research in a final project (i.e., literature review) identifying and illustrating knowledge of key aspects of student learning of their own choosing.
- Students will apply APA manual style to all course assignments.[1]

**LEARNING ACTIVITIES:**
This class is grounded in the philosophy of collaborative inquiry (CI). CI is described by Bray, Lee, Smith, and Yorks (2000) as "a process consisting of repeated episodes of reflection and action through which a group of peers strives to answer a question of importance to them" (p.6). CI requires that each participant is active "in his or her own meaning-making by using processes that ground new knowledge in personal experience" (Kasl & Yorks, 2002, p. 5). Two critical questions that we will be addressing in this course is "How do students learn?" and "How can we improve our practice as teachers to improve student learning?" To address these questions, various learning activities will be utilized that require students' thoughtful preparation and participation.

**Required Course Assignments:**
Each assignment listed below has a corresponding file or folder within the Canvas website (see the Course Materials area). It is the responsibility of each student to be familiar with assignment materials, requirements, grading materials, and due dates. Please note that some assignments are self-assessments, some have firm due dates, and others have variable due dates or windows of time in which assignments are due.

I.     **Self-Evaluation: Attendance & Participation (50 points; 10% of final grade)**

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[1] Departmental Requirement

This self-evaluation provides students with concrete examples of what it means to be an active community member in this course. The self-evaluation is due on the last day of class.

## II. Readiness Assurance Tests (RAT) (100 points; 20% of final grade)

To ensure that every student comes prepared to discuss the readings and participate in collaborative activities, at the beginning of most (11) class period students will complete a Readiness Assurance Test (RAT) to assess knowledge of content and identify content that needs to be elaborated upon in class. RATs will also provide each student with feedback regarding their own mastery of the material. RATs are worth 10 points each and may take a variety of forms. Some RATs may also be provided in advance of class meetings. **RATs may not be "made up"** but all students will be able to drop one RAT grade from their final grade (10 RATs x 10 pts. Each= 100 pts.).

## III. Student Observation & Analysis (80 points; 17% of final grade)
    A.    Observation (25 points)
    B.    Theoretical Analysis (45 points)
    C.    Individual Summary/Evaluation (10 points)

## IV. Online Discussion (40 points each=80 points; 17% of final grade)

Online course discussions stand in lieu of face-to-face course meetings when course cancellations are unavoidable. Online Discussions are worth 40 points and students should refer to the directions for online discussions in the Canvas assignment folder. There is one online discussion currently in place for our class meeting on November 5th (Coincidently this is our class meeting to discuss the role of technology in learning).

Should course be cancelled due to weather or instructor illness, an online discussion may stand in lieu of that face-to-face meeting which may alter the final points for this course. Students will be notified in writing via email (their BGNET account ONLY) about any changes that impact final point totals for this course.

## V. Research Roundtable Discussion (50 points; 10% of final grade)

Each student will sign up to facilitate a group discussion about classroom research. For this assignment each student will be assigned a primary/original research article on a topic or concept related to a learning theory (e.g., behaviorism, social cognitive theory, information processing, or constructivism) or a classroom learning problem (e.g., motivation, classroom management, technology, etc.) to share in class. [See Canvas site for more details]

## VI. Final Project (120 points; 25% of final grade)

Each student is required to complete a 10-15 page literature review of primary/original research (at least 6 are required) within an area related to learning for their final project. The purpose of this project is to assess student learning of course objectives. This project should be considered the final for this course.

### VI.a Final Paper[1] (100 points)                Due: December 3rd
Every student is required to submit a 10-15 page review of the primary/original research literature concerning a topic related to learning. All papers need to meet assignment requirements and will be evaluated using the provided grading matrix. APA format is required.

<u>**VI.b. Final Paper Poster Presentation (20 points)**</u>          **Due: December 10th**

In lieu of a final exam or formal presentations of final papers, graduate students within this course will coordinate a mini-conference highlighting posters of final papers (more details on this later). All students are required to be present on this class date or no credit for this activity will be earned.

**COURSE ASSESSMENT:** Students can check their grades 24/7 online within the Canvas site. Students will receive prompt, quantitative feedback for every assignment. This means that scores will be provided to students using the assignment rubrics so students can be aware of the degree to which they met assignment requirements.

| Grade | % | Pts. | Meaning |
|-------|-----|---------|---------|
| A | 100-90 | 480-432 | **Illustrated outstanding command of learning objectives**; went **beyond** required expectations for course activities and assignments. |
| B | 89-80 | 431-384 | Illustrated high degree of competency of learning objectives; met required expectations for course activities and assignments. |
| C | 79-70 | 383-336 | Illustrated minimal competency of learning objectives; met required expectations for course activities and assignments. |
| D | 69-60 | 335-288 | Did not illustrate minimal competency of learning objectives; do not meet expectations for course activities and assignments. |

**TEXTS AND READINGS:**
- Schunk, D. H. (2011). *Learning theories: An educational perspective* [Sixth Edition]. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson.

Additional required readings for this course will be provided as URL's or Adobe Acrobat files within the Canvas site in the area labeled "Readings". A free copy of Adobe Acrobat Reader may be found at www.adobe.com

**COURSE CALENDAR:**

The course calendar, which includes course reading and assessment due dates, can be found in the course Canvas site.