Instructor: Cynthia Stevens, Ed.D.
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Class meetings: Saturdays, 9 a.m.- 4:15 p.m. (one-hour lunch break)
April 7, 21, May 5, 19, June 2

Course Description:

This course grounds participants’ areas of practice and challenges them to look beyond and learn from other practices by examining a variety of theories, models, or paradigms related to adult learning. Participants will investigate their practical experience in their selected settings in light of these various theoretical approaches. They will investigate how students and learning facilitators are placed, or place themselves, within the complex social reality of any educational situation, and how this reality motivates or inhibits some or many of the multiple layers of ‘learning.’ They will therefore primarily focus on the process rather than the outcome of learning. This course therefore builds upon on EA 526 where the focus is on the outcomes of learning and on EA 517 where concepts and methods for facilitating learning are being addressed.

Recognizing the implications of theories for one’s practice of facilitating learning is embedded in a broad understanding of the multiple layers and types of learning that may enter any educational situation in one way or other. Students will examine how and why different theoretical approaches reveal useful themes that fit their practice setting and perspective, while others may conceal important dynamics of the context. Based on the recognition that everyone is always engaged in some kind of theorizing, even without being aware of it, students will examine the importance of theorizing on multiple levels and in multiple ways. They will understand why some theories have the most direct appeal to their clearly defined practice of learning facilitation, and how others contribute to recognizing the many invisible, hidden, or taken-for-granted dimensions of learning, dimensions that may be entirely unrelated to the defined learning task at hand but may nevertheless strongly influence the parameters and possibilities of learning.

Students will examine how different theories and models can contribute to articulating key principles of good practice, what kinds of practical but also theoretical questions they generate, and which ones are important to pursue not only for enhancing one’s own practice but also for being able to situate one’s theoretical and practical knowledge in the broader field of adult learning.
Learning Outcomes:

1. Can demonstrate an understanding of different adult learning theories, models, perspectives, and paradigms.
2. Can explain how social, cultural, institutional, and other contextual factors affect adult learning.
3. Can demonstrate how a set of adult learning theories can guide instructional decisions, and can describe the strength and limitations of those theories.
4. Can use adult learning theories to reflect and analyze their applicability to different educational settings and specific teaching/learning situations.
5. Can engage in a community of learners as a critically reflective thinker.

Required Readings:

- Other required readings available through D2L and Ares Course Reserve Reserve system

MAAPS Competencies

—AP-510 Main Theories. ("Can identify and analyze relevant theories, models, concepts and principles of adult learning and development to support, challenge, and enhance one’s area(s) of practice.")

—AP-574 Reflection In/On Practice. ("Can apply theories and models of learning from experience and reflective practice to one’s own practice as an educator of adults."")

—AP-585, -586, -587, -588, -589 Supplemental Competence. ("Can describe and analyze how choices of theories or significant ideas influence practices in the delivery of educational offerings for adult learners.")

—or some other version of the above competencies—subject to advance approval by Faculty Mentor and Instructor.

Course Requirements:

Organization and scope. In this course we will be moving back and forth between becoming familiar with and analyzing a number of different theories, and critically investigating their different practical implications for concrete learning situations. While we can only work with a limited number of theories they nevertheless exemplify fundamental aspects and dimensions of adult learning, and complementary or different theoretical frameworks or paradigms. They therefore illustrate the importance of developing a critical understanding of the role theories in general do or could play in our practice.

Through a variety of learning activities and assignments you will demonstrate your theoretical and practical understanding of the course material, and that you can effectively contribute to the learning of others.

Evidence for Assessment:

- Response Paper to Week 1 and 2 readings (3 pages Max).
- A Portrait of Myself as a Learner (3 pages Max).
- A Plan for Developing a Learner’s Potential based on an analysis of another learner’s self-portrait (3 to 4 pages Max).
• Experiment with one or more specific learning theories to one’s own particular context. (Experiment and follow up conversation will be about 30 minutes).
• A Final Essay that builds on and expands with additional sources on the material discussed in class as well as presented on the panel (10 pages Max, including bibliography).

All written assignments must be in APA style with clear documentation of all the resources used in the assignment (both direct quotes and indirect references). NOTE: Assignments without proper citations will be returned, ungraded, for revision.

Assessment Criteria and Percentage of Grade

Class Participation (20 %)

Note: See guidelines for class participation posted in D2L for additional expectations and ideas for class participation expectations.

A: Engaged participation in all class sessions based on thoughtful preparation; ability to discuss readings, draw on relevant life/work experience and overall contribute to the quality of the collaborative learning experience.

B: Active participation in most class sessions, class preparation and ability to discuss readings and relate them to practice setting with some degree of thoughtfulness.

C: Inconsistent participation and preparation; demonstration of some ability to link readings and theory to practice though lacking in detail.

Response Paper (15% of final grade)

A: Concise summary of key aspects of the reading put together in a coherent essay, presenting a critical perspective on some of these aspects based on available evidence and well-reasoned argument(s), along with some reference to implications for practice.

B: Summary of key aspects of the readings.

C: Description of some aspects of the readings, with reference to personal opinion.

Written Portrait of Myself as a Learner (10% of final grade)

A: Coherent, well-organized description of self as a learner in reference to specific learning theories.

B: Solid description of self as a learner in reference to specific learning theories.

C: Description of self as a learner somewhat lacking in organizational coherence and consistency in referencing relevant learning theories.
Peer Feedback: Plan for Developing a Learner’s Potential (15% of final grade)

A: Clear and persuasive analysis of a fellow student’s self-portrait in terms of strengths along with thoughtful and well-supported plan with specific suggestions for developing the person’s learning potential, using theories studied in class to inform suggestions.

B: Good description of another learner’s strengths and areas in need of development, and a solid plan for developing the person’s learning potential, with some grounding in theory.

C: Description of another learner’s strength and areas in need of development, with some analysis and somewhat lacking in persuasiveness of suggested plan for development, little or no grounding in theory.

Enhancing Practice Experiment (10% of final grade)

A: Thoughtful design and facilitation of a learning/facilitation approach that is inspired by relevant of course material and theories studied and clearly and creatively addresses a practice-based question.

B: Design and facilitation of a learning/facilitation approach that with some reference to course material and theories studied and that less clearly addresses a practice-based question.

C: Design and facilitation of a learning/facilitation approach that is not clearly inspired by course material and theories studied and/or does not clearly address a practice-based question.

Final Paper (30% of final grade)

A: Well-organized and comprehensively documented paper that demonstrates a thorough understanding of a set of learning theories and how these theories apply to one’s particular practice. Includes critical reflection on the learning experiment conducted in class in light of key dimensions of the theories studied and discussed, and initial thoughts about what you learned from the experiment and might want to do differently next time.

B: Well-organized and fairly adequately documented written demonstration of a solid understanding of a set of learning theories and how they apply to one’s particular practice, some reflection on learning experiment with little or weak reference to theories.

C: Fairly adequately documented and relatively well-organized report on a one’s particular practice, with little or weak reference to learning theories investigated inside and outside of class, little or no reflection on learning experiment.

Class Schedule:

Class 1 (Apr 7)

Read and do prior to this class session:

- Adult Learning (Merriam & Bierema): Chapters 1-4
Retake Teaching Perspectives Inventory (TPI) and bring results to class: http://www.teachingperspectives.com/tpi/

AM:

“Traveling through the landscape of adult learning”

- Taking initial stock of our current knowledge and assumptions regarding ‘theory,’ ‘learning,’ and how theory and practice relate to each other; looking at representative samples.
  - What is theory?
  - Why should we study it?
  - How is it relevant to your practice?

- Overview of major theoretical orientations/Conceptual frameworks
- Identification and discussion of our practice-based questions.
- Review of syllabus, assignments, and traveling together, as members of a panel, and individually.

PM:

- Overview of major theoretical orientations (Con’t)
- Reading for Critical Engagement Strategies
- Expectations regarding the final individual project.
- Preview of required readings and Assignments for Next Session.

1. Readings (See Response Paper Assignment)
2. Response Paper (Due May 2)
3. Portrait of Myself as a Learner (DUE May 9)

Based on work done in previous classes in the program, and based on ideas generated by the readings, please write a 2-page portrait of yourself as a learner. From now on keep a separate notebook where you note how the various theories we discussed in class give you tools to investigate what they say about you as a learner. Later in the course you will revisit your initial self-portrait and write a final version. (You may want to look at the handout “Portrait of Myself as a Learner.”)

4. Formation of Panels based on commonality of interests

Class 2 (April 21)

Learning, the Body, Brain, and Emotions

Read prior to this class session:

- Adult Learning (Merriam & Bierema): Chapters 7 and 9
- Facilitating Learning With the Brain in Mind (Taylor and Marienau): Chapter 9
- Reserve Readings:
  - Sheckley, B., Bell, S. (2006) Experience, consciousness, and learning, in New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education.
  - Dirkx, J. (2001) The power of feelings, in New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education.

**AM:**
- Embodied and Whole Person Learning
- Emotions and Learning
- Meaning-Making and Spirit in Learning

**PM**
- Brain-Aware theories and practices
- Learning Agility
- Discussion of the applicability of these theories to one’s own self and to one’s own practice.
- Possible connections to your practice-based question and final experiment

Preview of **Assignments** for next session:

1. Readings (See Class 3, below)
2. **DUE May 2:** Response Paper

**Class 3 (May 5)**

*Read prior to this class session:*

Adult Learning (Merriam & Bierema): Chapters 5, 6 and 11

The Experiential Educator (Kolb and Kolb, 2017): Chapter 1 (In Ares reserve)

Choose one of the following from Ares reserve:

- Clark and Dirkx, *Moving beyond a unitary self*
- Xing (Lucy) Lu, *Identity negotiation in the classroom*
- Brookfield, S. *Unmasking power*
- Hurtado, A. *Strategic suspensions: Feminists of color theorize the production of knowledge*
- Newman, *Self-help for the blind*

**AM:**
**Learning and Development**

- Perspectives on Transformative Learning
- Critical Thinking and Critical Perspectives

**PM**
**Learning in and from Experience**

- Perspectives on Experiential Learning
• Different notions, definitions, meanings of ‘experience’
• Kolb’s experiential learning theory and mind/body dualism
• Alternative models and theories
• Narrative theory and learning

Preview of Assignments for next session:

1. Readings (See Class 4 prep below)
2. DUE May 9: Portrait of Self as a Learner
3. Write: One page outline of final paper and submit for early feedback. Submit before May 19th.

Class 4 (Oct 21)

Read prior to this class session:

• Adult Learning: Chapters 8, 10 and 12 (Merriam & Beierma)

AM:

Motivation and Learning

• Theories of Motivation
• Culture and Context in Adult Learning

PM

1. Individual reports on work regarding learner’s self-portrait; exchange of learners’ self-portraits and discussion of preparing plan for learner’s development.
2. Experiment meetings/Brainstorming sessions

DUE TODAY: Outline of Final Paper (or before)

Preview of Assignments for next Session:

1. Write a plan for development of a learner’s potential based on a fellow student’s self-portrait.
2. Prepare your learning experiment for next session’s Panel Groupings

Class 5 (June 2)

AM

• Peer coaching sessions for suggested plans for a learner’s development
• Enhancing Practice Experiments & Reflection

PM

• Enhancing Practice Experiments & Reflection
• Closing Reflections and Celebration
NOTE: The final essay (and all outstanding assignments) are due by Thursday, June 7 in the appropriate Drop Box folders. Any papers submitted after June 7 will likely require you to submit an Incomplete form for the class or risk receiving an “F” grade for the course.

EXPECTATIONS, POLICIES & OTHER RESOURCES

- **Adult/Professional Engagement:** All course participants (students & instructors alike) are responsible for co-creating the learning space of this course—contributing individual uniquenesses while also modulating them for the sake of group learning. In this regard, professional engagement is expected from all—and particularly in areas of difference. Such engagement manifests itself through punctual attendance, thorough preparation, focused and respectful interactions (turning off electronic devices; curtailing side-conversations; active listening; informed contributions; probing questions; involved discussion; open-mindedness; etc.) as well as a high degree of both self-motivation and self-accountability. In addition, as adults, we are all responsible for **requesting what we need** to improve/sustain learning. The answer may be ’yes’ or ’no’—but, **not to request** is to leave the matter to chance. For additional information pertaining to DePaul’s Code of Student Responsibility, see: [http://studentaffairs.depaul.edu/handbook/index.html](http://studentaffairs.depaul.edu/handbook/index.html)

- **Students** are expected to adhere to the University’s policy regarding academic integrity (involving plagiarism, cheating and other forms of academic dishonesty). Violations of academic integrity will be adjudicated in accordance with this policy. For additional information pertaining to Academic Integrity, see following link: [http://academicintegrity.depaul.edu/AcademicIntegrityPolicy.pdf](http://academicintegrity.depaul.edu/AcademicIntegrityPolicy.pdf).

- **Attendance:** Attendance is of vital importance. The MAEA program encourages participation in all sessions; if a session must be missed, the student takes responsibility for “catching up” and “making up” missed work. If a student misses more than one full day session s/he needs to retake the course. All class session start on time and end on time. You are expected to be present at the start of class to support the collaborative learning experience. Two late arrivals of more than 15 minutes will count as a half-day absence and could jeopardize your ability to pass the course. In accordance with adult/professional engagement (above) and, in particular, the importance of co-creating the learning space of this course, students are expected to participate and contribute within all class sessions.

- **Citation Format:** SNL Graduate Programs has adopted the APA reference style for all papers, presentations, etc. See most recent edition of *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*.

- **Classroom-based Research involving Human Subjects:** Students are expected, when conducting research through the auspices of this course, to exhibit concern for the confidentiality and protection of their research subjects—guaranteeing anonymity wherever possible. Should there be any possibility or intent to publish or otherwise disseminate data and findings of research associated with this course, students are required to file an application for review of their methods protocol with the IRB (Institutional Review Board) prior to beginning any data collection. For additional information pertaining to Classroom-based Research, see following link: [http://research.depaul.edu/IRB/IRB_Home.html](http://research.depaul.edu/IRB/IRB_Home.html).

- **Incomplete Grade:** Students seeking an “incomplete” (due to unusual or unforeseeable circumstances not encountered by other students and as acceptable to the instructor) are to request such in accordance with the University’s policy regarding incompletes. To request an incomplete, students are to complete and submit the required form in advance of grading deadlines listed in the syllabus. Instructors are not obligated to accept all requests for
incompletes. For additional information pertaining to “incompletes” (including required form), see following link: See [http://snl/StudentResources/Graduate_Resources/Grades.asp](http://snl/StudentResources/Graduate_Resources/Grades.asp).

- **Learning Disabilities:** Students who have need of an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact the instructor as early in the course as possible for a private/confidential conversation. In addition, students should contact Plus Program (for LD, AD/HD) at 773-325-4239 or The Office for Students with Disabilities at 773-325-7290. See [http://studentaffairs.dePaul.edu/plus/index.asp](http://studentaffairs.dePaul.edu/plus/index.asp).

- **Writing Assistance:** Students who wish assistance with their writing may seek such through the DePaul Writing Centers. These centers offer resources for student writers through both on-site and online services. Students are advised to consult the following links for information pertaining to writing assistance: [http://condor.dePaul.edu/writing/index.html](http://condor.dePaul.edu/writing/index.html) and/or [http://snl.dePaul.edu/writing/index.html](http://snl.dePaul.edu/writing/index.html).

**INSTRUCTOR BIOGRAPHY**

Cynthia Stevens has earned a doctorate in Adult and Higher Education and master’s degree in Adult Continuing Education from Northern Illinois University. The concentration in her degrees centered on nontraditional education and research. Her research interests include adult education, prior learning assessment, experiential learning, nontraditional education, staged self-directed learning, college-level learning, and developmental education with a specific interest in literacy.
Additional Readings & References (Most will be available on Ares Reserve via CampusConnect)


