

Undergraduate Teaching Experience

PSYC 4391-001 — Spring 2023 — January 17th — May 2nd

Wednesdays: 11:00-11:50AM — Life Science 501

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Course Description: Teaching effectively requires mastering the content of your discipline, but also numerous other skills. This course will prepare undergraduate students to be challenging, inspiring, engaging teachers and/or communicators of psychological topics by covering important professional issues, including planning a syllabus, structuring a lecture, navigating class discussions, communicating effectively with different types of classes, responding to student input, dealing with classroom incivilities, responding to student assignments, using technology, and responding to student work. This course will also assist students through the process of teaching as learning through addressing cognitive theories underlying the learning process.

Student Learning Objectives/Outcomes:

- Working with a supervising professor, students will observe the development and execution of a specific college class throughout the semester while fulfilling standard Teaching Assistant responsibilities (which vary depending on the course and professor)
- Given information about course development, learning outcomes, and assessment, students will design an introductory course using best practices by creating a syllabus for the course.
- Given course readings, students will articulate and analyze common classroom issues and potential solutions through active participation in class discussions.
- After observing three undergraduate classes, students will compare various approaches to teaching, explain how these approaches effect classroom dynamics, and acknowledge which approach the student prefers by writing a five-page observation essay.
- Given an opportunity to choose topic of interests, students will create their own lecture materials and practice delivering a lecture in two different 12-minute mini-lesson presentations.

Required Textbooks and Materials:

1. Darby, F. & Lang, J.M. (2021). *Small Teaching: Everyday Lessons from the Science of Learning*, 2nd edition. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
2. Svinicki, M. & McKeachie, M.J. (2011). *McKeachie's Teaching Tips: Strategies, Research, and Theory for College and University Teachers*, 14th Edition. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.
3. Additional assigned readings provided throughout the semester **via Canvas: To be announced.**
4. Canvas will be an important resource throughout the semester. Your grades will be posted through Canvas and supplemental readings will be provided. Make sure you have access to Canvas.
 - a. Canvas support is available 24/7 by calling 1-855-597-3401 or by clicking on the “?” icon on your Canvas Dashboard.
 - b. If you are new to Canvas please complete the Canvas Student Orientation training course before starting the course: <https://uta.instructure.com/courses/17157>

Course Pre-requisites, Co-requisites, and/or other restrictions: Students must complete Introduction to Psychology (PSYC 1315) before enrolling in this course. Students must have a minimum GPA of 3.5 and be a psychology major (other majors may be approved with instructor permission). Students must have earned a B or better in the class for which they will serve as a TA and instructor approval is required.

Course Assignments

Class Participation and Discussions: This course is a discussion-based course. It is expected that you come to class prepared, having read the assigned readings and provided discussion questions on Canvas. Participating in the class discussion and interacting with your peers and your professor is important, it is also what makes this course fun and engaging.

Classroom Observation Reflection Essay: Teachers can learn a great deal by observing their peers in action. Classroom observations outside your discipline are especially powerful because you can focus on the teaching rather than the content. You will select and observe three undergraduate classes taught by three different instructors. Two of the three courses you observe must be outside your home department. Please contact each instructor in advance for his/her permission to visit class. Also ask his/her preferences regarding when you visit, where you should sit, how you should join the virtual lecture etc.

Although you are free to observe anyone that you wish (aside from the limitations specified above), consider the following suggestions:

- Compare three sections of a single course taught by different instructors
- Compare three courses of similar size and format (e.g., three large lecture-format courses)
- Observe award-winning instructors (see a list at the Academy of Distinguished Teacher's website: <http://www.uta.edu/academy/index.php>)
- Observe three senior faculty members, three new faculty members, or some of each

Elements to discuss in your essay include:

- How did the instructor spend class time (e.g., how many minutes spent lecturing, how many questions did the instructor ask, how many minutes were used to elicit discussion, did he/she use technology)?
- What were the students doing during class (e.g., taking notes, asking questions, chatting in the textbox)?
- What were your experiences during class (e.g., could you understand the content, could you take good notes over the content, was technology used effectively, were you struggling to stay awake, would you like to take a course from this instructor, etc.)?
- What qualities of this instructor/class would you like to integrate in your teaching?
- What qualities of this instructor/class would you like to avoid in your teaching?

Your essay should identify the three classes you observed (e.g., class title, instructor's name, length of class period) and describe your observations. Your essay need not have any particular structure or format. Essays should be approximately five double-spaced pages.

Model Lecture Presentation: You will present two mini-lessons in class. Each mini-lesson should use no more than twelve minutes of class time (including any preparation time). These lessons should be on a topic **outside** of your area of expertise. Prior to presenting your lesson, you will turn in a list of all required materials, one or more learning objectives for the lesson, and a specific description of the procedure for the lesson (if you choose to give a lecture, you'll turn in your lecture notes and learning objectives). The learning objective should be an observable behavior that you will be able to measure during the lesson. Although not required, you are encouraged to try active learning techniques.

After each lesson, you will receive formative feedback on each of the following criteria:

- Did the lesson fulfill its learning objective(s)?
- Did the lesson require higher-level thinking/learning skills from students?
- Was the lesson appropriate in depth & level of difficulty for an introductory course?
- Was the lesson appropriate in duration?
- Was the lesson clear and well-organized?
- Was the lesson fun and engaging from a student's point of view?

Course Objectives: You will write course objectives for an introductory course in your discipline. Each objective should be an observable, measurable behavior (e.g., what students should be able to do after successfully completing the

course). Don't be afraid to think big or creatively. Strive to structure the course around one or more themes or big question(s) to help students integrate the course into a coherent whole rather than a disjointed set of unrelated topics. You will share a copy of your course objectives with the class on the day the objectives are due and give a five-minute presentation explaining your choice of objectives.

Objectives will be evaluated on the degree to which they meet each of the following criteria:

- Are the objectives observable, measurable behaviors?
- Are they specific enough to facilitate lesson and assessment planning?
- Do the objectives include authentic tasks that go beyond "learn and remember?"
- Do they incorporate the breadth of the discipline?
- Do they incorporate basic undergraduate skills?

Learning Objectives and Course Schedule: One process that can transform your teaching is to plan a specific learning objective for each day of class. Doing so requires considerable thought and planning but it is well worth the time. Learning objectives are "smaller" and more specific than course objectives. The daily learning objectives should break the course objectives down into the component skills, knowledge, and abilities students will need to achieve the course objectives.

To do so, you will select a textbook for your introductory course and start by breaking your course objectives into manageable daily learning objectives. Then identify what skills and/or information students will need in order to achieve each day's objectives. Select topics and reading assignments based on this analysis.

For convenience, assume the class meets two days a week (Tuesday/Thursday) in 70-minute periods according to the Spring 2023 schedule. Your course schedule should identify a specific topic and at least one learning objective for each day of class. You should also identify a reading assignment for each day of class, although each day need not have a unique reading assignment (e.g., you can assign Chap 2. for two days of class). Similarly, each day need not have a unique learning objective, although there should be sufficient variety in learning objectives across the course. The reading assignments will presumably be from the textbook you select but don't feel overly wedded to it. Feel free to use readings from other sources or skip chapters altogether when appropriate to the day's learning objective.

You will share a copy of your course schedule and daily learning objectives with the class on the day it is due. You will give a five-minute presentation justifying your learning objectives, your inclusion of the specified topics and your exclusion of other topics. Also describe your rationale behind the sequence of the specified topics. Although it is acceptable to follow the textbook, your rationale should not be limited to that as a justification for your order of topics.

The course schedule and learning objectives will be evaluated on the degree to which they meet each of the following criteria:

- Do the learning objectives demonstrate one or more best practices?
- Are the daily learning objectives observable, measurable behaviors that can reasonably be achieved given a fifty-minute class period?
- Do the learning objectives demonstrate adequate specificity and variety?
- Are themes or a big question(s) evident in the schedule and learning objectives?
- Is the inclusion and exclusion of topics reasonable and thoughtful?
- Is the sequencing rationale reasonable and thoughtful?

Assessment Plan: In this assignment you will describe how you will assess your course objectives. The plan may include exams, formal or informal writing assignments, in-class activities, projects, etc.

The plan should describe each assessment in detail *including a full grading rubric* and the weight given to each assessment technique (e.g., 25% of final grade). I should be able to evaluate any student product as you intend based on your assessment plan. I should also be able to calculate a student's final grade as you intend based on the information in your assessment plan. For example, if you plan to use exams, describe the number and type of items, the

format (i.e., in-class vs. take-home), the content covered by the exam, 4-6 sample questions, and where the exam fits in the progression of the course.

Please include a list of your course objectives as part of your assessment plan and specify which objective(s) is/are being assessed by each activity in your assessment plan. Your assessments and your objectives should be conceptually aligned. That is, every assessment should be tied to at least one objective and every objective should have at least one assessment.

Your plan will be evaluated on the degree to which it meets the following criteria:

- Does each assessment appropriately measure at least one course objective?
- Is each objective assessed in at least one way?
- Are rubrics appropriately specific?
- Is there an adequate variety and quantity of assessments?
- Do the assessment techniques enhance learning in addition to simply assessing learning?
- Are the assessment techniques likely to be fun and engaging from a students' point of view?

Course Syllabus: Your complete course syllabus should contain all of the elements you have already completed (e.g., course objectives, assessments, daily learning objectives, etc.) plus any other necessary elements (see the Office of the Provost for more syllabi information: <https://resources.uta.edu/provost/course-related-info/index.php>). Your course may change throughout the semester so be sure that all the elements of your syllabus are internally consistent. The syllabus will be evaluated on the degree to which it meets each of the following criteria (see Canvas for complete rubric):

- course objectives and assessments
- choice and sequence of topics
- choice of reading assignments/textbook
- selected teaching strategy or strategies

Evaluation:

Assignments	% of total	Percentage	Letter Grade
Class participation and discussions	30%	100 – 90.0%	A
Classroom observation essay	15%	80.0 – 89.9%	B
Model Lecture Presentations	15%	70.0– 79.9%	C
Syllabus Assignments	25%	60.0– 69.9%	D
Teaching Assistant Duties	15%	< 59.9%	F
TOTAL	100%		

Grading is based on a mastery model. Students are expected to keep track of their performance throughout the semester and seek guidance from available sources. *I make it a policy not to “bump” any final grade up to the next higher grade.* Please do not ask me to do otherwise. If you want a specific grade, then you need to put in the effort necessary to obtain said grade.

Course Schedule

CLASS DATE	DISCUSSION TOPICS	READING
Week 1 — January 18	Introductions, Expectations, and Projects Due: Compliance Trainings, FERPA Acknowledgement, Faculty/Student Contract	
Week 2 — January 25	Discussions	S&M: Ch 5
Week 3 — February 1	Ethics in Teaching	S&M: Ch 1, Ch 22
Week 4 — February 8	Course Preparation Due: Course objectives	S&M: Ch 2, Ch 3
Week 5 — February 15	Small Teaching: Designing for Learning	Darby & Lang: Ch 1, 2, 3
Week 6 — February 22	Lectures Due: Learning Objectives and Course Schedule	S&M: Ch 6, Ch 18
Week 7 — March 1	Assignments, Grading, Academic Honesty Due: Classroom Observation Essay	S&M: Ch 7, Ch 8
Week 8 — March 8	Classroom Observation Discussion	
Spring Break: March 13 – 17 No Classes		
Week 9 — March 22	Students as Learners and as People	S&M: Ch 11, Ch 12
Week 10 — March 29	Small Teaching: Teaching Humans Due: Assessment Plan	Darby & Lang: Ch 4, 5, 6
Week 11 — April 5	Common Problems and Classroom Incivilities	S&M: Ch 13
Week 12 — April 12	Small Teaching: Motivating Online Students (and Instructors) Due: Course Syllabus	Lang: Ch 7, Ch 8, Ch 9
Week 13 — April 19	Mini-Lectures	
Week 14 — April 26	Mini-Lectures	

University of Texas at Arlington Institutional Policies

UTA students are encouraged to review the below institutional policies and informational sections and reach out to the specific office with any questions. To view this institutional information, please visit the [Institutional Information](https://resources.uta.edu/provost/course-related-info/institutional-policies.php) page (<https://resources.uta.edu/provost/course-related-info/institutional-policies.php>) which includes the following policies among others:

- Drop Policy
- Disability Accommodations
- Non-Discrimination Policy
- Title IX Policy
- Academic Integrity
- Student Feedback Survey
- Final Exam Schedule
- Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS)
- Student Support Services

Face Covering Policy: While the use of face coverings on campus is no longer mandatory, all students and instructional staff are strongly encouraged to wear face coverings while they are on campus. This is particularly true inside buildings and within classrooms and labs where social distancing is not possible due to limited space. If a student needs accommodations to ensure social distancing in the classroom due to being at high risk they are encouraged to work directly with the Student Access and Resource Center to assist in these accommodations. If students need masks, they may obtain them at the Central Library, the E.H. Hereford University Center's front desk or in their department.

Emergency Exit Procedures: Should we experience an emergency event that requires evacuation of the building, students should exit the room and move toward the nearest exit. When exiting the building during an emergency, do not take an elevator but use the stairwells instead. Faculty members and instructional staff will assist students in selecting the safest route for evacuation and will make arrangements to assist individuals with disabilities.

Attendance: At the University of Texas at Arlington, taking attendance is not required but attendance is a critical indicator of student success. Each faculty member is free to develop his or her own methods of evaluating students' academic performance, which includes establishing course-specific policies on attendance. As the instructor of this section, note that you should be aware that we can track your progress in Canvas—in fact, we can see each page you accessed and the time when that occurred. As the instructor of this section, lecture attendance is required. However, while UT Arlington does not require instructors to take attendance in their courses, the U.S. Department of Education requires that the University have a mechanism in place to verify Federal Student Aid recipients' attendance in courses. UT Arlington instructors should be prepared to report the last date of attendance as part of the final grading process. Specifically, when assigning a student a grade of F, faculty must report the last date a student attended their class based on evidence of academic engagement such as a test, participation in a class project or presentation, or an engagement online via Canvas. This date is reported to the Department of Education for federal financial aid recipients.

Distance education courses require regular and substantive online interaction and participation. Students must participate in online course activities to demonstrate attendance; logging into an online class is not sufficient by itself to demonstrate attendance

Academic Success Center: The Academic Success Center (ASC) includes a variety of resources and services to help you maximize your learning and succeed as a student at the University of Texas at Arlington. ASC services include supplemental instruction, peer-led team learning, tutoring, mentoring and TRIO SSS. Academic Success Center services are provided at no additional cost to UTA students. For additional information visit: [Academic Success Center](#). To request disability accommodations for tutoring, please complete this [form](#).

The IDEAS Center: (<https://www.uta.edu/ideas/>) (2nd Floor of Central Library) offers **FREE** [tutoring](#) and [mentoring](#) to all students with a focus on transfer students, sophomores, veterans and others undergoing a transition to UT Arlington. Students can drop in or check the schedule of available peer tutors at www.uta.edu/IDEAS, or call (817) 272-6593.

The English Writing Center (411LIBR): The Writing Center offers **FREE** tutoring in 15-, 30-, 45-, and 60-minute face-to-face and online sessions to all UTA students on any phase of their UTA coursework. Register and make appointments online at the [Writing Center](https://uta.mywconline.com) (<https://uta.mywconline.com>). Classroom visits, workshops, and specialized services for graduate students and faculty are also available. Please see [Writing Center: OWL](#) for detailed information on all our programs and services.

Library: The Library's 2nd floor [Academic Plaza](http://library.uta.edu/academic-plaza) (<http://library.uta.edu/academic-plaza>) offers students a central hub of support services, including IDEAS Center, University Advising Services, Transfer UTA and various college/school advising hours. Services are available during the [library's hours](#) of operation.

Librarian to Contact: Andy Herzog (amherzog@uta.edu)

Research or General Library Help:

Ask for Help

- [Academic Plaza Consultation Services](http://library.uta.edu/academic-plaza) (library.uta.edu/academic-plaza)
- [Ask Us](http://ask.uta.edu/) (ask.uta.edu/)
- [Research Coaches](http://libguides.uta.edu/researchcoach) (<http://libguides.uta.edu/researchcoach>)

Resources

- [Library Tutorials](http://library.uta.edu/how-to) (library.uta.edu/how-to)
- [Subject and Course Research Guides](http://libguides.uta.edu) (libguides.uta.edu)
- [Librarians by Subject](http://library.uta.edu/subject-librarians) (library.uta.edu/subject-librarians)
- [A to Z List of Library Databases](http://libguides.uta.edu/az.php) (libguides.uta.edu/az.php)
- [Course Reserves](https://uta.summon.serialssolutions.com/#!/course_reserves) (https://uta.summon.serialssolutions.com/#!/course_reserves)
- [Study Room Reservations](http://openroom.uta.edu/) (openroom.uta.edu/)

Emergency Phone Numbers: In case of an on-campus emergency, call the UT Arlington Police Department at **817-272-3003** (non-campus phone), **2-3003** (campus phone). You should also dial 911.