

# EDPE 635: THEORIES OF LEARNING AND INSTRUCTION

Winter 2014 (3 credits)      Thursdays 6:05-8:45 PM

Education Bldg (3700 McTavish), Room 613

---

**Instructor:** Dr. Nathan C. Hall  
**Office:** 543 Education Bldg  
**Office Hours:** By appointment

**Phone:** 514-398-3452  
**Email:** nathan.c.hall@mcgill.ca

---

## Course Overview

In this graduate survey course, we will examine several theoretical and research traditions in the study of learning and instruction. Within a historical framework, we look at foundational theories as well as recent revisions and developments. Through selected readings, lectures, and discussion, we will also consider the extension and application of learning theories to educational practice. The course design will also provide opportunities for in-depth study of specific theories and research studies through journals, discussion questions, and class presentations. The course objectives and assignments aim to facilitate critical examination of established theoretical perspectives in the context of recent research, as well as the elaboration of a personal framework for learning and instruction.

## Course Objectives

1. Knowledge of key tenets of past and current theoretical perspectives on teaching and learning
2. Ability to critically evaluate major theoretical models in the context of empirical research
3. Application of learning theories and research to classroom instruction and personal teaching frameworks

## Required Readings

All course readings are indicated in the schedule below and available for download in the myCourses system. The Education building computer lab (room 328) is available for on-campus computer use and printing. McGill network access (wireless, labs) may be required to access article links. All students are expected to read each of the assigned “core” article(s) prior to the designated class.

## Course Requirements

Weekly classes will consist of lectures, discussion, and class presentations. Final course grades will be based on four components intended to facilitate the critical evaluation of learning theories through in-class activities, as well as individual journals encouraging personal reflection on foundational theories and research. In accordance with McGill University’s Charter of Students’ Rights, students in this course have the right to submit in English or in French any written work that is to be graded. Supplemental rubrics outlining specific information concerning the course requirements (i.e., structure, grading) are available in the myCourses system. I do not review rough drafts of assignments and extra credit submissions or post-deadline assignment revisions are not accepted.

### **1. Journal Assignments (60%)**

Four journal assignments (15% each) may be submitted for **Weeks 3-12 (not 13)** and are intended to encourage reflection, elaboration, and self-monitoring concerning the course readings. Each journal addresses the readings for that week and relevance of the material to both the classroom setting and personal epistemologies. Each journal consists of four questions concerning one core reading and one supplemental reading assigned for that class. Journals must be 1500-2000 words in length, submitted via myCourses, and are due prior to the start of that class. For more information, please consult the journal assignments rubric in myCourses.

## 2. Class Questions (10%)

In **Weeks 3-12 (not 13)**, students will submit 2 multiple-choice questions (5% each, 1 submission per class; 4 to 10 response options) to be answered by the class via text message ([www.polleverywhere.com](http://www.polleverywhere.com)) at the start of class.

Questions are submitted via myCourses by NOON on the day of class and are to be submitted on the same dates as the research and teaching presentations (see myCourses schedule; can swap dates with others). Questions should be directly relevant to the readings for that class, and evaluate higher-order thinking vs. repetition of article content. The question rationale must be explained in class, and grades will be based on relevance, engagement, and quality: <http://cft.vanderbilt.edu/teaching-guides/assessment/writing-good-multiple-choice-test-questions>.

## 3. Research Presentation (20%)

Each class in **Weeks 3-12 (not 13)** will include individual 15-minute presentations reviewing one research article related to the readings for that class. Students must review a recent, peer-reviewed research article obtained via a literature search. The presentation will be in PowerPoint format (uploaded to myCourses before class), and follow the guidelines in the supplemental rubric provided in myCourses.

## 4. Teaching Presentation (10%)

Each class in **Weeks 3-12 (not 13)** will also include individual 10-minute presentations demonstrating a teaching strategy related to the readings for that class. Students must provide an interactive demonstration of how the theory can be effectively applied to classroom instruction, and include an introduction indicating the teaching method's relevance to the readings. A teaching and research presentation cannot be given on the same date and all slides must be in PowerPoint format (uploaded to myCourses before class) as per the rubric provided in myCourses.

## Grading

Final grades are assigned on the standard university scale based on the course requirement rubrics. Students are strongly encouraged to discuss any grading questions or concerns directly with the instructor. In the event of extraordinary circumstances beyond the University's control, the course content/grading rubrics are subject to change. All course requirements must be completed for a final grade to be assigned.

Requirements		Grade	Grade Points	Numerical Scale
Journal Assignments	60%	A	4.0	85-100%
Class Questions	10%	A-	3.7	80-84%
Research Presentation	20%	B+	3.3	75-79%
Teaching Presentation	10%	B	3.0	70-74%
		B-	2.7	65-69%
Total:	100%	C+	2.3	60-64%
		C	2.0	55-59%
		D	1.0	50-54%
		F	0	0-49%

## **Class Policies**

- **Participation & Conduct**

Students are expected to read the assigned material before each class, contribute to in-class discussions, and attend each class except in the case of illness, official closures, or extenuating circumstances. Students are responsible for obtaining missed class content from other students or the instructor (class slides are not available electronically). All electronic devices should be silenced prior to class and should not be used without instructor permission (e.g., phones, PDAs, laptops, recorders, etc.). Usage privileges may be revoked following inconsiderate device use (e.g., texting, loud typing, unrelated websites).

- **Late Submissions**

Late journal submissions will be penalized 10% per day, with entries submitted after the specified times above considered one day late (late media submissions are not accepted). Explanations for late submissions involving technology problems are not acceptable. Ensure your documents are backed-up and ready for submission before they are due, and allow yourself sufficient time to confirm your document was uploaded and/or utilize campus computers to avoid personal computing difficulties. All excuses concerning university technology (e.g., email, myCourses) must be confirmed by direct correspondence from McGill ICS personnel to the instructor.

- **Deadline Extensions & Changes**

Deadline extensions and presentation date changes may be considered if a prior notice of absence and/or appropriate formal documentation regarding excusable absences is provided. Possible excusable absences include illness (e.g., physician note, hospital record), funerals (e.g., travel receipts, obituary), religious observances, participation in university activities, and extenuating circumstances. Revised deadlines must be within one week of the original deadline. Presentation dates may be exchanged between students in case of scheduling difficulties.

- **Academic Integrity**

McGill University values academic integrity. Therefore, all students must understand the meaning and consequences of cheating, plagiarism, fabrication, and other academic offences under the Code of Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures (see [www.mcgill.ca/students/srr/honest](http://www.mcgill.ca/students/srr/honest) for more information). In this course, plagiarism is defined as 5 or more words in a row from source other than your own original writing for this class (e.g., textbook, website, article, another paper, etc.) that is not included within quotation marks and followed by a parenthetical source notations. This definition applies to all written course submissions including journals and PowerPoint slides. Papers suspected of plagiarism will be scanned electronically using digital services also available for self-checking (WCopyfind; [www.dccop.com](http://www.dccop.com); [www.dustball.com/cs/plagiarism.checker](http://www.dustball.com/cs/plagiarism.checker)).

As per the zero-tolerance plagiarism policy for this course, submissions in which plagiarism is observed will be forwarded to the Associate Dean of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies for disciplinary action (articles 56 and 56.1 in the [Student Rights and Responsibilities Handbook](#)). Lectures and course materials are copyright protected and require written instructor consent before reproduction for commercial use. Additional policies governing academic issues that affect students are found in the McGill Charter of Students' Rights (Handbook Chapter 1).

- **Students with Disabilities**

If you are a student with a physical or learning disability as documented by the Office for Students with Disabilities (514-398-6009), please contact me as soon as possible to make necessary arrangements. Students must register with the OSD and inform the instructor at least two weeks prior to a course deadline in the case of disability-related deadline changes. It is not acceptable to justify late assignments or poor performance with post-hoc rationales involving learning disabilities that are not documented by the OSD.

- **Religious Observances**

It is the policy of McGill University that students not be penalized for religious observances. Students will be allowed, whenever possible, deadline extensions and presentation date changes due to such absences. It is the student's responsibility to contact the instructor at least 2 weeks before the absence, at which time arrangements will be made for deadline changes.

- **Course Evaluations**

Students are strongly encouraged to fill out the online evaluation for this course at the end of term. Online course evaluations serve primarily as a tool towards teaching improvement, informing students about courses, and as one of the elements for evaluating the teaching performance of staff for reappointment, tenure, and promotion purposes. The Mercury system will be available in the spring and is accessible via Minerva. More information is available at: <http://www.mcgill.ca/tls/teaching/course-evaluations>.

- **Course Communication**

Emails will be sent to the class in the event of class cancellations or announcements and are the best way to contact the instructor (via myCourses mail or directly at [nathan.c.hall@mcgill.ca](mailto:nathan.c.hall@mcgill.ca)). Ensure all direct email communication with the instructor is from a McGill email addresses (to verify identity), and allow at least 2 business days for an email reply from the instructor. The course syllabus, assignment instructions/readings, and grades are also accessible through the myCourses system. To avoid problems with myCourses functionality, Firefox or Internet Explorer browsers are encouraged, ensure the java software on your computer is up to date, and click the “Support / System Check” link on your myCourses home page (top right) to ensure your browser is properly configured.

- **Acknowledgements**

The present syllabus incorporates elements from previous syllabi by Gina Franco and Boris Vukovic (McGill University), and Dr. Ann Battle (University of Maryland, College Park).

## Course Schedule and Deadlines

\*\* NOTE: Topics and readings are subject to change.

Week	Date	Topic	Core Readings	Supplemental Readings	Deadlines
1	Jan. 9	Course Overview			
2	Jan. 16	Introduction	Bruner (1985) Shuell (1993)		
3	Jan. 23	Developmental Perspectives	Piaget (1964) Vygotsky (1997)	1) Duncan (1995) 2) Karpov & Haywood (1998)	Class Question ( ) Journal ( ) Research Present. ( ) Teaching Present. ( )
4	Jan. 30	Behavioural Approaches	Skinner (1954) Bandura (1977; 16-45)	1) Skinner (1988) 2) Harzem (2004)	Class Question ( ) Journal ( ) Research Present. ( ) Teaching Present. ( )
5	Feb. 6	Cognitive Processing	Mayer (1996)	1) Frederiksen (1984; 363-384) 2) Pressley et al. (1989)	Class Question ( ) Journal ( ) Research Present. ( ) Teaching Present. ( )
6	Feb. 13	Situated Cognition	Brown et al. (1989) Collins (2006)	1) Choi & Hannafin (1995)	Class Question ( ) Journal ( ) Research Present. ( ) Teaching Present. ( )
7	Feb. 20	Achievement Motivation	Maehr & Zusho (2009) Graham & Williams (2009)	1) Ames (1992) 2) Haynes et al. (2009; 232-249)	Class Question ( ) Journal ( ) Research Present. ( ) Teaching Present. ( )
8	Feb. 27	Self-regulated Learning	Puustinen & Pulkkinen (2006)	1) Paris & Paris (2001) 2) Boekaerts & Niemivirta (2000; 417-431)	Class Question ( ) Journal ( ) Research Present. ( ) Teaching Present. ( )
	Mar. 6	No Class			
9	Mar. 13	Personal Epistemologies	Hofer (2001) Murphy & Mason (2006)	1) Vosniadou (2007) 2) Bendixen & Rule (2004)	Class Question ( ) Journal ( ) Research Present. ( ) Teaching Present. ( )
10	Mar. 20	Constructivist Perspectives	Windschitl (2002)	1) Applefield et al. (2001) 2) Phillips (1995)	Class Question ( ) Journal ( ) Research Present. ( ) Teaching Present. ( )
11	Mar. 27	Academic Emotions	Pekrun (2006)	1) Frenzel et al. (2009)	Class Question ( ) Journal ( ) Research Present. ( ) Teaching Present. ( )
12	Apr. 3	Attachment Theory	Baumrind (2008) Walker (2009)	1) Kleinfeld (1975; 318-339)	Class Question ( ) Journal ( ) Research Present. ( ) Teaching Present. ( )
13	Apr. 10	Future Perspectives	Bransford et al. (2006)	1) Alexander et al. (2009)	