

PSYC 400 - Applied Research in Higher Education

Seminar instructor:

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Office hours by email appointment

Practicum instructor:

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Class hours:

Wed 9:00-11:00 HUM 223

Fri 9:00-11:00 HUM 131

Thanks go to Dr. Joe Kim at McMaster University for his mentorship and generosity. This course was modeled after one of his.

Course description

The goal of this course is to introduce you to the scholarship and practice of teaching. In this course, we will explore what it means to be a scholarly teacher, how pedagogy research informs educational practice, and how people effectively learn complex information. The theoretical elements will be explored through journal readings, critiques, small group and class wide discussions. The practical elements of the course will include delivering mini workshops and weekly teaching practica.

The presentation and group facilitation skills gained in class as well as the teaching skills honed through weekly teaching practica will not only benefit you in consolidating your own understanding of applied educational psychology and psychology in general, but will also provide you with practical skills and experience that will benefit you in future coursework as well as in volunteer and paid employment. A high level of active participation, reading, writing and constructive peer feedback is critical to success in the theoretical and practical components of this course. Upon successful completion of PSYC 400, you will be eligible to apply for a position as a TA in PSYC 100B during the winter term.

Each year that this course has been offered, student feedback has been critical to informing changes made to the content or structure of the course. Throughout this syllabus, we have incorporated some of the comments we have received from past students through USAT evaluations, both to provide you with some of the rationale for different course components and to demonstrate our continued commitment to improving the learning experience in this course. One past student suggested that we *“improve the syllabus so that it's more clear, effective, and easy to follow – with this class having a lot of assignments and deadlines, it would alleviate a lot of stress and confusion.”* Below we have attempted to do just that, so please take the time to review this information carefully.

Course Outcomes

Throughout, and upon successful completion of, this course, students will be able to:

Knowledge/Understanding

- Critically evaluate applied educational research
- Explain how people learn complex information
- Identify and describe effective teaching strategies
- Identify and describe the principles of effective course design

Teaching Skills

- Demonstrate competency in active teaching strategies
- Evaluate and recommend strategies for improvement to learning sessions for undergraduate students by actively contributing to instructional team

Learning/Reflective Skills

- Identify their assumptions about teaching and learning and describe how and why they have changed over the semester
- Reflect on their teaching skills, integrating peer and instructor feedback
- Cooperate with and enhance the learning of others through active involvement and by providing constructive feedback to peers in a nonjudgmental manner

Course format

The first 2 hour seminar each week will be made up of two components: student facilitated discussions of educational research based upon journal readings (or, in other words, small-group discussions), and instructional strategy ‘mini-workshops’. The Friday seminar session will be devoted to application of learned material (9:00-9:30) followed by planning for PSYC 100 learning labs with all facilitators, both undergraduate and graduate (9:30-11:00).

There will be no lectures; instead, you will be responsible for learning the material by completing readings on your own and then discussing them in class. Although some students may find this format daunting at first, in our experience (and in past students’ experiences, see below) this structure best fosters active learning and meaningful engagement with the course material. *“The structure of the course was excellent, having peer instruction and presentations as well as the class-wide discussions and small group discussions. I felt prepared for class, the readings really contributed to my understanding of the material. My ability to think critically and deeply about materials was improved through the small and open nature of the course.”* In addition, you will participate in a Teaching Triangle to observe and provide feedback to two partners and to learn from their feedback (more details below under Evaluation Details, 4.).

Readings

A list of readings and resources is posted on OnQ. You must complete the assigned readings before class each week and bring assigned preparatory work with you to class. Past students identified this prep work as something they really valued in the course: *“The assigned work made sure group members were familiar with the content and elevated the calibre of our discourse.”* Yet we also received feedback from past years that students would like *“other ways to interact with the readings than annotated bibliographies,”* and thus these assignments will have some variety. They will include annotated bibliographies as well as assignments like thought papers, active reading activities (e.g., a set of questions to work through), and knowledge translation activities (e.g., creating an infographic or poster). On certain weeks, you will be assigned the role of facilitator and your prep work will be to submit questions and prompts that demonstrate how you will ensure that your group thinks critically about the theories and research.

Evaluation

Knowledge		50%
Journal Readings (weekly prep work)	25%	
Research Proposal	25%	
Application/Teaching Skills		40%
Learning Lab project	15%	
Instructional Strategy ‘mini workshop’	15%	
Teaching Triangle	10%	
Participation/Reflective Skills		10%
Peer Evaluation	5%	
Instructor and Self Evaluation	5%	

*If you miss any component of the assessment, please provide an appropriate reason **IN ADVANCE** if possible and we will discuss the need for documentation.*

Academic Integrity

It is important for all of us to promote academic integrity at Queen’s. This is achieved by coming prepared to class, contributing your ideas, treating your classmates with respect, and submitting only your own work. In return, we will do our best to provide an interesting and challenging course and to provide the support necessary for you to fully understand the material and prepare for your learning labs. Any lapse of academic integrity is taken very seriously. These may include any act or failure to act in a way that may result in unearned academic credit or advantage, such as plagiarism and improper collaboration. Departures from academic integrity can result in penalties such as a grade of 0 on the assignment or in the course, and may become part of your permanent record. Please take time to read Regulation 1 regarding Academic Integrity in the Arts & Science calendar. You are responsible for abiding by this, and the remaining regulations, in the calendar.

Topics	The reading list is posted on OnQ with links to the articles.
Week 1	Introduction, orientation to teaching practicum (Review expectations)
Week 2	Situating the scholarship of teaching and learning (Design a research study)
Week 3	Cognitive models of Learning (Complete assignment sign up)
Week 4	Cognitive models of Learning (Discuss developing a Teaching Statement)
Week 5	Can we improve lectures? (Workshop on Peer Instruction)
Week 6	Small group learning (Workshop on Team Based Learning)
Week 7	Learning Styles (Workshop on Case Based and Problem Based Learning)
Week 8	On line learning/Instructional Design - best practices (Community Service Learning)

Week 9	Assessment (Universal Design for Learning)
Week 10	Course and curriculum design (Inquiry Learning)
Week 11	The Open Classroom Debate (Workshop TBD)
Week 12	Review and reflection

If you must miss a class, please let your group know in advance and send them your work.

Evaluation Details

1. Participation (10%)

Active participation is essential to your success in this course. By the end of Week 5 and Week 12, you will be asked to participate in a team processing activity. This will entail submitting an individual evaluation of your team's interactions and effectiveness, followed by discussing these evaluations together. The team as a whole will then identify areas of strength and areas your team will strive to improve on. You will be assigned an interim formative grade and a final summative grade - the interim grade is to provide you with feedback and will not count, whereas the final grade will contribute to your overall mark.

2. Journal Readings (25%)

i) Preparatory Work (e.g., annotated bibliographies, readiness assessment quiz) (20%)

During 8/10 weeks, you must bring prep work or prepare for a quiz that will cover all of the assigned readings (as discussed above).

Please visit <http://www.lib.sfu.ca/help/writing/annotated-bibliography> for information on how to write an annotated bibliography.

ii) Discussion Facilitator (5%)

During 2/10 weeks, you will act as a Discussion Facilitator. Your duty as a Discussion Facilitator is to ensure an overview of the key points of the articles, ample opportunity for group members to make connections between articles, and to apply the research to their understanding of teaching and learning. You will do this by:

- facilitating the discussion of the assigned articles by providing questions, prompts, etc. as needed to get group members actively involved (30 mins).
- with the other group facilitators, leading a final class-wide discussion, summarizing and comparing the different group discussions (10 min)
- As a Facilitator, you must hand in your prepared discussion questions, prompts and/or connections (half a page) at the beginning of class.

Here are two resources that may be helpful in structuring effective discussion questions:

Stanford Teaching Commons on Designing Effective Discussion Questions

<https://teachingcommons.stanford.edu/resources/teaching/student-teacher-communication/designing-effective-discussion-questions>) and some helpful question "stems"

to promote deeper thinking

<https://www.lavc.edu/profdev/library/docs/promotethink.aspx>) Learning

3. Lab Project (15%)

Once during the term you will complete a Learning Lab project, which requires you to critically review different aspects of one of the PSYC 100 Learning Labs. The goals of this project are to increase the teaching effectiveness of you and your classmates, and to encourage you to apply the content of the PSYC 400 course to your Learning Labs.

During the week following one of the Learning Labs, you must submit an individual written report reflecting on the learning lab. This report will have two components:

- 1) Report the descriptive statistics from your student evaluations (see below), and reflect on the learning lab you presented. Include a reflection on both your personal performance during the lab (things you did well, things you will strive to improve), *and* on the content of, and preparation for, the learning lab given to you (things we did well, things we should strive to improve). This section should be approximately 2 pages.
- 2) Apply the concepts we are discussing in PSYC 400 to the Learning Lab you are evaluating. For example, you might analyze the cognitive load aspect of the lab, whether groups were formed effectively, or the degree of active learning taking place, etc. Note that you are meant to analyze the lab *content* itself (the lesson plan, the activities, etc.) and not your personal presentation. The journal articles on our reading list should provide enough context for your analysis, but you may choose to perform a small amount of additional research if necessary. This section should be approx. 2 pages.

PSYC100 Learning Lab Evaluation

Our PSYC 100 facilitators complete a special seminar course, PSYC 400: Applied Research in Higher Education, which emphasizes the science of teaching and learning, and the development of lifelong teaching skills. We ask that you complete this short survey evaluating the PSYC 100 Learning lab that you attended today. The results of this survey are anonymous, and will be used only within PSYC 400 to improve the quality of our course and TAs.

Note: Please complete this evaluation considering *today's learning lab only*. Please separately evaluate the **content** of the lab (the information presented, the activities) and the **presentation** of the lab (your facilitator's clarity, delivery style, enthusiasm, etc.)

Disagree		Neutral			Agree	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Evaluate the tutorial CONTENT							
1. The learning lab focused on important course topics.							
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
2. The learning lab presented material in a new way to aid my understanding.							
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
3. Working in a group with my peers helped me learn the concepts.							
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
4. The learning activities were enjoyable.							
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
5. The learning activities (discussions, etc.) helped me understand the content.							
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
6. Overall, the content of this learning lab was a valuable educational resource for me.							
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	

Evaluate the tutorial PRESENTATION							
7. My facilitator seemed well prepared for the lab.							
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
8. My facilitator seemed knowledgeable about the learning lab content.							
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
9. My facilitator presented information clearly to the class.							
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
10. My facilitator was engaging and able to keep the class interested.							
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
11. My facilitator had a positive attitude and rapport with the class.							
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
12. Overall, during this learning lab my facilitator was a valuable educational resource for me.							
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	

Written Comments

Please provide comments below and on the reverse on the lab content, presentation, or both.

4. Teaching Triangle (10%)

The goal of this component is to improve teaching through structured, non-evaluative classroom observation from your peers and reflection through self-evaluation. This base will be used to develop your personal Statement of Teaching Philosophy, which is a standard part of a Teaching Dossier. This project involves practical and written parts.

Practical: A Teaching Triangle consists of 3 members who:

- observe one full learning lab (ideally the same one) taught by each of your two partners
- as Observer, objectively record class experience and complete the Worksheet
- after you host an Observer, prepare your own reflection by completing the Worksheet
- share feedback and reflections with partners

Week	Activity	Task
6-7	Initial Meeting	Make arrangements for class visits.
7-8	LL Visit 1 LL Visit 2	Visit each of your partner's LL's once. As the Observer, carefully observe and record the events of the class. Send a copy of your written feedback prepared from your recorded observations to your partners by Friday that week. When your LL is being observed, prepare a written reflection on your independent view of how the session went.
8-9	Reflection and final meeting	Reflect on these reports along with your own self-reflections as you prepare for your Final Meeting. Share your personal observations with your partners.
9-10	Written Report	Your final report is due the following Wednesday in class

Written Report: Personal Statement of Teaching Philosophy

Every instructor starts with an initial theory of teaching and learning, based on personal experiences as a learner and, in some cases, reading or training. In reflective practice, the teacher applies this theory in classroom practice, observes and reflects on the results, and adapts the theory. The classroom becomes a kind of laboratory where the teacher can relate teaching theory to teaching practice.

The theory provides a unifying rationale for the activities that the instructor uses in the classroom; classroom observation and reflection enable the instructor to refine the theory and adjust teaching practice. Concepts that the teacher acquires through reading and professional development are absorbed into the theory and tested in the reflective practice cycle. This cycle of theory building, practice and reflection continues throughout a teacher's career, as the teacher evaluates new experiences and tests new or adapted theories against them.

The Teaching Triangle practicum will give you specific feedback on your daily teaching. In your final report, you will take a broader view and submit a 3-4 page statement of your Teaching Philosophy. Teaching Philosophies will be discussed in class in week 3 or 4 and resources (example teaching philosophies) can be found on most university websites.

Teaching Triangle Worksheet

1. Was proper context provided for the material covered in the Learning Lab?
2. Was the purpose of the activities conveyed well to the students? Were the instructions clear?
3. How did students collaborate during different parts of the lab?
4. Who asked questions? Who provided answers?
5. When did students ask for help? What kind of help did they request? How was it provided?
6. How was the overall rapport between students and the facilitator?
7. Final Comments. (Feel free to use other side)

The facilitator talked _____ percent of the time. Individual students spoke _____ percent of the time. Students talked with one another _____ percent of the time.

Were the percentages listed appropriate?

1. This facilitator's teaching method is teacher centered in these ways:
2. This facilitator's teaching method is learner centered in these ways:

5. Instructional Strategy workshop (15%)

In groups of 3 or 4, you will investigate one of the following instructional strategies

- Peer Instruction
- Team Based Learning
- Problem Based Learning
- Community Service Learning
- Inquiry Learning
- Universal Design for Learning
- TBD

Your group will design and facilitate a 45 minute workshop for the class. Your workshop should help the class understand the principles upon which the instructional approach is based, how it works (demo or videotape), and whether, and in which situations, it is effective. You are encouraged to interview someone who uses this type of teaching at Queen's and, if possible, to observe it in action. Prepare a brief (2 page) handout for the class summarizing the main points along with 2 or 3 references. Send your references to Jill two weeks before your workshop and then book an appointment to meet with her the week before your workshop to review your teaching plan.

6. Research Proposal (25%)

The goal of this project is to give you practice with innovative thinking, extensive literature searches, designing scientific studies, and communicating ideas in writing in the context of pedagogy research. Each of you will prepare a research proposal. The specific topic of the proposal is up to you; start by brainstorming to define a problem or question that is both interesting and important and conduct a preliminary background literature search to see what, if anything, is known about this problem. You must have your final topic approved by the instructor before proceeding and no later than Nov. 19th.

For your final report, you will synthesize literature pertinent to the question(s) developed, construct null and alternative hypotheses, design specific studies to test each hypothesis, and prepare a proposal outlining the rationale for the study, the specific experiments that address each question posed, and the broader anticipated significance of the research. Proposals must be no longer than 12 pages (double-spaced), excluding figures, references and any appendices and are due in the December exam period (TBD).

A Final Note:

At the end of the course, past students have told us: *“This course challenged me because the assignments could be tricky, and there were many topics that broke me out of my previous ideas of what teaching and learning are.”* This course is meant to be challenging, but it is also a lot of fun! Past students have thoroughly enjoyed facilitating PSYC 100 tutorials, and getting to know their classmates and peers in a team-based setting unique to this course. As one student put it: *“This course also helped me make friends in my program. I feel like I'm more a part of the psychology department and the Queen's community.”* We hope this course provides you not only with foundational knowledge in pedagogical research, but also with experiences and skills that will serve you as you continue your journeys as life-long learners.