

Psychology 850: Teaching Practicum in Psychology

Fall 2020

Instructor: Alison Melley

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Student Hours: Virtual: Tuesday 10:00am - 12:00pm, Thursday 1:00- 3:00pm, or by zoom appointment: <https://calendly.com/amelley/15min>

Office Location: Physical: 2062 David King Hall; Virtual: Zoom link in Blackboard.

Class Time/Location: Wednesday 4:30-7:10pm/Zoom link in Blackboard

Course Overview:

This course is intended to support your preparation to teach as an independent instructor, with practical focus on preparing your own class in the psychology department in the Spring. We will use readings and professional development opportunities as a springboard to conversations about teaching, moving you toward making your own decisions about course design, student support, etc. We will develop a plan with your host faculty to find learning experiences in your shadow assignment, and you will begin to develop your teaching philosophy. I will ask for your active participation in this course - in return, I will do whatever I am able to do to support your teaching endeavors.

Required Materials:

- All readings will be linked on Blackboard.
- You will need regular internet and a device to access Blackboard, Zoom, and email.

Course Goals and Learning Outcomes

This course is designed around four competency areas for teaching: Practical Skills and Conceptual Frameworks, Professional Development, Teaching Excellence, and Observation. The following specific goals and learning objectives are mapped to learning activities below:

1. Practical Skills and Conceptual Frameworks

To gain practical skills, knowledge and conceptual frameworks for effective college teaching, you will:

- Gain knowledge about learning principles and how to utilize them in selecting techniques appropriate for the discipline, level, and learning context (**Pedagogy and learning theory**)
- Learn to set and communicate learning goals and expectations, both for individual class sessions and the overall course, that are appropriate for the discipline, level, learning context, and institutional curriculum (**Setting goals and expectations**)

- Assess student learning responsibly, equitably, and in alignment with learning goals; use results to enhance student learning (**Assessing learning**)
- Plan for an inclusive learning environment with attention to diversity, multiple perspectives, and demographics, using concepts, tools, and strategies from Universal Design for Learning to decrease barriers for students.
- Develop awareness of university, departmental, and course-specific policies to understand the context and environment in which you will be teaching. (**Awareness of policies and context**)
- **Identify resources** available to support your to support your practice of reflective teaching.
- Prepare syllabi, lesson plans, assessment tools, and other teaching materials aligned with course learning objectives. (**Prepare materials**)
- **Build effective presentation skills** and develop strategies to engage students.

2. Professional Development

Even seasoned teachers continually engage in professional development to adapt to the ever-changing classroom and student needs.

Goals include: Learning to collaborate with a community of teachers with the possibility of enhancing your teaching practice through the sharing of strategies for teaching specific topics, increasing engagement, technology tools, classroom management, online teaching, difficult situations with students.

3. Teaching Excellence

With the goal of leaving the course with a beginning teaching portfolio and skills for potential future job searches, you will:

- Practice skills for ethical decision-making, building relationships, and reflective teaching.
- Begin to develop a teaching persona in face to face courses, developing an online presence.
- Identify factors in your educational and personal background that will contribute to your identity as a teacher, including your relationship with students.

4. Observation

To gain skills in observing others, being observed, giving/receiving feedback, and developing collaborative relationships, you will:

- Observe an experienced professor and develop a mentoring relationship with that faculty member.
- Practice conducting peer teaching observations and peer review, and experience being observed yourself.

Learning Activities

Development of Teaching Materials

You will develop three sets of teaching materials for your microteaching sessions (details to be provided) and a syllabus for the course you will teach in Spring. When preparing materials, each submission will include:

1. Lesson plans and teaching materials
2. One original multiple-choice question or essay/short answer question to assess student understanding.
3. Beginning with the second set of materials, a paragraph reflecting on the feedback you have received and how you address that feedback in the assignment.
4. Acknowledgement of sources used in compiling material (previous TAs, external resources, etc.)

Additionally, to learn about Blackboard, you will obtain a Blackboard “sandbox” or practice shell. You will build this out as a template for the course you will teach in the Spring.

Microteaching

You will prepare and practice delivering a portion of your class materials by microteaching and will receive both instructor and peer feedback. This course includes three opportunities for microteaching:

- One five-minute (live) talk on any topic (NOT psychology).
- One ten-minute (live) activity conducted with a peer, from a predetermined teaching topic
- One 10-15 minute segment (recorded) of a teaching topic of your choosing.
- One 10-15 minute segment (recorded) of a topic of your choosing from your Spring choice.

Participation and Engagement

Participation in this course is attendance in practicum sessions, asking questions, and contributing in online class discussions. You may miss one session without penalty.

Teaching Portfolio

You will develop a beginning teaching philosophy statement, add your teaching experiences to your CV, and present the teaching materials developed during this course.

Shadow Assignments

To focus your learning from this experience, you will complete several assignments. The goals of these assignments include:

- Create a plan for your learning/mentoring this semester.
- Learn about the rationale for the design of the course you are shadowing.
- Assess the course you are shadowing through the lens of UDL/Inclusion and identify strengths and areas for improvement.
- Reflect on the course design and delivery, what worked/what you would do differently.
- Additionally, you will complete a self-assessment of teaching and you will observe your peers in a formal teaching observation.

Teaching Conferences

To gain an awareness of professional development opportunities and resources outside of this course, you will participate in 4 hours of teaching conference sessions. This can be accomplished by attending:

1. Stearns Center ITL conference Sept 21-25: <https://stearnscenter.gmu.edu/programs/annual-conference-itl/> (synchronous sessions and asynchronous on-demand videos, no registration fee but you must register)
2. Mid-Atlantic Teaching of Psychology Conference (MATOP, Oct 2) <https://dianepgcc.wixsite.com/website> (free, registration required, synchronous only)
3. STPS's Annual Conference on Teaching (ACT, Oct 8-10): <https://teachpsych.org/conferences/act.php> - (free of charge to STP members)
4. Other teaching-related activities of your choice (please run it by me first).

You will also obtain a **membership in STP** for the year (\$15 for grad students). You will have access to all the resources on the STP site through December 2021 (if you do it now it will end Dec 2020). <https://teachpsych.org/index.php>

Peer/Self Observation

As part of the Microteaching activities, you will observe your peers' microteaching sessions and give them feedback. Additionally, you will complete a formal self-observation of your own microteaching session.

One practicum session will be devoted to peer review of Blackboard course shells. Peer observations and reviews will be structured to follow a rubric we will provide.

Learning Activities Mapped to Course Goals

	Pedagogy and Learning Theory ²	Setting Goals & Expectations ¹	Assessing Learning ¹	Universal Design for Learning ¹	Awareness of Policies & Context ¹	Identify Resources ^{1,2}	Prepare Materials ^{1,4}	Build Presentation Skills ^{1,2,3}
Lesson Plan/Materials ¹		x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Syllabus ¹	x	x	x	x	x		x	
Assessment Tool ¹	x	x	x	x		x	x	
Teaching Portfolio ^{1,4}	x	x	x	x			x	
Microteaching ¹	x					x	x	x
Participation ^{1,2,3}	x			x	x	x	x	x
Teaching Conference ^{2,3}	x					x	x	x
Shadow Assignments ^{1,3}	x			x	x	x	x	x
Peer/Self Observation ^{2,3}	x	x	x	x				x

¹Practical and Conceptual skills; ²Professional Development; ³Observation; ⁴Teaching Excellence

Note on Spring

This course continues in the Spring as a twice-monthly seminar. During that time, we will practice reflective teaching, troubleshoot course management, and invite guest speakers who can support our teaching.

Grading

Learning Activity	Points
Written Assignments	
Lesson Plan/Materials	75
Assessment Tools	75
Syllabus	100
Teaching Portfolio	100
Teaching Conference	100
Shadow Assignments (4 @ 25 points each)	100
Microteaching	
• One five-minute (live) talk on any topic (NOT psychology).	25
• One ten-minute (live) activity with a peer, predetermined teaching topic	50
• One 10-15 minute segment (recorded) of a teaching topic of your choosing.	75
• One 10-15 minute segment (recorded) of a topic of your choosing from your Spring choice.	75
Participation	50
Observation	
Peer Observation of Teaching (3)	75
Peer Observation of Blackboard	50
Self-Observation/Teaching Reflection	50
Total	1000

Grading Scale

A 93%-100%
 A- 90%-92%
 B+ 87%-89%
 B 83%-86%
 B- 80%-82%

C+ 77%-79%
 C 73%-76%
 C- 70%-72%
 D 60%-69%
 F < 60%



Learning in a time of Global Crisis

Below are listed my usual course policies. However, this is not a “usual” time. I fully understand that more of us than ever will face new obstacles, or old obstacles in novel ways, during this time. As if being a graduate student isn’t difficult enough. Please communicate with me if such things are getting in your way in this course. My goal is to facilitate your growth and success; I can only do that if you tell me what is happening.

Expectations and Commitment

As **INSTRUCTOR**, I make the following commitment to you as students in this course:

- Do my best to model and share principles of effective teaching.
- Listen and respond to any questions and concerns you may have.
- Provide clear, thoughtful, and prompt feedback on all assignments.
- Demonstrate respect for you, your contributions to this course, and your perspectives on teaching.
- Respond promptly to questions and be accessible through phone, email, and appointments.
- Support your development as an instructor.
- Plan class time so that our time together is useful and interactive.

As **STUDENTS**, I have the following expectations of you:

- Be prepared and bring your best to participate in each class meeting (yes, Zoom fatigue is real. Please respect your instructor and your peers by avoiding multi-tasking during class).
- Contribute meaningfully to discussions and conversations about teaching and learning.
- Be open to new ideas and ways of looking at the topics, and to interacting with others who may be quite different from yourself.
- Submit work on time, and communicate with your instructors if you need assistance, clarification, or accommodations
- Demonstrate respect for one another, the instructors, and for students.
- Treat your teaching responsibilities with importance and respect.

If at any point in this course you have any questions, concerns, or comments, let me know right away. I welcome any feedback you’re willing to offer to improve this course for all students.

Communication guidelines

The following are expectations for how we should communicate as a class. Above all, please remember to be respectful and thoughtful of one another, the instructor, and guests who contribute to this course.

- **Communication:** All primary contact in the course will be via email and Blackboard; please check your Mason email account regularly. You may forward GMU emails to other accounts, but emails to the instructor should come from your GMU account.
- **Writing style:** While there is no need to complete your writing assignments as if you were writing a research paper, please consider these a part of your professional materials and write in a style that matches your professional persona.
- **Tone and civility:** Please remember that we are members of a larger learning community where excellence is achieved through civility. Our actions affect everyone in our community. Please be respectful and supportive of others regardless of gender, age, race, culture, religion, sexual orientation, politics or opinions so that everyone feels safe and can learn from each other.
- **Backing up your work:** Always save your work in a cloud with autosave – it will save you a ton of grief. I recommend backing up your work in Onedrive through GMU.

Academic integrity policy

- **Written assignments:** The assignments you submit should be your own original work. Many examples of others' teaching materials will be available to you in this course, and when you are a GTA. While you are encouraged to review and draw upon the examples as a starting point, the course materials and assignments you submit may not duplicate others' work. Acknowledge to the instructors when you are using materials from a peer or current/former GTA in your assignments, and it is good practice to keep track for yourself when you use course materials developed by someone else, or from a textbook publisher.
- **Collaboration and informal peer-review:** You will have opportunities for formal collaboration with your classmates. You are encouraged to collaborate with one another to develop assignments and activities and to share examples with one another. Sharing resources with one another is not considered misconduct, it is part of collaboration as an instructional team. Peer review is encouraged and will be a formal and informal component of this course.
- George Mason University has an **Honor Code**, which requires all members of this community to maintain the highest standards of academic honesty and integrity. It is every student's responsibility to familiarize himself or herself with the Honor Code. [The Honor Code is available HERE.](#)

Student Privacy Statement

Students may disclose personal information. It is expected that the class will respect the privacy of peers. The personal information disclosed in this class should not be repeated outside of the course.

Accommodations

Disability Services at George Mason University is committed to providing equitable access to learning opportunities for all students. If you are seeking accommodations, please visit <http://ds.gmu.edu/> for detailed information about the Disability Services registration process. Then discuss your approved accommodations with me. Disability Services is located in The Student Union Building I (SUB I). Email: ods@gmu.edu | Phone: (703) 993-2474.

Collegiate Compassion

We learn best when we can show up as whole and healthy people. It is difficult to do so if we are struggling to meet basic needs. Please reach out if you need help with and visit our campus food pantry: <https://ssac.gmu.edu/patriot-pantry/> or other Mason resources <https://learningservices.gmu.edu/campus-resources/>.

Title IX

George Mason University is committed to providing a learning, living and working environment that is free from discrimination and a campus that is free of sexual misconduct and other acts of interpersonal violence in order to promote community well-being and student success. We encourage students who believe that they have been sexually harassed, assaulted or subjected to sexual misconduct to seek assistance and support. [University Policy 1202: Sexual Harassment and Misconduct](#) details Mason's process, the resources, and the options available to students. Any faculty or staff member is required to report all disclosures of sexual assault, interpersonal violence, and stalking to Mason's Title IX Coordinator, but please know that this will result only in someone reaching out to you directly to let you know about available services and to determine if you wish to take any action. You can also contact the Student Support and Advocacy Center (703-380-1434) or Counseling and Psychological Services (703-993-2380) to speak to someone confidentially, as those offices are not required to report disclosures. You may also seek assistance from Mason's Title IX Coordinator (703-993-8730; titleix@gmu.edu).

Holidays/College Closures

In general, online classes continue in the event of weather-related or other closures. Please check the calendar for any holidays that may affect your work: <https://ulife.gmu.edu/religious-holiday-calendar/>. You are expected to submit before a due date that falls on a holiday that you observe.

Wellness

If you are experiencing feelings of anxiety, panic, depression, sadness, Student Health Services (703-993-2831) and Counseling and Psychological Services Offices (703-993-2380) provides a range of resources to assist and support you. Students can call or walk-in during open hours. If you or someone you know experiences a mental health crisis or emergency, seek help immediately. Call 911 for local emergency services, the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (1-800-273-8255), or text the Crisis Text Line (741-741) anytime. I am also available to speak with you about stresses related to your work in my course.