Psychology 850: Teaching Practicum in Psychology

Fall 2021 (with Spring 2022 Supervision)

Instructor:Alison Melley

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Student Hours: Drop in: Wednesday 2:00-3:00pm, or by appointment: [**https://calendly.com/amelley/15min﻿﻿﻿﻿﻿﻿**](https://calendly.com/amelley/15min)

Office Location: 2062 David King Hall – moving Sept 8 3066A David King

Class Time/Location:Wednesday 4:45-7:10pm Aquia 219

## Overview:

This practicum 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. 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 and accessed via Perusall, where you can annotate, discuss, and pose questions.

## Course Design

Class meetings will center around the topic of the week in Perusall. Coming to class prepared includes spending time in the assigned readings and posing thoughtful comments and questions to guide class discussion. In class, we will answer your questions, discuss benefits and drawbacks to different teaching approaches, develop solutions to various scenarios, and gain an understanding of the decision-making process in course development.

## Grading

I will need to assign a grade for each student in this class. An A indicates that you came to class prepared having read the materials each week, engaged in class discussions, and completed a satisfactory syllabus and several lesson plans for your Spring course. A B would indicate that you are ready to teach in the Spring but did not significantly contribute to our class discussions. C or lower would indicate that you put minimal effort into this course. I will ask you at the end of the semester what grade I should enter for you and if we disagree we will have a conversation to come to a resolution.

## Goals and Learning Outcomes

This course is designed to prepare you to teach in the Spring and beyond. These are my goals– I put them here recognizing that you may not have these goals for yourself. Items in **bold** are considered essential for becoming prepared to teach a course this Spring, you can decide which of the additional goals are important to you and engage appropriately.

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

### 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.**
* **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.**
* **Assess student learning responsibly, equitably, and in alignment with learning goals; use results to enhance student learning.**
* **Develop awareness of university, departmental, and course-specific policies to understand the context and environment in which you will be teaching.**
* **Prepare syllabi, lesson plans, assessment tools, and other teaching materials aligned with course learning objectives.**
* 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.
* Become familiar with resources available to support your practice of reflective teaching.
* Build on your existingpresentation skills and develop strategies to engage students.

### 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.

### 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.
* Identify factors in your educational and personal background that will contribute to your identity as a teacher, including your relationship with students.

### Observation

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

* Observe an experienced professor and begin to develop a mentoring relationship with that faculty member.
* Conduct peer teaching observations, and experience being observed yourself (Spring 2022).

## Ways to Meet Learning Outcomes:

### Participation and Engagement

Participation in this course means attendance and engagement on Wednesday evenings, contributing in online class discussions, and engaging in the development of teaching materials (see next).

### Development of Teaching Materials

During the second half of the semester, you will develop teaching materials for the class you will teach in Spring 2021:

1. syllabus
2. course schedule
3. three lesson plans
4. at least one assessment

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

### Professional Development

You will gain an awareness of professional development opportunities and resources outside of this course, as well as enhance your exposure to teaching faculty, you will attend teaching conference sessions and share what you learned with the class. This can be accomplished by attending:

1. Stearns Center ITL conference Sept 20-25: <https://stearnscenter.gmu.edu/programs/annual-conference-itl/>  (synchronous sessions and asynchronous on-demand videos, no registration fee but you must register)
2. STPS’s Annual Conference on Teaching (ACT, Oct 14-16): <https://teachpsych.org/conferences/act.php> - ($50 for access to asynchronous content – includes STP membership – see below)
3. Other teaching-related activities of your choice – such as a teaching-focused session at another conference.

Highly recommended: 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.  <https://teachpsych.org/index.php>

## 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 more guest speakers who can support our teaching.

* During the Spring, I will observe each of you teaching live, or formally observe your online course. Following the observation, we will meet 1:1 for feedback.
* You will also observe at least one of your classmates teaching and complete an observation form.

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## Earth globe: AmericasLearning 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.
* 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 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 be excessively formal in written class discussions or communications, please consider these a part of your professional life 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

* **Using materials from other instructors**: The syllabi and lesson plans that 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 you develop for this teaching practicum 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 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 practicum.
* 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](https://oai.gmu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/George-Mason-University-Honor-Code-2019-2020-final.pdf).

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| Student Privacy StatementStudents 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.AccoAccommodationsDisability 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/*](https://ssac.gmu.edu/patriot-pantry/) or other Mason resources [*https://learningservices.gmu.edu/campus-resources/*](https://learningservices.gmu.edu/campus-resources/). WellnessIf 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.  |  | 7B7B7BTitle 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](https://universitypolicy.gmu.edu/policies/sexual-harassment-policy/) 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 ClosuresIn 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. |

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| Course Schedule PSYC 850 Teaching Practicum |
| Date | Topic |
| Week 1 8/25 | Introductions and TA meeting |
| Week 2 9/1 | Supporting Student Learning |
| Week 3 9/8 | Intro to Backwards Design |
| Week 4 9/15 | Active Learning |
| Week 5 9/22 | Facilitating Discussions |
| Week 6 9/29 | Assessment of Student Learning *Student reports from STEARNS Conference* |
| Week 7 10/6 | Inclusive Classrooms & Universal Design for Learning |
| Week 8 10/13 | Reflective Teaching and Course Evaluations |
| Week 9 10/20 | Writing Learning Outcomes*Student reports from teaching conferences* |
| Week 10 10/27 | Online Course Design/Online Supplement*Guest Speaker: Jerry Mize* |
| Week 11 11/3 | Building the Syllabus*Student reports from teaching conferences (overflow, if needed)* |
| Week 12 11/10 | Choosing Learning Materials and AssessmentsLesson Planning |
| Week 13 11/17 | Classroom and Course Management |
| Week 14 12/1 | Reflection, Plan for Spring, Finalize Syllabi |
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