



**Format:** The course is entirely online with *no class meetings* and you will access the course through Blackboard.

**Student Office Hours:** I use a self-scheduling calendar to meet with students – [see this link!](#) Please email if you cannot find a time.

**Professor:** Alison H. Melley, Ph.D. [amelley@gmu.edu](mailto:amelley@gmu.edu) (you can call me Dr. Melley, pronouns she/her)

**Required Textbook:** (Ormrod, J. E., Anderman, E. A.; Anderman, L. (2019). Educational Psychology: Developing Learners, 10e (Pearson). **This is a textbook only – you can get the hard copy or the ebook.**

**Accessibility:** I've worked to make this course user-friendly and flexible so that you can learn well. [GMU's Disability Services office](#) can identify specific learning accommodations that will help make all your learning environments equitable. If you have already met with them, be sure to send me your faculty contact sheet, and feel free to talk with me about any changes that are needed. You do not need to divulge any personal information to advocate for yourself. We can work together to be sure the course meets your needs. If you do not require accommodations to learn well, please understand that some of your fellow students might, and it is important to me that you do not make assumptions about where, when, or how they learn.



### LEARNING IN A TIME OF GLOBAL CRISIS

*As we learn to live and learn in a way changed forever by the strange and uncertain last few years, my goal is to facilitate your growth and success; I can only do that if you tell me what is happening. Please communicate with me if there are obstacles getting in the way of your success in this class.*

### Collegiate Compassion

It is important to me that you feel able to show up fully in our work together. I am human first, as are you – and we work best when we feel whole, healthy, and secure: *a roof over our head, a safe place to sleep, a stable place to live, and enough food to eat.* If you are struggling to meet any of these basic needs please visit [our campus food pantry](#) or other [Mason resources](#). Asking for assistance and advocating for yourself is an important part of your collegiate experience. You are not alone!

### Wellness

If you are experiencing feelings of anxiety, panic, depression, and sadness during the semester, 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, see help immediately. Call 911, the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (1-800-273-8255) or text the Crisis Text Line (741-741) I am also available to speak with you about stresses related to your work in my course.

## Syllabus Table of Contents

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## What will I learn in this course?

**Course Objectives:** You will apply psychological principles (such as motivation, personality, cognition, and assessment) to the learning and developmental processes in the educational and classroom context. You will be able to conduct an evidence-based analysis of the intersecting roles of teachers, students, and systems in teaching and learning. By the end of the class, you will have an answer to 12 different questions that we will focus on. These questions line up with each week we'll be working together and are organized into three units (see course schedule for more info).

### Unit 1: Teachers

- ⇒ What makes a good teacher, and how do we know?
- ⇒ What do good teachers understand about the thinking and learning process?
- ⇒ What do good teachers understand about supporting student behavior?

### Unit 2: Students

- ⇒ How do students build their understanding of the world?
- ⇒ How does student development affect learning?
- ⇒ What is the role of intelligence in student success?
- ⇒ How can we support students with a variety of learning strengths and challenges?

### Unit 3: Systems

- ⇒ How do our families affect our educational experiences?
- ⇒ How do teacher choices affect student motivation?
- ⇒ What role do social identities play in the learning environment?
- ⇒ How can teachers tell whether students learned anything?
- ⇒ What do we need to know about peer pressure and bullying?

## How will I learn about these things?

**Learning Activities:** For each module, you will watch a video or two, read from your textbook, and take mini-quizzes (Checkpoints) on the reading material. Then you will have an opportunity to apply or reflect on your learning through either class discussion or a journal assignment. There are no big exams in this class, but there are two final projects worth a larger part of your grade than the module assignments.



**WATCH** short module intro videos and other short videos that will supplement the reading content.



**JOURNAL** about your learning. There are two types of Journals: What I Wish, and Metacognition.



**READ** the excellent textbook I've chosen for this course: *Educational Psychology: Developing Learners* (Ormrod)



**CHECK** your learning on knowledge checkpoints. These are short quizzes in Blackboard, based on the readings.



**DISCUSS** your learning with classmates using discussion boards. Once per unit, you will analyze together a video of an "excellent teacher" and once per unit, you will do another applied learning activity.

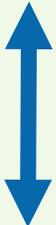
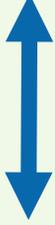


**CREATE** a final "Un-Essay" assignment and a final What I Wish Journal.

## How will my learning be assessed?

**Grading:** I use a form of grading called Specifications Grading. This means that your grade represents your effort and mastery of the material and if you do not meet expectations for the grade you want, you can try again. This way, we both know that your grade means that you learned the material.

**Feedback:** The table below shows how much each activity is worth. Note that there are lower-tier assignments worth fewer points and with basic feedback (an automatic score or assigned points level based on a rubric), and there are higher tier activities with more feedback and worth more points. The feedback you get from your instructor in your journal assignments will be important to read and use for your final project and journal.

High Feedback    Low Feedback	Tier 4	1 What I Wish project = 100 points 1 Final Metacognition Journal = 100 points	High Points    Low Points
	Tier 3	6 Journals – 50 points each = 300 points	
	Tier 2	7 Discussions – 20 points each = 140 points	
	Tier 1	11 Checkpoints – 10 points each = 110 points	

Total possible points = 750

A = 675

B+ = 652 - 674

B = 600 - 651

C+ = 577 - 599

C = 525 - 576

D = 450 - 524

F = < 450

### Deadlines, Late Work, Extra Credit

We have deadlines because experience tells me that learners need structure – so **this course is not self-paced**. It also infuses distributed practice (i.e., cramming means only short-term learning). Also, peer-to-peer learning happens best when we are working on the same things at the same time. That said, there are always learners who need a different schedule or have unexpected events. I build in flexibility for this reason. If you need to do things after a deadline, please use the form in Blackboard to request a new date. So, this course is not self-paced but does have some flexibility. You may not complete the course all at once, but you *can* do things off-schedule.

**Re-do:** yes, you can re-do a Journal assignment after you read the feedback if you did not earn credit. Please use the form in Blackboard to request a re-do.

## Specifications Grading:

Ok so that all seems pretty normal so far, right? Ok so here's where the Specs Grading comes in. Each Learning Activity has "Specs" or "Criteria" that you must meet to earn the points. There is no partial credit – you either meet the specs for that point level, or you don't. So, for example, if you get 80% of the questions correct on a checkpoint, you earn 10 points. If you get 70% correct, you do not earn any points (but you can do it again!). Detailed criteria can be found in Blackboard, and they are summarized below. In Blackboard MyGrades, you will also see a running total of points earned – so you can see how many more points you need to earn the grade that you want.



**CHECK:** 11 Checkpoints, 10 points each.  
80% or above = 10 points.  
Below 80% = 0 points.  
You may take these as many times as you need until you get 80% correct.



**DISCUSS:** 7 Discussion Boards, 20 pts each  
5 points: on time (late = 0 pts.)  
5 pts: initial post meets criteria (0 if does not meet)  
5 pts each: two follow-up posts meet the criteria (0 if not)



**JOURNAL:** 6 Journals, 50 points each.  
Meets specifications = 50 pts.  
Does not yet meet specs = 25 pts.



**CREATE** two final assignments.  
Meets specifications = 100 pts.  
Does not yet meet specs = 50 pts.

## Policies and Tips for Success

### Withdrawal and Refund Dates

It is the student's responsibility to drop a course. Non-participation or failure to pay does not constitute official withdrawal. To view specific deadlines, log into your MyMason account: 1) Click on "My Class Schedule" under Student Quick Links 2) Select the current term 3) Click on "View Drop Deadline Dates" at the bottom of the page. You can find the academic calendar with these dates here: <https://registrar.gmu.edu/calendars/>

### Student Privacy Statement

At times, students may disclose personal information in online class discussions. It is expected that you will respect the privacy of classmates. The personal information disclosed in this class should not be repeated outside of the course.

### Academic Misconduct

George Mason's honor code requires all community members to maintain the highest standards of academic honesty and integrity. Cheating, plagiarism, lying, and stealing are prohibited. It is every student's responsibility to familiarize themselves with the honor code. The honor code is available [HERE](#). If a student cheats by plagiarizing, the instructor may assign an F grade for the assignment, and/or for the course.

### Civility (Non-Academic Misconduct)

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 of others regardless of gender, age, race, culture, religion, or sexual orientation. It is expected that all students will follow general "netiquette" in online work. For example: <http://www.albion.com/netiquette/corerules.html>. Individuals who engage in disruptive online behaviors such as posting disrespectful or hostile comments, posting inappropriate comments, or shouting (using all capitals) may have their online access privileges revoked and/or may receive an F for the class.

## Policies and Tips for Success (continued)

### Civility (continued)

Title IX: George Mason University is committed to providing a learning, living, and working environment that is free from discrimination and a campus free of sexual misconduct and other acts of interpersonal violence 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](mailto: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 and let me know if there are major conflicts, I should be aware of: <https://ulife.gmu.edu/religious-holiday-calendar/>.

### Managing your Time

You are expected to spend 8-10 hours per week on this course. PRINT the schedule and mark off each item as you complete it. If you begin to fall behind talk to me about how best to get back on track. *If a crisis emerges, contact me \*as soon as possible\** - it is more difficult to accommodate your emergency if you wait until afterward to talk to me.

### Email/Announcements

Announcements/reminders are posted in Blackboard and sent to your GMU email. Read these. Check email regularly. I will make every effort to respond to emails within 48 hours. I expect you will extend the same courtesy if I send you a private message.

### Come see me!

Make an appointment for 1:1 conversation - see Contact Your Instructor in Blackboard. E-mail me and I will try to respond within a day or two.



**Personal Success!!!** Please utilize me as a resource to help you succeed, both in class and outside class. I want you to earn the grade that you want and enjoy this class, do well in college, and still have a life with your friends, family, job, and hobbies. If one or more of those things are not happening, please talk to me so we can work together to figure out a plan to improve your situation.

# Technology

## Overview

This course is fully online and asynchronous, meaning there are no required face-to-face encounters. Your Learning Management System (LMS), Blackboard, serves as your “Classroom” for this course and all learning activities must be completed online – preferably on a computer rather than a phone or tablet. If your Wi-Fi connection is weak or you will be away from the internet, it is your responsibility to plan to complete your work. Please read through this section carefully as it details the technology requirements of the course. The schedule at the end of the syllabus will detail the week-to-week breakdown of the semester.

## Hardware

You will need access to a Windows or Macintosh computer with at least 2 GB of RAM and access to a fast and reliable broadband internet connection (e.g., cable, DSL). A larger screen is recommended for better visibility of course material. You will need speakers or headphones to hear recorded content and a microphone if you use the option of video responses or to meet over zoom in office hours. For Hard Disk Space required for taking a distance education course, consider and allow for space to store work that you will do for the course.

## Software

This course uses Blackboard as the learning management system (LMS). You will need a browser and operating system that are listed as compatible or certified with the Blackboard version available on the [myMason Portal](#). (See [supported browsers and operating systems](#).) You will certainly need plugins that will allow you to stream videos through Kaltura and YouTube. You will also need PowerPoint and Acrobat reader.

Make sure your computer is protected from viruses by downloading the latest version of Symantec Endpoint Protection/Anti-Virus software for free [here](#).

You also need to download and install [Zoom](#) as this is how you will meet with your instructor for student office hours and appointments. It is available to students for free through your GMU credentials.

Note: If you are using an employer-provided computer or corporate office for class attendance, please verify with your systems administrators that you will be able to install the necessary applications and that system or corporate firewalls do not block access to any sites or media types.

## Accessibility Statements for Course Technologies:

Blackboard: <http://www.blackboard.com/accessibility.aspx>

Office 365:

<https://www.microsoft.com/enable/products/office365/>

Google products (i.e., Chrome browser, Google docs,

YouTube): <https://www.google.com/accessibility/all-products-features.html>

## Blackboard Mobile App:

Blackboard is accessible through a mobile app, and you should be able to access most course materials and activities. However, I do not recommend taking quizzes or exams, or submitting work with a mobile device/Blackboards mobile app. Also, please be aware that the menu in the app works differently so be sure to look at a computer to be sure you aren't missing things.

## Submitting assignments electronically:

Assignments will be submitted electronically via Blackboard. When submitting a document, it should be *in Word doc or pdf format unless* it is otherwise noted. This is the easiest way for me to grade them and get feedback to you quickly (I cannot read .pages files from a Mac). Word and other Microsoft software are free for your use while you are at Mason (Microsoft 365).

If you are experiencing trouble with Blackboard's submission portal, please email me the assignment directly and let me know of the issue. If there is a Blackboard issue and you need to submit your assignment via emailing me directly, you must do so before the original deadline.

## Backing up your work:

As this is a fully online course, you will complete all of your assignments on a computer, digital format. You are responsible for ensuring the safety of your work by regularly backing up and copying your materials. Excuses for missing work, or late work such as “My computer deleted my files, my hard drive crashed, I lost my flash drive” etc. will not be accepted. Back up and save your work frequently and in multiple places.

## Course Calendar

- ⇒ Expect to work 4-8 hours per week on assignments for this course.
- ⇒ Unless otherwise stated, all assignments are due by the end of the week in which they are assigned. For the purposes of this course, a week is defined as beginning at 12:01 am each Wednesday EST and ending at 11:59 pm on the following Tuesday EST. Discussion boards have TWO dates - the first post is due by Saturday and the remaining ones are due by Tuesday.
- ⇒ All assignments are due by 11:59 pm on the assigned date.
- ⇒ To help you manage your schedule and time to complete the assignments in this course, please follow the recommended timeline below. If you have a question or concern or encounter a problem about an assignment, please contact me immediately so we can discuss and work out a resolution.

Weeks	Unit/Module/Topic	Assignments
Week 1 1/25 – 1/31 Classes begin 1/23	Unit 1 - Teachers Module 1: Orientation/Introductions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review Course Topics and Requirements.</li> <li>• Introduce Yourself in Blackboard Discussion by Tuesday, Jan 31.</li> <li>• Test your computer with Practice Quiz on Syllabus Dates by Tuesday, Jan 31</li> <li>• Start reading Chapter for week 2.</li> </ul>
Week 2 2/1 – 2/7	Unit 1 - Teachers Module 2: What makes a good teacher, and how do we know?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• WATCH Module 2 Video: What makes a good teacher, and how do we know?</li> <li>• READ Chapter 1 (sections 1.2, 1.4, and 1.5).</li> <li>• CHECK your knowledge on Checkpoint #2 (on Ch 1) due Tuesday, February 7 (11:59pm).</li> <li>• WATCH Learning Remotely Video. (videos on learning remotely).</li> <li>• JOURNAL about your learning (Metacognition #1) due Tuesday, February 7 (11:59pm).</li> </ul>
Week 3 2/8 – 2/14	Unit 1 - Teachers Module 3: What do good teachers understand about the thinking and learning process?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• WATCH Module 3 Video: What do good teachers understand about the thinking and learning process? (Part 1)</li> <li>• READ Chapter 6 (6.1-6.5) and Preview 6.6 (will revisit later).</li> <li>• DISCUSS about XXX (Discussion #2) with initial post due Saturday, February 11 (11:59pm) and peer responses due Tuesday, February 14 (11:59pm).</li> </ul>
Week 4 2/15 – 2/21	Unit 1 - Teachers Module 4: What do good teachers understand about the thinking and learning process? (cont.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• WATCH Module 4 Video: What do good teachers understand about the thinking and learning process? (Part 2)</li> <li>• READ Chapter 7 (entire chapter).</li> <li>• CHECK your knowledge on Checkpoint #3 (on Ch 6 &amp; 7) due Tuesday, February 21 (11:59pm).</li> <li>• JOURNAL about your learning (WIW #1) due Tuesday, February 21 (11:59pm).</li> </ul>

<p>Week 5 2/22 – 2/28</p>	<p>Unit 1 - Teachers Module 5: What do good teachers understand about supporting student behavior?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• WATCH Module 5 Video: What do good teachers understand about supporting student behavior?</li> <li>• READ Chapter 13 (entire chapter).</li> <li>• CHECK your knowledge on Checkpoint #4 (on Ch 13) due Tuesday, February 28 (11:59pm).</li> <li>• WATCH the "Excellent Teacher" video.</li> <li>• DISCUSS a video of a real life teacher (Discussion #3) with initial post due Saturday, February 25 (11:59pm) and two responses due Tuesday, February 28 (11:59pm).</li> </ul>
<p>Week 6 3/1 – 3/7</p>	<p>Unit 2 - Students Module 6: How do students build their understanding of the world?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• WATCH Unit Intro Video.</li> <li>• WATCH Module 6 Video: How do students build their understanding of the world?</li> <li>• READ Chapter 2 (sections 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4) and Chapter 3 (entire chapter).</li> <li>• CHECK your knowledge on Checkpoint #5 (on Ch 2 &amp; 3) due Tuesday, March 7 (11:59pm).</li> <li>• JOURNAL about your learning (Metacognition #2) due Tuesday, March 7 (11:59pm).</li> </ul>
<p>Week 7 3/8 – 3/14 Spring Break starts 3/13.</p>	<p>Unit 2 - Students Module 7: How does student development affect learning?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• WATCH Module 7 Video: How does student development affect learning?</li> <li>• READ Chapter 9 (sections 9.1, 9.2, 9.3) and Chapter 10 (10.1-10.5).</li> <li>• CHECK your knowledge on Checkpoint #6 (on Ch 9 &amp; 10) due Tuesday, March 21 (11:59pm).</li> <li>• DISCUSS your learning about self-regulation (Discussion #4) with initial post due Saturday, March 11 (11:59pm) and two responses due Tuesday, March 21 (11:59pm).</li> </ul>
<p>Week 8 3/15 – 3/21 Spring Break ends 3/19.</p>	<p>No new content due to break (See Assignment due dates.)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Take a break if you can or catch up on work!</li> <li>• Remember that Checkpoint #6 and Discussion #4 are due this week.</li> <li>• Explore WIW Final Project instructions. Have questions ready upon return from break.</li> </ul>
<p>Week 9 3/22 – 3/28</p>	<p>Unit 2 - Students Module 8: What is the role of intelligence in student success?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• WATCH Module 8 Video: What is the role of intelligence in student success?</li> <li>• READ Chapter 5 (sections 5.1-5.3).</li> <li>• WATCH Learning Styles Video: The Biggest Myth in Education.</li> <li>• CHECK your knowledge on Checkpoint #7 (on Ch 5) due Tuesday, March 28 (11:59pm).</li> <li>• JOURNAL about your learning (WIW #2) due Tuesday, March 28 (11:59pm).</li> </ul>
<p>Week 10 3/29 – 4/4</p>	<p>Unit 2 - Students Module 9: How can we support students with a variety of learning strengths and challenges?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• WATCH Module 9 Video: How can we support students with a variety of learning strengths and challenges?</li> <li>• READ Chapter 6 (section 6.6).</li> <li>• CHECK your knowledge on Checkpoint #8 (on Ch 6 and UDL) due Tuesday, April 4 (11:59pm).</li> <li>• DISCUSS "Excellent Teacher" Video (Discussion #5) with initial post due Saturday, April 1 (11:59pm) and two responses due Tuesday, April 4 (11:59pm).</li> </ul>

<p>Week 11 4/5 – 4/11</p>	<p>Unit 3 - Systems Module 10: How do our families affect our educational experiences?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• WATCH Module 10 Video: How do our families affect our educational experiences?</li> <li>• READ Chapter 8 (sections 8.1-8.4).</li> <li>• CHECK your knowledge on Checkpoint #9 (on Ch 8) due Tuesday, April 11 (11:59pm).</li> <li>• JOURNAL about your learning (Metacognition #3) due Tuesday, April 11 (11:59pm).</li> </ul>
<p>Week 12 4/12 – 4/18</p>	<p>Unit 3 - Systems Module 11: How do teacher choices affect student motivation?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• WATCH Module 11 Video: How do teacher choices affect student motivation?</li> <li>• READ Chapter 11 (entire chapter) and Chapter 12 (section 12.5).</li> <li>• CHECK your knowledge on Checkpoint #10 (on Ch 11) due Tuesday, April 18 (11:59pm).</li> <li>• DISCUSS your learning about instructional strategies (Discussion #6) with initial post due Saturday, April 15 (11:59pm) and two responses due Tuesday, April 18 (11:59pm).</li> </ul>
<p>Week 13 4/19 – 4/25</p>	<p>Unit 3 - Systems Module 12: What role do social identities play in the learning environment? What do we need to know about peer pressure and bullying?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• WATCH Module 12 Video: What role do social identities play in the learning environment? What do we need to know about peer pressure and bullying?</li> <li>• READ Chapter 3 (sections 3.2 and 3.3) and Chapter 4 (sections 4.3 and 4.4).</li> <li>• CHECK your knowledge on Checkpoint #11 (on Ch 3 &amp; 4) due Tuesday, April 25 (11:59pm).</li> <li>• DISCUSS the "Excellent Teacher" and assessment (Discussion #7) with initial post due Saturday, April 22 (11:59pm) and two responses due Tuesday, April 25 (11:59pm).</li> </ul>
<p>Week 14 4/26 – 5/2</p>	<p>Unit 3 - Systems Module 13: How can teachers tell whether students learned anything?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• WATCH Module 13 Video: How can teachers tell whether students learned anything?</li> <li>• READ Chapter 14 (sections 14.1 and 14.5) and Chapter 15 (sections 15.1, 15.2, and 15.4).</li> <li>• CHECK your knowledge on Checkpoint #12 (on Ch 14 &amp; 15) due Tuesday, May 2 (11:59pm).</li> <li>• JOURNAL about your learning (WIW #3) due Tuesday, May 2 (11:59pm).</li> </ul>
<p>Week 15 and Final Due Dates 5/3 – 5/13</p>	<p>Final Wrap-up Prepare final WIW class presentations &amp; complete wrap-up</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SUBMIT final WIW Project due Saturday, May 6 (11:59pm) and submit project feedback to 2 peers due Saturday, May 13 (11:59pm).</li> <li>• JOURNAL about your learning (Metacognition #4 - Final Journal) due Saturday, May 13 (11:59pm).</li> </ul>