

Syllabus

Theories of Learning Online with Blackboard 9.1

Course Number: **01.601.031** (3 Credits) - Fall 2013

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PRINT A COPY OF THIS SYLLABUS SO THAT YOU WILL HAVE IT FOR EASY REFERENCE WHEN YOU ARE NOT ONLINE.

Help with Technical Problems:

To obtain help with any and all technical problems with Black Board 9.1, settings, other software or equipment problems go to the **Start Here** module and **click on the Tech Support link**.

Beginning this Course:

This course will begin on Wednesday **September 4, 2013** at which time you will access the **Start Here** module. You are to complete the orientation and orientation activities of the Start Here module by **Sunday, September 8, 2013 at 9 PM** at which time the Week 1 module will be released.

Course Module Release Day:

Each "Week" (or learning module) of this course **begins on a Monday** and ends on the following **Sunday at 9:00 PM Eastern Standard Time**. On Monday mornings, you will see that the online materials for that particular week are accessible. You will notice these new learning modules on your home page, then, as they become available each week.

Chat Schedule:

Chat sessions are on Wednesdays 7:00 PM – 8 PM Eastern Standard Time. Chat is not required but you are expected to read any Chats you miss.

Students with Special Needs

Students with documented special needs are responsible for making their needs known to the instructor. Students with special needs are responsible for seeking and arranging available assistance from the Office of Student Disability Services, 240 O’Leary, 978-934-4574, or by contacting Chandrika Sharma via email at Chandrika_Sharma@uml.edu.

COURSE MATERIALS AND RESOURCES:

The **Textbook** for this course is:

Schunk, Dale H. (2008). **Learning Theories: An Educational Perspective, Sixth Edition**. NJ: Allyn & Bacon. ISBN: 0132435659

It is available in the bookstore or from the publisher if the bookstore does not have copies:

<http://www.textbooks.com/Search.php?CSID=MQT0QQ20MOU0CUUCMKKK2MQKT&TYP=SBJ&TXT=Schunk>

There is an e-book version of this text for those interested in an e-version.

Besides the **Textbook** and **Week Notes in each module**, a variety of other course materials will be provided to you via **web links** and written materials located in **the Week** and **Resources** modules, and materials I **email to you** regarding a point that has come up in discussion or in an email from you.

Please note that you should **carefully read** the descriptions of, cautions about, and guidelines for these resource materials and materials **on the web in this area** in general in the **Start Here** and **Resources** modules of this course. There is a lot of inaccurate, out-of-date, and just plain wrong material out on the web in the area of learning theory (and instructional theory as well), and you need to be careful, cautious and discriminating in terms of what you access on the web in this area and use good judgment relative to the source of the material presented at a given website and its quality, currency, and validity.

You will need Adobe Reader, Real Player and Microsoft Word (or a Viewer) to read files and view videos in this course.

Course Focus:

This course is a *general survey course* on learning and instructional theories. The field of learning and instructional theories is a very broad, highly diversified and a rapidly expanding area with many specialties and subspecialties now. One, therefore, must be selective, as this course is only 14 weeks and thus can only cover the major theories and views (or paradigms) according to some dominant perspective or focus. The dominant perspective or focus in this course is primarily the middle 80% of the learning population and EdS degree students in Education. The course, therefore, is designed primarily for **EdS Degree Students in Education** to fulfill their Theories of Learning survey course requirement in the EdS Degree program in Education at UMASS-Lowell. **Consequently, these EdS students and their program requirements (and professional needs) are the primary focus of this course (stop! don't panic quite yet😊).**

Other students, such as advanced graduate and doctoral students from other disciplines (e.g., Allied Health, Computer Science, Psychology and Management), graduate students seeking Masters and Certificate Degrees, and practitioners enroll in this course each semester and **are also welcome in this course** to the degree that this course (whose content and approach is very generic) meets their needs **as designed**, as no course can be tailored to or directly meet the needs of all of these different areas and degree levels, so the course must have a general tilt or focus that is adapted somewhat in various ways to be helpful and worthwhile for all of the different kinds of students who enroll in it. Many non-EdS students have enrolled in and successfully completed this course in the past and found value in its broad survey of the field and inclusive perspective and done an outstanding job in the course as well.

Regardless of one's specialties and/or proclivities or epistemological commitments, one should have some familiarity with the field of learning as a whole, and it's many different views, if only to situate one's own views and work better, and understand how very differentiated and complex learning is especially across different domains, types, ages, learners and cultures. As Thomas Kuhn noted more than 50 years ago, many of a particular area's most promising **new** ideas and understandings tend to come from areas **just adjacent to it**. So being familiar with the whole of a field (or broad area) has many potential advantages, even for the specialist or the professional or learner with a highly focused agenda.

To the extent possible, I will try to accommodate the different kinds of students who may be registered for this course and their learning needs and goals given the course's primary focus, which is that it is a general survey course and not a specialty course focused on one paradigm, level, or type of learner or area.

Prerequisites:

Students' prior preparation in psychology and learning range from relatively recent and extensive to very little and long ago and all combinations in between these two points. If

you have **never** had a course in psychology, this course, most probably, **is not the one to be your first course**, as it is a **graduate (and not introductory psychology) course**.

However, please note that graduate students who have not had any courses in (general or/and instructional) psychology have successfully completed this course, and online links to free basic psych sources and textbooks are provided in the materials.

Again, to the extent possible, I will try to accommodate the different kinds of students who may be registered for this course given the course's primary focus.

PRIMARY OBJECTIVES FOR THIS COURSE

The primary instructional objectives for this course are:

1. The student will be able to summarize and explain the four major general theories of learning or paradigms (i.e., behavioral, psychoanalytic, observational-social and information processing) in the field and how each relates to the three major domains of learning (cognitive, affective and procedural).
2. The student will be able to summarize and explain the four major theories of development (biological, social, cognitive, affective, and communal) and compare and contrast the four major theories of development with the four major theories of learning paradigms and each relates to the three major domains of learning.
3. The student will be able to summarize and explain the standard information processing theory and paradigm and to summarize and explain the alternative sub-theories and views for each of the major components of this model and paradigm.
4. The student will be able to summarize and explain the major cognitive, affective, and procedural learning processes in each of the four major learning paradigms and compare and contrast the different views or theories of each of the aforementioned processes; and,
5. The student will be able to analyze different learning tasks, situations and problems using the four major learning theory paradigms and to apply the four major learning paradigms to real world tasks, situations and problems.

THE PRIMARY FOCUS AND CONTENT OF THIS COURSE

This course will focus on the **four fundamental theories or paradigms of learning** (behavioral, psychoanalytic, observational-social and information processing) which have been the prominent paradigms in the field of learning in this and the last century, and as they relate to the **three basic domains of learning**: namely, cognitive, affective and procedural (or psychomotor).

The general “**macro stage**” **theories of development**, within which different theories of learning are more or less nested will also be addressed in broad strokes, as the two frameworks/theories (i.e., development versus learning) often need to be differentiated in discussions of learning.

The neurology and biology of learning will be addressed at the elementary level, and, you will learn about the **standard information processing model of learning** which should help you see the “bigger picture” and characterize and locate each theory of learning (and development) in terms of this bigger picture. This model and paradigm will introduce you to **schema and script theory** and the **complexities of human memory** in detail.

Ausubel’s **Receptive Learning Model** and lower and higher order cognitive (and affective) processes will be examined, as well as andrological (adult) and humanistic views of learning. We will also study **Discovery Learning as well as Social-Cultural and Observational learning theory**, including knowledge creation and validation processes, as well as various theories of **Motivation** and other types of energizing processes.

A longer and more detailed version of this *Focus and Course Content* section is given in [Start Here](#) and [Resources](#) modules.

Assessment and Grading

There will be **THREE (3) Exams** in this course (see the **Course Schedule** for dates). **Each of these assessments will count for 20% of your grade.** Each will have **short answer** and **longer essay questions** that will be directed at assessing your understanding of course material and your ability to summarize your learning and to use what you have learned to analyze learning situations and problems and to propose solutions to the same.

The Exams will be sent to you (or posted) on the **Monday of the week it is due** and you will have the week to work on your answers to the questions. Your answers to the exam must be **emailed to me by Sunday at 9 PM of that week.** **The scoring rubric and the specifics for each of these exams will be provided to you beforehand** (see the **Start Here** module for details).

Each week (except for exam weeks) you will have to post your **one-page (minimum) Takeaway** for the week in question by Sunday at 9 PM. A **Takeaway is a list (in sentence form) of what you considered to be the key and critical points of what you read, discussed and experienced for the week.** You will do 11 Takeaways for the course. **Your 11 Takeaways will count for 25% of your grade.** Your Takeaway will be evaluated using a simple analytical scoring rubric which is described below.

As online learning is about participation, Discussion Board postings are required all weeks of the course. **Your discussion Board Posting will count for 15% of your grade.** To receive weekly Discussion Board credit, you must **at a minimum post once a**

week and respond to the posting of two (2) different students each week. The guidelines for discussion board postings are given below. Discussion Board posting will be holistically evaluated (see the **Start Here** module for details).

To summarize, then, assessments in this course will be:

Discussions board	15%
Takeaways	25%
Exam 1	20%
Exam 2	20%
Exam 3	20 %

NOTE WELL: Assignments and assessments of any kind **are due on the date specified for the assignment** and no credit will be given for the assignment if it is submitted after the date due except by the consent of the instructor with any needed support documentation the instructor requires.

There are many assignments in the 14 modules in this course which you **should do** as (1) you will learn a lot from them and (2) they can only help you relative to your course grade through the CFF (i.e., the Carifio Finagle Factor). The **CFF** is what I use to modify exams and other assignments that you do not do particularly well or up to criteria on rather than having you formally redo each and every below standard performance (or the performance standard level you desire) as it is far more efficient, and this is a **graduate (and not other kind) of course**. I assume that you will learn and correct your mistakes from the feedback you receive as you are in the process of developing "*learning character*" which entails taking major responsibility for your own learning. Of course, if you choose not to do the assignments in each module, you will lose the CFF safety net as well as the opportunity to receive coaching and feedback from me on your progress and performance. Also, the only way you are going to learn about certain aspects of decision-making (a key part and factor in learning) is *to engage in decision-making actively* including post-mortems on the decisions you make. So I am going to give you many opportunities and choices in this course to actively engage in decision making relative to your own learning. Lastly, I use a "**minimum grading model**," which you will learn about in the course, so that no one or two catastrophically poor performances on your part "ends your semester" or learning efforts relative to obtaining a passing or good grade for the course, as there is a fair and reasonable "minimum grade" that you will receive on every assignment that will not *over-penalize* you for not successfully completing the assignment to a basic acceptable standard that allows you to recover and obtain a better grade through subsequent better performance.

Failure is typically a part of learning, and often a key step in and towards learning and even discovery. And sometimes failure is the learning of importance and value at a particular time and in a particular situation, which are some of the reasons why failures "while learning" should not be over-penalized. As you will learn in the information processing learning paradigm, failure is information of a particular kind to be further processed by the learner as opposed to being ignored or forgotten as quickly as possible or a sharp sting that produces avoidance. Therefore, one needs to learn to be reasonably tolerant of and open to failures and particularly one's own to learn, develop, be productive and discover. Hopefully, the use of a minimum grading approach in this

course will help you to begin to hear and understand this message and its importance to learning and the learning process. I can tell you that your professor has failed more than he has learned his entire life (and thus learned a lot about failure if nothing else☺) and often quite spectacularly and embarrassingly, and he has never “ridden the Cannon Ball Express to success,” but he has usually managed to get to desired goals in the end and well above standards even if by somewhat circuitous routes. So I have a high tolerance of failure and many strategies for coping with it and learning from it (which is called “metacognition” you will find out), which is a prerequisite to success and successful learning for most people. Learning to fail well and wisely, then, are very important things to learn and particularly relative to difficult, desired, and worthy goals, as is learning to let yourself “fail a little” on “some things” and choosing what you will fail on, as you will learn hopefully by the end of this course. Attempting to learn anything that is complex, difficult and worthwhile is to risk failure at some level and in some way and usually failure will be met face-to-face many time over before the prize is obtained. One of the important keys to complex, difficult and worthwhile learning, then, is to be willing to make the wager (try) and risk failure and having the skills to fail well and wisely (called self-regulated learning and processes) when it happens, as it rarely can be eliminated completely when one is learning something complex, difficult and worthy that is new or a modifications of things one has learned before (unlearning) which is very difficult and often frustrating if not painful. So, one of our goals in this course *is to develop a greater tolerance of failure and the skills to manage needed the failures that will occur in this course (yours, colleagues, and mine☺) well and wisely.*

GRADING

The **proportion of the percentage you receive for each assessment above will be summed to give an overall percentage on a 100 point scale which will be used to assign your grade according to the scale given below.**

98-100	A+	(4.0)	Work of the highest professional standards
94-97	A	(4.0)	Excellent high quality and independent work
90-93	A-	(3.7)	Very good work but with a few areas needing improvement
86-89	B+	(3.3)	Good work but with several areas needing improvement
82-85	B	(3.0)	Work to Graduate Standard
78-81	B-	(2.7)	Below Graduate Standard but effort and some quality evident
75-77	C+	(2.3)	Poorer quality graduate work
72-74	C	(2.0)	Poor quality graduate work
69-71	C-	(1.7)	Some effort but works lacks quality and insight
65-68	D+	(1.3)	Work lacks quality and insight
60-64	D	(1.0)	Work lacks effort, quality and insight
0-59	F	(0.0)	Work of lowest quality, insight and effort

Optional Paper

A student may elect to do an optional 10 to 15 page paper in APA format on an approved topic to improve their overall grade in this course, if they so desire. The

paper option is also a window or option for you to customize aspects of this course for yourself and your own personal goals and area of specialty. Such a paper will be given a weight of 20% **on an overall base of 120% rather than 100%** and the guidelines and scoring rubric for the paper will be provided to you. Therefore, the optional paper is almost but not quite a “substitute” assessment for one of the five grading components listed above. **The decision to do a paper must be made and approved by me by the end of Week 11 for the course.**

Course Structure

Weeks are periodically built into this course for you to review, consolidate and further elaborate your learning of the new content and materials you have been learning so that you can create long-term memory structures and schemas and make and elaborate connections. During these weeks, new topics and areas are not intentionally introduced so that you can focus on review and consolidation activities.

It is strongly recommended that you do NOT treat these weeks as “time off” or waste these valuable periods, as such behavior will come back and bite you, and these periods are also providing you with the opportunity to learn valuable graduate student and professional success skills.

Course Levels

Each Module (Week) in this course clearly indicates which readings are **required** and which are **optional for students who are not EdS degree level students or above** (i.e., Masters and Certificate degree students). For EdS students and above, all of the readings in the module are required **except** for the *Further Reading Section* at the end of the module which are optional more advanced readings. This approach is used to allow and help some Masters students and some Certificate students and students without extensive educational backgrounds not to become too overwhelmed in this course, as this course seeks to cover more about learning theories rather than less and to a more sophisticated rather than less sophisticated level, as most students today tend to take one rather than several courses (as they should) in learning theories, so I tend to push all students to get the most out of this course as they can within reason and with a safety net that tries to encourage striving and allows and does not over-punish errors.

All students are encouraged to do all of the readings in each module to the degree that they can, given their entry level of preparation and their personal goals for what they want to learn for the course. However, given your degree level, **it is up to you** to manage what you read and do not read in each module given these guidelines. In the past, most students have read most things in each module which simplifies many things (and has impressed me). I sort out differential reading patterns by degree level when reading and evaluating your responses to assessments and exercises in this course using the CFF and a standard that is appropriate for a student with your background at the degree level you are pursuing.

Course Schedule (Calendar)

9/4: Start Here Module: Course Preliminaries

Readings: All materials in the Start Here module.

Assignments: Complete and post questionnaire and other assignments by 9PM **Sunday, 9/8.**

9/9 Welcome to Week 1: Introduction/overview: What is Learning - key concepts, ideas, views, relevant history; basic models, the standard model, and key taxonomies: Big pictures, smaller pictures, little pictures, and nano-pictures. *Readings:* Schunk, CH 1 and module materials; *Assignments:* Do Exercises and Discussions 1 and 2; **Takeaway 1 due by Sunday 9 PM.**

9/16 Welcome to Week 2: Major Theories of Development and Learning: Part I, Cognitive Development. *Readings:* Schunk, CH 8 and module materials; *Assignments:* Do Exercises and Discussions 3 and 4; **Takeaway 2 due by Sunday 9 PM.**

9/23 Welcome to Week 3: Theories of Development and Learning: Part II, Affective Development. *Readings:* Schunk, CH 8 and web materials; *Assignments:* Do Exercises and Discussions 5 and 6; **Takeaway 3 due by Sunday 9 PM.**

9/30 Welcome to Week 4: Simple (behavioral) models of learning and “American/Russian” Psychology: Part I, Associationism and Classical Conditioning: *Readings:* Schunk, CH 2 and web materials; *Assignments:* Do Exercises and Discussions 7 and 8; **Takeaway 4 due by Sunday 9 PM.**

10/7 Welcome to Week 5: Simple (behavioral) models of learning and “American/Russian” Psychology: Part II, Instrumental and Operant Conditioning and their extensions: *Readings:* Schunk, CH 2 and web materials; *Assignments:* Do Exercises and Discussions 9 and 10; **Takeaway 5 due by Sunday 9 PM.**

10/14 Welcome to Week 6: Learning Consolidation and Elaboration Week: Read, Review and Study **ALL** Lecture Notes, articles, websites assigned and Schunk Chapters 1, 2, 8. Go over the Discussion Boards and read responses that you have not read. Consolidate your Takeaways. Continue Discussions 1 to 6 and **Post Exam 1 by 9PM Sunday.**

10/21 Welcome to Week 7: Observational and social learning theories and the cultural tool box, Part I: Basics and Bandura. *Readings:* Schunk CH 3 *Assignments:* Do Exercises and Discussions 11 and 12; **Takeaway 6 due by Sunday 9 PM.**

10/28 Welcome to Week 8: Observational and social learning theories and the cultural tool box, Part II: More Primary Processes and Social Media. *Readings:* finish any undone reading from week 7 and do the readings available in this module. **Takeaway 7 due by Sunday 9 PM.**

11/4 Welcome to Week 9: The Standard model/information processing theories of learning, Part I: Attention, perception, types of memory, the executive processor, response generator, types of memory structures and types of processing (and some Freud). *Readings:* Assigned/mailed/web model materials in depth and then Schunk, CH 4 **with many caveats**. *Assignments:* Do Exercises and Discussions 13 and 14; **Takeaway 8 due by Sunday 9 PM.**

11/11 Welcome to Week 10: The standard model: information processing theories of learning, Part II: parallel processing, unconscious processing, computational processes, encoding, decoding, executive control development, learning styles, emotions, and types of thinking (and some Freud). *Readings:* Schunk, CH 9, mailed articles and assigned websites. *Assignments:* Do Exercises and Discussions 15 and 16; **Takeaway 9 due by Sunday 9 PM.**

11/18 Welcome to Week 11: The standard model: information processing theories of learning, Part III: Finishing the components of the standard model and cognitive processes including language, sleep, meta-cognition and metaphor and metaphoric operativity. *Readings:* the materials in this module and review of prior two modules. *Assignments:* **The assignment in this module (i.e., the “make a memory” assignment) is the second Exam for the course. Do not miss or fail to do this assignment in this module. Complete EXAM 2 (i.e., the “Make a Memory Model” assignment in this module) by 11/24/2013 at 9 PM.**

11/25 Welcome to Week 12: Meaningful receptive learning and instruction. Learning from “text,” learning to read, reading to learning, discourse analysis, meaningful learning processes (a different kind of observational learning) and cognitive instructional models. *Readings:* materials in this module, mailed articles and assigned websites. *Assignments:* web-based materials. **Takeaway 10 due by Sunday 9 PM.**

NOTE WELL: FOR WEEK 13 YOU HAVE A CHOICE BETWEEN TWO ALTERNATIVE MODULES FOR THE WEEK (HIGHER ORDER COGNITION OR MOTIVATION THEORIES AND DISCOVERY LEARNING).

EACH MODULE IS IMPORTANT, BUT THERE ARE JUST NOT ENOUGH WEEKS IN THE COURSE TO DO BOTH SO YOU WILL NEED TO MAKE A CHOICE FOR YOURSELF THIS WEEK AS TO WHICH MODULE YOU WILL STUDY (PRIMARILY) FOR YOUR WEEK 13 OF THE COURSE.

SO CHOSE THE MODULE TO STUDY FOR WEEK 13 OF THE COURSE THAT IS MOST APPROPRIATE FOR YOU.

You can, of course, check out and/or skim articles in the module you did not chose if they interest you or are relevant to your goals.

I do not need to know which Module you choose as that will be apparent from your reading log for the week that Black Board keeps on you and the assignments you do and your Take-Away for the week.

12/2 Welcome to Week 13: Higher Order Cognition. Thinking, problem solving and decision-making, learning styles, learning to think, learning to feel and ethics. *Readings:* the materials in this module. *Assignments:* discussions for the week.

Takeaway 11 due by Sunday 9 PM. OR

12/2 Welcome to Alternative Week 13: Motivation Theories and Discovery Learning. Intrinsic and Extrinsic motivation, various (competing) theories and kinds of motivation, self-directed and self-regulated learning, learning as problem-solving and decision-making, adult development, and learning character. *Readings:* the materials in this module. Chapter 11 in Schunk on Motivation which is actually the best chapter in the book. *Assignments:* discussions for the week. **Takeaway 11 due by Sunday 9 PM.**

12/9 Welcome to Week 14: Learning Consolidation and Exam 3. Review and consolidate your learning for the last third of the course. Exam 3 will be sent to you by 12/11. **Complete and submit EXAM3 by 12/15/2013 at 9 PM.**

ASSIGNMENTS GUIDELINES

Each module has a section at the beginning in it called “**The Drill (for this Week).**” The “**Weekly Drill**” lists the specifics you need to do to be successful for the week including assignment guidelines, policies and general rules for the week. More specific points about the Weekly Drill section in each module are as follows:

THE WEEKLY DRILL

Each week you need to do the following to be successful in this course:

- 1. Always Read “Welcome to the Week” First,** as this material will guide you relative to the order in which activities should be done for the week. For example, sometimes I will want you to post to the Discussion Board **BEFORE** reading anything☺
- 2. Read the correct Chapter for the week in the Text (see Course Calendar) as directed; namely, either before or after the Lecture notes, links and emails.**
- 3. Read Lecture Notes, Links and so on in the order specified.**

4. Do any exercises or self-reflections recommended.
5. **Post to the Discussion Board as assigned in each Module.**
6. Join in the weekly **Chat** or read the Chat for the week if you miss Chat.
7. **Review** additional postings for a given Week that have occurred after the Week is over (see below for details).
8. **Write and submit Takeaway for the Week**, every week except quiz weeks.
9. Do and post **the Assigned EXAM/Quiz** in the weeks required.

Technically speaking, The Drill is your **procedural** “advanced organizer” or schema for the module for the Week in question.

OTHER IMPORTANT POINTS:

1. Assignments of any kind are **due on the date specified for the assignment in the assignment and no credit will be given for the assignment if it is submitted after the date due** except by the consent of the instructor with any needed support documentation the instructor requires.
2. Many of **your assignments will be submitted as an email attachment to me**. I use **Microsoft Word 2007 as my word processor**. It is able to open any version of Microsoft Word up to the **2007 version**. This fact means that **you will need to save your word documents as Word 2007 documents to email them to me or e-mail them to me as a PDF file**. If you work with any other word processor, you will have to cut and paste your work into the body of an e-mail to submit it to me.

Exercises and Self-Reflection Guidelines

Weekly exercises and reflective writing are periodically required throughout the course. **Weekly exercises** focus on specific tasks or observing activities for you to do to obtain specific experiences designed to give you insight into and about various concepts, mechanisms, and views included in the course. They are essentially **guided discovery activities**. **Weekly reflections** will hopefully help you to focus on the concepts and themes discussed during the module. A list of questions to guide you reflection activities will be provided to you.

I consider Weekly Exercises and Weekly Reflections to be the same as Weekly Readings. I do not give you any kind of “credit” for Weekly Readings but I expect you to do them when and as assigned and I test you on them in various ways. This exact same point holds for Weekly Exercises and Weekly Reflections; they are no different from Weekly Readings (but they are part of the CFF safety net).

Discussion Board Interaction Guidelines

Each Learning Module (week) has its own discussion boards. The discussion boards serves as an extension of the face-to-face classroom in a traditional class. It is an important part of the online learning experience and should be maximized by all students. **Each week you must post at least one discussion board original contribution and response to the contributions of at least two other students.**

The rubric for evaluating discussion board contributions and responses should be fairly apparent from the guidelines given below.

General Discussion Board Guidelines

1. Observe academic decorum at all times and even handed, fair and balanced verbal behaviors to the best of your ability: No profanity, texting short-hand (write-it-out), gross impoliteness, insensitive jokes or jokes in poor taste (humor, wit and appropriate jokes and quips are **OK**), “online yelling” or aggressiveness in its many forms (i.e., targeting, mobbing, or bullying). Remember **online prose is very de-contextualized and without tone, facial expressions and gestures:** so, **“Pause and Think before you click and Send.”**

2. Academic and professional discussion and dialogue, particularly at the graduate level, often by its very nature is reasonably critical, adversarial, and competitive within the limits and rules of academic decorum. So, **remember the limits and the rules, and be reasonable, balanced, sensitive and fair in your comments and criticisms.**

3. Try to employ, where possible, Wolpe’s **“reciprocal inhibition” theory** (pairing positive comments with less than positive comments) when giving feedback or/and criticism; and,

4. Let me know by email if someone is not complying with these guidelines relative to you so some kind of **“circuit-breaker”** and discussions may occur.

More Specific Discussion Board Guidelines are:

When responding other students (or me) in a discussion board activity, practice “**good cognitive form**” in the following ways:

1. Expand on the topic/comment if possible as well as adding depth or breadth.
2. Offer a different perspective or perspectives if possible.
3. Provide an online resource relevant to the topic (include a hyperlink)
4. Provide a summary of the ideas posted so far (good when you come late to the conversation) or the requested one page summaries written.
5. Ask a specific question (but avoid prompting just yes or no answers).
6. Ask a relevant open ended (on topic) question.
7. Provide a correct but respectful critique or factual, reasoned, or experienced-based correction of points or statements made with references if needed.
8. Provide helpful or insightful suggestions that positively help other students or the instructor.
9. Provide an insightful or well-stated summary or explanation.
10. State what you think are some of the key “Take-Aways” for the discussion as the discussion is winding down.

You will see that the above idea of “good cognitive form” will also **apply to all forms of interaction and assessment used in this course and is a generic evaluation rubric.**

I will be checking the discussion board and will respond as needed. I may, from time to time, ask follow up questions to spark further debate and discussion or even have a guest (or one of my many Avatars) evaluate and respond to the discussion.

I will **holistically assess and evaluation your discussion board postings** using the **simple rubric** given in the **Start here** and **Resources** modules and give you periodic feedback to let you know if your discussion board postings are in the “desired and targeted performance zone” or not.

For instructions on how to use Blackboard 9.1 discussion tools, please visit the online tutorial that BlackBoard 9.1 makes available to you when you firstly log onto the system.

I have included a separate module on the Home Page for **Off Topic Discussions** where you can communicate with each other on whatever you choose to your heart’s content to keep the focused Discussion Boards reasonably uncluttered.

Takeaways

Each week you must post a **one-page (minimum) Takeaway for the week** by Sunday at 9 PM for the week in question, which is required for all weeks of the course, except the quiz/exam weeks.

A **Takeaway** is a list (**in sentence form**) of what you considered to be the **key and critical points** in what you read, discussed and experienced for that week. Your Takeaway should **use the vocabulary, terms and key concepts and principles that you have learned in the course up to and including the week in question**. Each **“bullet point”** in your Takeaway should be able to be read and understood by people/readers other than yourself and **should have a minimum of “egocentric speech”** (vague and indirect or amorphous references and terms and more or less talking to yourself in your own inner code).

Once you have master the simple prose Takeaway, I will allow you to include a chart, graphic or visual **as part of a given bullet point** as long as it is summarized, elucidated, or explained **in words/prose/text well enough to be understood by people/readers other than yourself**.

Your Takeaway will be evaluated using a simple analytical scoring rubric given in the **Start here** and **Resources** modules and I will give you periodic feedback to let you know if your discussion board posting are in the “desired and targeted performance zone” or not.

E-Mail

It will be helpful to all of us handling various aspects of email and discussions messages if we follow certain **protocols** or rules relative to what is put in the **“subject line”** in each message so that the nature of the message and the **“thread”** it belong to is reasonably clear and can be followed in the strings of messages.

I have outlined these **Email protocols** and rules in the **Start Here** module as they involve too much detail to be included here. **Please read the material provided on these protocols in the Start Here module**.

Academic Honesty & Misconduct

Students are responsible for the honest completion and representation of their work, for the appropriate citation of sources, and for respect of others’ academic endeavors. The **Definitions of academic dishonesty** as provided by the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators include:

Cheating: The use or attempted use of unauthorized materials, information, or study aids in any academic exercise.

Plagiarism: The use of others’ ideas and words without a clear acknowledgement of the source.

Fabrication: The intentional and unauthorized falsification or invention of any information or citation in any academic exercise; and,

Assisting: The facilitation or assistance in academic dishonesty.

Students who violate these standards will be formally notified and must accept the consequences of their actions. Note well: If your work shows evidence of **plagiarism** in particular, the instructor will invoke the UML Graduate School Policy that can be found at <http://www.uml.edu/catalog/graduate/discipline/default.htm>

The definition of **plagiarism** used in the UML Graduate Catalogue is:

1. Direct quotation or word-for-word copying of all or part of the work of another without identification or acknowledgment of the quoted work;
2. Extensive use of acknowledged quotation from the work of others which is joined together by a few words or lines of one's own text;
3. An unacknowledged abbreviated restatement of someone else's analysis or conclusion, however skillfully paraphrased."

Course Withdrawal

If you are behind in your course work and you have not participated regularly in the required on-line discussion board, then you may be advised to WITHDRAW from the course. You will lose the money you paid for the course, but a W rather than an F will be recorded on your transcript. PLEASE do not ask for an incomplete grade unless you or a close family member has suffered a severe illness or other emergency situation arises. You may be asked to provide supporting documentation.

DATES FOR WITHDRAWAL are posted on the UMASS Lowell continuing education website: <http://continuinged.uml.edu/general/registration.htm> Scroll to near the bottom.

Withdrawal with "W" Notation: Students withdrawing from any class must use [ISIS](#). **Verbal messages to faculty or staff do NOT constitute official notification.**

Graduate School of Education Mission Statement

A theme entitled "Education for Transformation" provides a conceptual framework that unifies programs at the Graduate School of Education. The mission of the University of Massachusetts Lowell is to meet the needs of the Commonwealth today and into the future by supporting the development of sustainable technologies and communities through its teaching, research, scholarship and engagement. The Graduate School of Education (GSE) contributes to this mission by educating new teachers and enhancing the professional development of those already in the field so that they may assume leadership roles focused on transforming the lives of children and the vitality of the region.

The GSE's commitment to "Education for Transformation" produces graduates who:

- demonstrate excellent knowledge, judgment and skills in their professional fields;
- promote equity of educational opportunity for all learners;
- collaborate with other educators, parents and community representatives to support educational excellence;
- use inquiry and research to address educational challenges.

The fundamental tenets of the school are excellence, equity, collaboration and inquiry.

The content of this course in major theories of learning (and development) should, I hope, transform your knowledge and understandings of the many and differing ways in which children, adolescents and adults learn, develop and change, which should influence the teaching, instruction and educational aspects of your professional activities.