

Psychology 290I: Designing Courses to Enhance Student Motivation Fall 2006

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Course Objective: Over the semester we will work together to address the following problem-solving challenge: What would a course in your field look like that integrated motivational principles that enhance learning?

Course Description: Our aim is to guide participants through a step-by-step process of course design and syllabus development. By the end of the seminar you will have composed a comprehensive syllabus, including a course description and semester schedule. More specifically, you will have learned how to use an overarching problem or challenge to unify your course and drive its content and activities; create learning goals and objectives; construct grading rubrics; and create a system of grading policies and procedures that enhance learning. Additionally, by the end of the term you will have articulated a rationale, a set of reasons, for the features of the course you have designed. Both of these documents are key components of a *teaching portfolio* that can be shared with prospective employers. Our hope is that you will develop an excellent course as well as become more conversant in theories and principles relevant to student engagement, learning and teaching.

Our approach to course design is rooted in principles of student motivation and engagement. Whereas other approaches to course design emphasize organization for clear transmission of information, we will focus on designing courses that maximize student motivation (especially intrinsic motivation) and engagement. The basis for this approach is simple: students engaged in learning tasks for positive reasons not only benefit in terms of learning, but also have greater appreciation for and enjoyment of what they are learning. Through readings and other activities we will consider all aspects of course design from a motivational perspective.

Readings: The assigned readings will come from our book manuscript, provisionally entitled *Life Beyond Grades*. Photocopied chapters will be distributed in a serial fashion in class over the course of the semester. We will also encourage you throughout the semester to become familiar with several other texts that present a more traditional approach to course design. These will be available at the GSI Teaching and Resource Center.

Evaluation: Seminar participants are expected to attend all seminar sessions and participate in class meetings. On a bi-weekly basis you will be asked to make postings to the course Bspace site. These postings will address, among other topics, components of your syllabus, reflections on assigned readings, and explanations for your course design choices. You will also be expected to provide feedback to peers on the design of their courses. (Students will also receive feedback from the course instructors at several junctures during the term). Your grade in the seminar will be based on how well your course syllabus and accompanying rationale demonstrate that you can think motivationally—that is, applying motivational principles to issues of curriculum and instruction—about the course you are designing.

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Psychology 290I - Syllabus Outline

Week 1 -August 28: Introduction.

Read Chapters 1-5 (LBG). Critique and comment. Create a brief description of proposed course. Create a problem/question or controversy around which course will be organized.

September 4: Labor Day (holiday).

Week 2 - September 11: Scaffolding Problem-Solving Strategies.

Read Chapter 6 (LBG). Critique and comment. Generate benchmarks for goal attainment. Generate strategies for content coverage. Create inventory of intellectual skills and subject-matter concepts necessary for goal attainment.

Week 3 - September 25: Instructional Strategies.

Read Chapter 7 (LBG). Create organizational structure for proposed course. Detail one assignment indicating goals as well as skills and content necessary to achieve goals.

Week 4 - October 9: Formative Evaluation.

Read Chapter 8 (LBG). Critique and comment. Create a grading rubric for assignment developed for prior week.

Week 5 - October 23: Summative Evaluation.

Read Chapter 9 (LBG). Critique and comment. Create a grading policy for proposed course including rationale for weighting assignments.

Week 6 - November 6: Restructuring Teaching Resources/Alliance-building.

Read Chapters 10/11 (LBG). Critique and comment. Plan use of available resources (e.g., lectures, sections, text material, computer-based activities). Craft policy for insuring course climate conducive to alliance-building.

Week 7 - November 20: Syllabus.

Create final version of syllabus with motivational rationale. Prepare for mock job interview.

Week 8 - December 4: In-class Activities.

Course evaluation and mock job interview.