Teaching Practicum

PSYC GR6200

Tentative Syllabus for Fall 2024

Course Information

Weekly meeting: Wednesdays, 2:10-4pm (room TBA)

Points: This course may be taken for 1, 2, or 3 points of credit. See below for details.

Instructor Information

Katherine Fox-Glassman

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Fall drop-in hours: TBD

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pronouns in use: she/her/hers

Role in the Psychology Curriculum

This class is open to all graduate students in the Psychology Department, and is strongly recommended for both first- and second-year graduate students. Graduate students are expected to participate in the Practicum to fulfill the M.A. "teaching training" requirement.

Senior graduate students—even those who have already completed the Practicum—may also join the course as a "refresher" as they develop their own courses and prepare their applications for teaching scholar awards and academic positions. Graduate students may also drop in on selected sessions of the course without registering.

Course Description

Teaching Practicum is designed with two complementary purposes in mind: to foster the development of graduate students as future teachers of psychology, and to enhance their efforts as teaching assistants for our undergraduate program. The course draws on empirical research in our field—from social psychology, cognitive psychology, and neuroscience—to address such topics as: teaching goals and strategies, giving effective lectures in large classes, facilitating productive class discussions, creating and grading student assessments, fostering inclusive classroom environments, and reflective teaching. The Practicum emphasizes the practice of scientific teaching, approaching pedagogy with the methods and rigor of scientific research.

Course Points

Students may enroll in this course for 1, 2, or 3 points of credit. Please enroll for the number of points that makes sense for you, based on the rough categories described below—but feel free to reach out to me if you're unsure!

- **1 point**: Students who plan to attend class each week and do around 1 hour of preparation weekly (e.g., doing readings, watching videos).
- **2 points**: Students who plan to prepare for and attend class every week, and who will be helping to lead class discussions/activities.
- **3 points**: Students who plan to prepare for and attend class every week, help to lead class discussions/activities, and complete microteaching exercises *or* a lecture observation project.

Taking this course for 3 points completely fulfills the "teaching training" requirement of the M.A. for Psychology grad students. Students taking this course for 2 points would likely need to add one CTL workshop to fully complete the M.A. requirement.

Course Requirements

The goal for this course is really to give graduate students—especially students in their first or second year—the chance to get together as a group and share experiences. Our focus will be scientific teaching, of course, but through our explorations of that topic you will also get to know each other and members of our department. Readings are designed to facilitate thoughtful class discussions, and assignments are structured to provide you with the opportunity to practice and question your ideas about teaching.

I. Participation

Students are expected to attend most of our class meetings, and actively participate in our discussions and exercises. Full participation includes preparation before class: having completed at least the base set of readings (or other preparatory activities) for that day.

I expect that nearly everyone will have to miss at least one class due to illness, conferences, or other commitments. Those absences can be excused as long as you let me know as soon as you anticipate them (especially if they will affect our plans, e.g., if you are scheduled to present), and as long as you do not end up missing a substantial amount of our class meetings. What constitutes "a substantial amount" of classes? That's something we'll likely end up discussing when we talk about syllabus design and grading!

II. Statement of Teaching Philosophy

Early in the semester, each of you will write a short document outlining your current teaching philosophy. At the end of the semester, you'll have the opportunity to revisit and revise your philosophy and your statement. More details will be provided during our first class meeting.

III. Presenting & Leading Discussions/Activities

Students taking this course for more than 1 point of credit will take the reins during some of our weekly discussions. Broadly, this assignment will involve either presenting an article or leading a classroom activity related to the week's topic. This assignment is flexible—we'll meet early on in the semester to discuss what makes most sense for each student based on particular interests—but could end up looking like any of the following (or many other options not listed here):

- Giving/leading a short (~15-25min) presentation/activity (e.g., presenting an empirical paper related to the week's topic, or guiding us through an exercise or sample activity)
- Collaborating with Katherine to take on a co-instructor role for one class

- Pairing up with another student to co-lead activities (e.g., setting up a debate) in two different classes.

IV. Microteaching Demonstrations

A primary of goal of the Practicum is to prepare you to teach. Toward that end, you will have several opportunities to demonstrate your teaching and to receive feedback from a friendly and supportive audience of your peers.

All students will present a very short, *very* low-stakes microteaching snippet during our first class meeting. Later in the semester, anyone who has interest in getting supportive, focused feedback on their teaching may participate in additional microteaching sessions which will involve preparing a short lesson. The microteaching demonstrations midway through the semester can be on any topic and will be limited to a 5-minute lesson. Later in the semester, you'll have the chance to select a topic that students commonly have trouble with, and tackle it with slightly longer lesson.

V. Lecture Observation Project

Students taking this course for 3 points of credit may choose a fall lecture course to observe and report on. This project will involve attending 2 of the lectures for that course, examining the course syllabus, conducting a short Q&A with the instructor, and presenting a short summary of their project during one of our class meetings. More details will be provided on Canvas.

Students taking this course for 3 points of credit are expected to complete either the microteaching demonstrations *or* the lecture observation. If you would like to do both, please consult with Katherine to figure out a plan that will reduce your workload elsewhere in the course.

Grading

As a grad course with a focus on discussion, practice, and experience, grading will be primarily completion-based, though qualitative feedback will also be provided. Completing all of your contributions on time will give you full points in each assignment category.

Since students may do different work depending on how many points of credit they are enrolled for, individual grades will be calculated as percentages of the total possible course points for each student, as follows:

1 credit: 15 points	2 credits: 30 points	3 credits: 45 points
Participation: 10 Teaching Philosophy: 5	Participation: 10 Teaching Philosophy: 5 Presenting/leading: 15	Participation: 10 Teaching Philosophy: 5 Presenting/leading: 15 Microteaching or Lecture Observ. 15

Course Policies

Missing Classes

If you will need to miss any classes this semester for travel, religious observance, or any other reasons, please come talk with me before the end of the first week of class so we can make sure to schedule your presentations/etc. accordingly.

Academic Integrity

I hope and expect that you are all here with the goal to learn and explore these topics, and with the intention of presenting your own work. We'll talk a lot about academic integrity—ways to promote it, ways to check for violations of it, how use of AI can (or can't?) be incorporated into learning transparently and constructively—as a topic in our course, so all I'll say here is that if something comes up in your semester that is making it hard to approach your work in this course in the way you'd like to, please come talk with me and we'll figure out a solution together.

Diversity & Inclusion

Every learning environment should accommodate the wide range of opinions, backgrounds, and identities that students bring into the room. And as psychologists, we know that groups benefit in many specific and important ways from diversity of all kinds—nationality, sex & gender, sexuality, race, class, religion, neurodivergence, and many others. To help me make this course as inclusive as possible, please let me know if any of the following is true:

- You have a name and/or set of pronouns that differ from those that appear in SSOL/on Canvas;
- Something that was said in class made you feel uncomfortable or unwelcome;
- Your ability to take part in our class is being affected by events or experiences outside of our class. Even if I can't help you directly, I can try to connect you with resources or support.

Like most people, I am still in the process of learning about and from diverse perspectives, identities, and brains. I'm very open to feedback; this is one of many areas where you can likely teach me as much as, if not more than, I could teach you. And of course, please correct me if I mispronounce your name or mistake your preferred pronouns!

Student-Specific Accommodations & Resources

If you require any classroom accommodations, please let me know. Since we don't have exams or traditionally graded assignments most ODS accommodations will likely not apply to this course, but at the same time the course should be very easy to adjust to any particular learning needs.

Topics & Schedule

All required and optional readings will be posted on Canvas. No textbook is required for this course.

The list of topics below is tentative and subject to change based on student interests and schedules. It is expected that all students will complete the main readings before the class in question. Supplemental readings (in italics) are entirely optional and are included for those who would like to explore a topic in greater depth.

Recommendations of alternate or additional readings are very welcome for any of these topics! If you let me know far enough in advance we may be able to incorporate them into this year's class, but even if not I will happily add them to next year's syllabus (and post them this year as optional readings for anyone who is interested).

This schedule is tentative, and will likely change at least a little; it may change substantially.

Date	Week	Topics	Due/Prep	Class Goals
Sept. 4	1	What is this course about, and what are my teaching goals?	Read this syllabus	• Introductions & course objectives • Casual teaching demos • Discussion of teaching philosophy & goals
Sept. 11	2	Who are my students and how can I best support their learning?	1 student-led presentation / activity	• What is inclusive teaching? • Designing inclusive learning environments
Sept. 18	3	What is active learning and how can we encourage it?	1 student-led presentation / activity	• What is the science behind active learning? • What counts as "active?" • Are there benefits to passive learning?
Sept. 25	4	How do we assess learning? (feedback & grading)	1 student-led presentation / activity	• formative vs. summative feedback • How do we grade fairly, consistently, clearly, and transparently? • rubrics vs. holistic grading
Oct. 2	5	How do we assess learning? (exams & assignments)	1 student-led presentation / activity	• What are assignments for, and what formats are most conducive to learning?

				• What are exams for?
				• Can exams be used to promote learning as well as assessing it?
				• What do various formats of exam and types of question each achieve?
Oct. 9	6	Microteaching I – Tiny Bites	Those who are doing microteaching: prepare a 5-min lesson to present in class	• Students will prepare and present a 5-minute lesson • Each observer will offer supportive (formative!) feedback
Oct. 16	7	How do I teach a small class?	1 student-led presentation / activity	• Leading productive lab sections • Teaching seminars & leading small-group discussions
Oct. 23	8	How can we promote academic honesty?	1 student-led presentation / activity	• Can the structure of courses & assessments nudge honesty? • Is it possible to motivate students to *want* to work hard? • What are our students' perspectives on academic honesty?
Oct. 30	9	What role can/should AI play in our classrooms?	Bring in 1 example of AI use in academia (an article, a personal experience, etc.)	• Can we detect AI use? • (When) should we care about AI use? • How can AI augment or enhance learning? • How can we discourage student from using it as a way to avoid learning / thinking? • How can teachers use AI to make their own jobs easier?
Nov. 6	10	How can I design a learner-centered syllabus? What do I want my students to learn, and how should that	Complete handout before class, & come prepared with	• What is backward design? • How can we identify our learning objectives?

		inform my teaching and course design?	an idea (topic & format) for a new course. We'll work on turning that into a syllabus during class.	• Going from course idea to a draft of your syllabus.
Nov. 13	11	Microteaching II – Second Bites	Those who are doing microteaching: prepare a 5-10min lesson to present in class	• Students will prepare another lesson, this time on a traditionally tricky topic • Each observer will offer supportive (formative!) feedback
Nov. 20	12	What can we learn by observing other teachers?	Those who did a lecture observation: present a summary of what you observed	• How are Columbia PSYC courses implementing some of the topics we've discussed so far? • How do different course designs work for different topics, teaching styles, etc.?
Nov. 27	-	*Thanksgiving Break*	-	-
Dec. 4	13	What do I think about teaching, and where do we go from here?	Bring in the Teaching Philosophy you wrote in Week 1	• Revisiting teaching philosophies • How do/should we evaluate teaching? • How does teaching fit into the academic sphere?