

CEP 900 – PROSEMINAR IN EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY  
Fall 2005  
Course Syllabus

**Schedule**

Mondays, 4:10 ~ 7:00pm  
212 Erickson Hall

**Instructor**

Dr. Yong Zhao  
Contact Info: zhaoyo@msu.edu  
Office Hours: by appointment, 115D Erickson Hall

**General Goal**

This Proseminar is designed to introduce you to the intellectual life of education in general and educational psychology and technology in particular. This seminar will be a critical experience for all of you. This course will help you understand the major theories and issues in education. It will also be an important site for developing your skills in reading and writing critically about educational research. Most importantly, you will learn to conceptualize and conduct your own research on issues of human learning, technology, culture, and teaching.

**Specific Objectives**

As an anchoring doctoral course, this course is designed to achieve the following objectives:

1. Provide an overview of the major theories and issues in educational technology and psychology and different approaches to educational issues.
2. Foster a general sense of scholarship in educational technology and psychology.
3. Develop the ability and skills to appreciate and criticize the literature in educational technology and psychology.
4. Provide opportunities for students to become familiar with the research process, important tools, resources, as well as important professional activities and events in education research.

## Major Topics

The course is organized around three themes:

*Theme 1: What is the field of educational psychology? (5 weeks)*

Textbook: Educational Psychology: Developing Learners (Ormrod, 2006)

During the first 5 weeks, we will discuss the important educational theories and approaches, such as learning, cognition, development, motivation, technology, etc. We will trace their intellectual history and examine their implications for current and future problems in educational practice.

*Theme 2: How to look at issues of educational psychology (3 weeks)*

Textbook: Human Natures: Genes, Cultures, and the Human Prospect (Ehrlich, 2000)

This section is about the approach to understand the field of educational psychology. The theme running through this section will be debate of nature-nurture. Sooner or later, you will notice that most educational issues are essentially about the relationship between nature and nurture.

How do human beings evolve? How do we develop as a group and as individuals? In order to answer these questions, we encourage you not to confine yourself to educational psychology, but to explore other closely related and fascinating fields like anthropology, history, culture studies, sociology, etc.

*Theme 3: What is educational research about? (5 weeks)*

Textbook: Taking Sides: Clashing Views on Controversial Issues in Educational Psychology (Abbeduto, 2001)

Take what we learn from part 1 and part 2 to apply and appreciate writings and critical issues on modern education, such as technology, accountability, international comparison in education, etc.

Throughout the three sections, we will talk about what the research process is about, what issues are involved, and what resources are available. A broad range of issues will be covered, from framing research questions to conducting research, from information access to management, from scholarly writing to ethical issues, etc.

## Requirements:

- ✧ Class preparation – intensive readings are very important both to this course and for your professional development.
- ✧ Class participation and discussion
- ✧ Quiz – You will take a quiz with about 10 questions based on what you just read every week. This activity is designed to push you to read, and understand materials comprehensively.

Besides weekly readings and class participation and discussion, there are three major assignments for this seminar:

1. Three short essays (3-5 pages)

You will write a review about 3 to 5 pages long for each textbook we used in this course. For the books of *Educational Psychology* and *Human Natures*, you will write an overall essay for each of them. For the book *Taking Sides*, you can focus the essay on one of the issues/chapters we will discuss in class.

This assignment will help you understand the readings better and deeper, to reflect upon the issues you are interested in, and make it easier to participate in our classroom discussion.

2. Two article critiques (10 pages)

You will write critiques for two empirical studies. The aim of this assignment is more than prepare you for the preliminary tests, but to make you a better reader, a better writer, and a better thinker.

The policies and CEPSE Preliminary Exam Questions are available at:

<http://ed-web3.educ.msu.edu/CEPSE/currentgradinfo.htm>.

3. One final paper (20 pages)

You will write a term paper on a self-chosen topic. The topic does not have to be covered by the class discussion, but should be closely related to the field of education.

This is where you demonstrate the depth and breadth of your understanding about education in general and your research interests in particular. More importantly, it should be a beginning point for you to consider your research direction that is significant, meaningful and interesting.

## Weekly Plan

Note:

1. The readings for each week should be completed before you come to class. For example, the readings for the first week is chapter1 to chapter 5 of *Educational Psychology*, which means you are supposed to finish these 5 chapters before the first class on 29<sup>th</sup> Aug, Monday.

2. Each class meeting is divided into 3 sessions. The first session is a lecture by the instructor; the second session is the time for students' responses and discussions based on the readings; the third session is lectures for general introduction of educational psychology research.

<b>Week</b>	<b>Readings</b>	<b>Topics of the first session</b>	<b>Topics of the third session</b>	<b>Assignments</b>
<u>Week 1</u> Aug. 29	<i>Educational Psychology</i> : Chapter 1 to Chapter 5	Introductions to the course and each other. Overview of the educational psychology: understanding the field and its definition.	Definition of an educational scholar: What is research about? What does a scholar do in educational psychology field? What are their roles, responsibilities and abilities?	Short essay for <i>Educational Psychology</i> : book review Due on week 6, Friday, Oct. 7
<u>Week 2</u> Sept. 5	Labor Day, no class meeting in this week.			
<u>Week 3</u> Sept. 12	<i>Educational Psychology</i> : Chapter 6, 7, 8.	Brain and cognition, and introduction of general learning theories.	Research process: How to start doing research? How to pick research topics? Etc.	
<u>Week 4</u> Sept. 19	<i>Educational Psychology</i> : Chapter 9, 10, 11.	Development and behaviors. The reference book is <i>Without Miracles</i> (Cziko, 1995)	Introduction of major journals, publications, conferences, and other resources in educational psychology.	
<u>Week 5</u> Sept. 26	<i>Educational Psychology</i> : Chapter 12, 13, 14.	Motivation and attitudes.	Academic Writing: writing for formal publications. Example articles from Teacher College Record will be talked and compared with other writings.	
<u>Week 6</u> Oct. 3	<i>Educational Psychology</i> : Chapter 15, 16.	Learning in an adults-guided environment- classroom: The role of adults in learning,	Data and Theory: relationships between data and theory. How to construct theory from data; how to collect data based on given theories.	
<u>Week 7</u> Oct. 10	<i>Human Natures</i> : Chapter 1 to Chapter 5	Co-adaptation of genes and culture.	Measurement and Statistics: how to connect statistic back to research question.	Short essay for <i>Human Natures</i> : book review Due on week 9, Friday, Oct. 28
<u>Week 8</u> Oct. 17	<i>Human Natures</i> : Chapter 6 to Chapter 9	The evolution of thinking, technology and language.	Article critique: give articles and talk about how to criticize articles according to research	Critique practice, based on given articles, according to the prelim questions and

			process, data, measurement, etc.	requirements. Due on week 9, and week 11, Monday
<u>Week 9</u> Oct. 24	<i>Human Natures:</i> Chapter 10 to Chapter 13	The continuation of evolutionary theory, selection theory in other fields. The reference book is <i>Without Miracles</i> by Gary Cziko.	Students report and discuss about article critique.	
<u>Week 10</u> Oct. 31	<i>Taking Sides:</i> Chapter 2	Should Ability-Level Tracking Be Abandoned?	Article critique	Short essay review of <i>Taking Sides</i> . You will select one chapter from our readings to write the review. Due On week 14, Friday, Dec. 2
<u>Week 11</u> Nov. 7	<i>Taking Sides:</i> Chapter 8	Should Schools Adopt a Constructivist Approach to Education?	Article critique	
<u>Week 12</u> Nov. 14	<i>Taking Sides:</i> Chapter 12	Do Recent Discoveries About the Brain and Its Development Have Implications?	Starting the work on final paper, introduction of literature review, writing skill, including references, Endnote, etc.	
<u>Week 13</u> Nov. 21	<i>Taking Sides:</i> Chapter 15	Should Schools Embrace Computers and Technology?	Discussion of the final paper, problems, revisions.	
<u>Week 14</u> Nov. 28	<i>Taking Sides:</i> Chapter 18	Should U.S. Schools Be Evaluated Against Schools in Other Countries?	Discussion of presentation for your final paper: how to prepare an academic presentation, slides, handouts, time, etc.	
<u>Week 15</u> Dec. 5		Student Presentations (1/2 of class)		Final Paper Due on week 16, you are able to revise your final paper after the presentation.
<u>Week 16</u> Dec. 12		Student Presentations (1/2 of class)		

## Grading Policy

- 10% Participation (attendance and discussion):
- 20% Quizzes:
- 15% Three book/chapter reviews:
- 40% One final paper:
- 15% Two critiques of 2 articles for preliminary exam preparation:

## Texts:

1. Educational Psychology: Developing Learners (Ormrod, 2006)
2. Human Natures: Genes, Cultures, and the Human Prospect (Ehrlich, 2000)
3. Taking Sides: Clashing Views on Controversial Issues in Educational Psychology (Abbeduto, 2001)
4. You are also required to sign-up the TCRecord online access membership. With this membership you receive online access to all of TCRecord's content. The introductory rate of \$15 is available for a limited time. <http://www.tcrecord.org/>

## ANGEL:

We will use ANGEL to support communication and learning in this Proseminar. ANGEL is a web-based learning management system. You will be able to access it at <http://angel.msu.edu> and log in with your MSUNet ID username and password. Documents and extra readings will be posted on ANGEL that all students can download. You will submit your assignments through this system. It also provides tools for instructors, TAs and students to communicate with each other. Both instructors and students can send emails to the whole class. Discussion forum and drop box will be used as well.

## References

- Abbeduto, L. (2001). *Taking Sides: Clashing Views on Controversial Issues in Educational Psychology* (3rd ed.). McGraw Hill / Dushkin.
- Cziko, G. (1995). *Without miracles: universal selection theory and the second Darwinian revolution*. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press.
- Ehrlich, P. R. (2000). *Human natures: genes, cultures, and the human prospect*. Washington, D.C.: Island Press/Shearwater Books.
- Ormrod, J. E. (2006). *Educational Psychology: Developing Learners* (5th ed.). N.J., Merrill: Upper Saddle River.