

**EHRD 630**  
**ADULT LEARNING**  
**Texas A&M University**  
**Department of Educational Administration and**  
**Human Resource Development**  
(This a tentative syllabus for review only-actual syllabus  
for minimester course will differ and will be available in class)

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**Location:** 503 Harrington Tower

**Schedule:** Minimester course—Fridays and Saturdays, 9-4 PM—12/7-8 and 12/14-15,  
with an additional meeting on 12/20, 1-4 PM. The rest will be web assisted.

**Course Description:**

This course explores the multiple dimensions of learning in adulthood. It focuses on both the experience and practice of adult learning, and it examines the various theories that attempt to explain how adults learn. We also examine how adult development intersects with learning in adulthood.

**Course Objectives**

At the end of this course students will:

- Understand the role of adult learning in contemporary society
- Be able to conceptualize the complex ways in which adult development intersects with and shapes learning in adulthood
- Have a thorough understanding of traditional learning theories and the major theories of adult learning more specifically
- Be able to discuss the newest approaches to adult learning and show how these expand our knowledge of the learning process in adulthood

**Prerequisites:** Graduate classification

**Required Texts:**

Merriam, S. B., Caffarella, R. S., & Baumgartner, L. M. (2007). *Learning in adulthood: A comprehensive guide* (3rd ed.). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Additional readings will be available for downloading on the web on our WebCT/Vista course site, available at: <http://elearning.tamu.edu/>

### **Course Assignments:**

I will ask you to form five stable small groups at the beginning of the course. These will function as learning communities, working together in class and on WebCT. Several of the assignments will be done as a group.

1. Conduct an in-depth interview of an adult learner about her or his learning experiences. Try to choose someone who differs from yourself in some ways: for example, age, gender, race/ethnicity, educational attainment, or socioeconomic status. We will develop the questions for these interviews together. In your small groups share what you learned and write a collaborative paper (maximum 10 pages) that presents your findings and relates them to the material in Merriam, Caffarella, & Baumgartner, Chapters 1-4.

[25% of final grade]

2. As a small group, you will do a presentation on one of the adult learning theories: Andragogy and Self-Directed Learning; Transformational Learning; Critical Theory, Postmodern, and Feminist Perspectives; Situated Cognition; and Spiritual Perspectives. Each group will create a presentation to give the rest of the class a thorough understanding of what your learning theory is all about. In your presentation, please address the following areas:

1. **Overview of the theory itself.** Questions to consider: What is this learning theory? What are its main tenets? What traditional learning theory informs this theory? Within this learning theory, how does learning actually happen? How do you know you have learned something? What is the outcome of learning?
2. **Published critiques about the topic as well as your own.** Questions to consider: What are the strengths of this learning theory? What are its weaknesses or omissions? What are the major issues or debates surrounding this theory? What is the group's opinion of the theory?
3. **Research on your theory.** Questions to consider: What kinds of empirical and theoretical research has been done on this theory? What are some of the results of this research that lend insight into the theory?
4. **Applications of your topic used in practice.** Questions to consider: How does this learning theory work in practice? How do adult educators incorporate this learning theory into the classroom? How would you use it in your practice?

Included in your presentation must also be some sort of activity for your classmates to participate in. This activity may consist of checking out some interesting and relevant websites, writing a short reflection piece on a case study or issue you pose, or even something like having a conversation with a friend about a particular topic and then reporting back. Use your creativity here! You can also have them discuss their participation in the activity/activities you create for them in the discussion that you lead on your learning theory.

As the final part of your presentation, your group will also provide a bibliography on your learning theory. Part of this bibliography will be annotated. An annotation is not simply a

summary of the article, but contains an analysis as well. The annotated section will include one entry from each group member on an article of their choice on the topic of their learning theory. This article should be academic in nature – that is, published in an academic peer-reviewed journal.

Stacks and Karper (2001), of the Purdue Online Writing Center ([http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/general/gl\\_annotatedbib.html](http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/general/gl_annotatedbib.html)) provide a format that I would like you to use for these annotations. The annotation should be two to three paragraphs long, and include the following:

1. **Summary:** Two to three sentences describing the article’s main argument. What is the point of the article? What are the major findings?
2. **Assessment:** Three to four sentences describing your assessment of the article. What are the strengths of this article? What are its weaknesses? Do you find the argument or the research findings persuasive? Is this a useful article?
3. **Reflection:** What does this article contribute to our knowledge of your learning theory? What will others be able to learn from this article?

During your group presentations, please feel free to be creative! Often groups will present a learning theory in a way that “models” the type of learning and teaching advocated by the theory. Consider creative ways of doing this – it makes these presentations fun as well as informative.

[30% of final grade]

3. Write a paper on an aspect of adult learning of interest to you (10-12 pages).  
Some possibilities:

- an indepth analysis of a particular topic, to include a review/critique of a major book in that area and several research articles;

- a reflection on the implications for practice of our understanding of adult learning in a specific adult education context (for example, in the military);

- exploration of a specific issue or problem in adult learning;

- development of a learning journal for the course, to include your reactions to each of the readings as well as to the experience of each class session (there would be no page limit on this project);

- critique a book on a topic related to adult learning.

[30% of final grade]

4. Participation in class discussions and on WebCT.

[15% of final grade]

<b>Grading:</b>	90-100	A
	80-89	B
	70-79	C
	60-69	D
	<60	F

### **General Requirements Related to Assignments**

- All written material should be double spaced, in 12 point font, with left justification only.
- Please use APA style of citation and references in your papers. Use the Fifth Edition of the *APA Publication Manual*.
- In your assignments, please make every effort to use inclusive language. I realize this is often problematic, since English does not have an inclusive pronoun and avoiding "he/his" can create awkward phrasing sometimes. To help you get through this language thicket, I will provide a handout outlining various ways of achieving inclusive language.

### **Course Schedule:**

[MCB is the Merriam, Caffarella, & Baumgartner text; listed readings are available on WebCT/Vista]

Week 1      Introductions and Course Overview

Week 2      Context and Provision of Adult Learning

                 MCB Chs. 1-2

Kerka, S. 2002. Teaching adults: Is it different: ERIC Myths and Realities, No. 21.

Zemke, R. & Zemke, S. 1995. Adult learning: What do we know for sure? Training, pp. 31-40.

**Population statistics** can be found at:

<http://www.census.gov/prod/2004pubs/03statab/pop.pdf>

**Education statistics** can be found at:

<http://www.census.gov/prod/2004pubs/03statab/educ.pdf>

**Labor statistics** can be found at:

<http://www.census.gov/prod/2004pubs/03statab/labor.pdf>

Week 3 Participation in Adult Learning

MCB Chs. 3-4

**Assignment Due:  
Group Presentation on Adult Learner Interviews**

National Center for Education Statistics, The Condition of Education 2004: Participation in Education: Adult Learning: Adult Participation in Work-related Learning

<http://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/2004/section1/indicator07.asp>

National Center for Education Statistics, The Condition of Education 2003: Participation in Education: Adult Learning: Participation in Adult Education

<http://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/2003/section1/indicator08.asp>

National Center for Education Statistics, Participation Trends and Patterns in Adult Education: 1991 to 1999, February 2002

<http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2002/2002119.pdf>

Week 4 Adult Development and Learning: Biological/Psychological and Sociocultural/Integrative Perspectives

MCB Chs. 5-6

**Assignment Due:  
Group Paper on Adult Learner Interviews**

*For more information about how the body physically changes as it grows older, and how aging relates to learning, check out some of these resources:*

- The Disease Center at infoaging.org. This site provides information on diseases and disease processes related to aging: <http://www.infoaging.org/disease-h.html>
- Learning in the Senior Years, from New Horizons for Learning. This site provides more information on aging and its affects on adult learning: [http://www.newhorizons.org/lifelong/senior/front\\_senior.htm](http://www.newhorizons.org/lifelong/senior/front_senior.htm)
- The Real Age Test. Take this quiz to determine your REAL biological age. This website defines your REAL age as the "biological age of your body, based on how well you've maintained it." This website also gives helpful hints about ways to slow down the aging process. This quiz is found at: <http://www.realage.com/reg/regassess.aspx?mod=LONGFORM&cbr=&memberId=>

- Physical changes in aging. For more information about how your body changes as you age, go to:

<http://muextension.missouri.edu/explore/hesguide/humanrel/gh6729.htm>

Test your aging knowledge with the Mayo clinic's Aging Quiz, available at:

<http://www.mayoclinic.com/invoke.cfm?objectid=95E722BF-7992-4A11-9FCE7A621884965C>

Week 5      Cognitive Development and Intelligence

MCB Chs. 7-8

Please complete one of the Multiple Intelligences Quizzes:

<http://www.ldrc.ca/projects/miinventory/miinventory.php>

<http://www.mitest.com/o7inte~1.htm>

and this Emotional Intelligence Quiz:

[http://ei.haygroup.com/resources/default\\_ieitest.htm](http://ei.haygroup.com/resources/default_ieitest.htm)

Week 6      The Learning Process: Memory and Cognition; Experience and Learning

MCB Ch. 9

**Assignment Due:  
Submit Topic for Final Paper**

To read more about memory, cognition, and aging, go to this article entitled, "Memory, Intelligence, and Aging," available at:

<http://www.hope.edu/academic/psychology/ludwig/335/webrep/memoryintell.htm>

For more information about how the brain changes with age, go to this website from the Neurobiology of Aging Information Center:

<http://www.infoaging.org/b-neuro-home.html>.

Week 7      Learning Theories

MCB Ch. 11

Websites that provide overviews of behaviorism:

<http://www.ship.edu/~cgboeree/beh.html>



Sandlin, J. A. (2005). Andragogy and its discontents: An analysis of andragogy from three critical perspectives. *PAACE Journal of Lifelong Learning*, 14, 25-42.

Brookfield, S. (1993). "Self-directed learning, political clarity and the critical practice of adult education." *Adult Education Quarterly* (43), no. 4, pp. 227-242.

Week 9      Transformational Learning  
                 [Group Presentation]

MCB Ch. 14

Mezirow, Jack (1978). "Perspective Transformation," *Adult Education*. 28, pp. 100-110.

Baumgartner, L. M. (2002). Living and learning with HIV/AIDS: Transformational tales continued. *Adult Education Quarterly*, 53, 44-59.

Week 10     Critical Theory, Postmodern, and Feminist Perspectives  
                 [Group Presentation]

MCB Ch. 15

New Update, chapter 4: A New Look at Women's Learning (Elisabeth R. Hayes).

Welton, M. R. (1993). The contribution of critical theory to our understanding of adult learning. In Merriam (Ed.), *An Update on Adult Learning Theory*, pp. 81-90.

Tisdell, E. J. (1993). Feminism and adult learning: Power, pedagogy, and praxis. In Merriam (Ed.), *An update on adult learning theory*, pp. 91-104.

Week 11     Situated Cognition and Spiritual Perspectives  
                 [Two Group Presentations]

MCB Ch. 10

Wilson, A. L. (1993). The promise of situated cognition. In Merriam (Ed.), *An Update on Adult Learning Theory*, pp. 71-80.

Wenger, E. (2000). Communities of practice and social learning systems. *Organization*, 7, 225-246.

Merriam, S. B., Coutenay, B., & Baumgartner, L. (2003). On becoming a witch: Learning in a marginalized community of practice. *Adult Education Quarterly*, 53, 170-188.

Tisdell, E. (2003). *Exploring spirituality and culture in adult and higher education*, ch. 1, "Introduction: Culture, spirituality, and adult learning." San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Dirkx, J. M. (1997). Nurturing soul in adult learning. *New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education*, no. 74, pp. 79-88.

Tisdell, E. J. (1999). The spiritual dimension of adult development. *New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education*, no. 84, pp. 87-95.

Week 12	Readings Day—no class
Week 13	Ethics MCB Ch. 16
Week 14	Presentation of Papers
Week 15	Presentation of Papers <b>Assignment Due: Final Paper</b>

### ***Establishing a Safe Classroom Environment***

Learning takes place best when a safe environment is established in the classroom. To this end, we will seek to support an environment that nurtures individual and group differences and encourages engaged, honest discussions. We hope that together we create a safe environment where everyone feels comfortable to share and explore ideas. In the course of class discussions, it is quite possible that disagreements will arise. We welcome disagreements in the spirit of critical academic exchange, but please remember to be respectful of other points of view, whether you agree with them or not. In this class, derogatory comments based on race, ethnicity, class, gender, sexual orientation, or nationality will not be tolerated.

### ***Attendance***

The attendance policy for this course is administered in accordance with student Rule #7—<http://student-rules.tamu.edu/rule7.htm>.

### ***Faculty Senate Statement on Plagiarism and Aggie Code of Honor***

Scholastic misconduct is defined broadly as “any act that violates the rights of another student in academic work or that involves misrepresentation of your own work.” The handouts used in this course are copyrighted. By “handouts” I mean all materials generated for this class, which include but are not limited to syllabi, quizzes, exams, lab problems, in-class materials, review sheets, and additional problem sets. Because these materials are copyrighted, you do not have the right to copy the handouts, unless I expressly grant permission. As commonly defined, plagiarism consists of passing off as one’s own the ideas, words, writings, etc., which belong to another. In accordance with this definition, you are committing plagiarism if you copy the work of another person and turn it in as your own, even if you should have the permission of that person. Plagiarism is one of the worst academic sins, for the plagiarist destroys the trust among colleagues without which research cannot be safely communicated.

Texas A&M University students are responsible for authenticating all work submitted to an instructor. If asked, students must be able to produce proof that the item submitted is indeed the work of that student. Students must keep appropriate records at all times. The inability to authenticate one’s work, should the instructor request it, is sufficient grounds to initiate an academic dishonesty case.

**“An Aggie does not lie, cheat, or steal  
nor tolerate those who do.”**

The Aggie Code of Honor is an effort to unify the aims of all Texas A&M men and women toward a high code of ethics and personal dignity. For most, living under this code will be no problem, as it asks nothing of a person that is beyond reason. It only calls for honesty and integrity, characteristics that Aggies have always exemplified. The Aggie Code of Honor functions as a symbol to all Aggies, promoting understanding and loyalty to truth and confidence in each other.

If you have any questions regarding plagiarism, please consult the latest issue of the Texas A&M University Student Rules, Part 1, Section 20 which can be found on line at <http://student-rules.tamu.edu>. Any suspected instances of scholastic dishonesty will be investigated and resolved according to the procedures outlined in the new Aggie Honor System (<http://www.tamu.edu/aggiehonor/>).

### ***Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Policy Statement***

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact the Department of Student Life, Services with Disabilities in Room 118B of Cain Hall. The phone number is 845-1637. Due to emergency evacuation requirements within the department, if you feel

accommodations will be needed, the department requires you to fill out a disability information form and provide a class schedule for the current semester. This form will be supplied to the instructor and placed in the students file for easy accessibility in case an emergency should arise. The forms are available in the main office, 511 Harrington Tower.

### ***Sexual Harassment***

Texas A&M University is committed to the fundamental principles of academic freedom, equality of opportunity and human dignity. To fulfill its multiple missions as an institution of higher learning, Texas A&M encourages a climate that values and nurtures collegiality, diversity, pluralism and the uniqueness of the individual within our state, nation and world. All decisions and actions involving students and employees should be based on applicable law and individual merit. Texas A&M University, in accordance with applicable federal and state law, prohibits discrimination, including harassment, on the basis of race, color, national or ethnic origin, religion, sex, disability, age, sexual orientation, or veteran status. Individuals who believe they have experienced harassment or discrimination prohibited by this statement are encouraged to contact the appropriate offices within their respective units.

Students should contact the Office of the Dean of Student Life at 845-3113, or visit student rules at <http://rules.tamu.edu/rules/300/340199ml.htm> for more detail information to file a sexual harassment complaint. You may also contact the College of Education and Human Development at 979-845-5311.