

Fall 2025 ITLS-3130-IO1 Syllabus

ITLS 3130 | How People

Learn

Syllabus

Course Overview

Learning is inherent in our human experience and development. As designers, understanding how people learn is imperative to building interactive experiences across contexts. The purpose of this course is to build students' capacity to design for learning from a strong holistic understanding of how people learn. Throughout the course, we will explore a range of topics and design applications centered around the question: *how do people learn?* The course is an invitation to engage with theoretical foundations and contemporary conceptualizations of how people learn and to apply these theories and concepts in your own design practice.

Inclusive Excellence Statement

Your experience in this class is important to us. As humans, we value who you are and the contributions you make to our community. Toward USU goals of inclusive excellence and belonging, it is our intent that students from all backgrounds and perspectives be well served by this course, that students' learning needs be addressed both in and out of class, and that the range of ideas that students bring to this class be viewed as a resource, strength, and benefit. It is our intent to present materials and activities that are respectful of differences. Your suggestions are encouraged and appreciated. Please let us know ways to improve the effectiveness of the course for you personally or for other students or student groups. In addition, if any of our class meetings or assignments conflict with your religious events, please let us know so that we can make arrangements for you. Pronoun and name preferences: It is important to us that our class community is a space of belonging for all participants, so we ask that we respect each other's preferred pronouns and names. Here is a video from CIDI (<https://www.loom.com/share/e25fc6bc0ca24a98b65f654a2d3b34c3>) of how to add your pronouns in Canvas, if you'd like to do that. Here are instructions (https://usu.service-now.com/kb_view.do?sysparm_article=KB0010066) on how to change your preferred name (note this happens in Banner not Canvas). Here's a resource for how to do both of these in Zoom (<https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/201363203-Customizing-your-profile#:~:text=Name%3A%20To%20change%20your%20name,Title%2C%20Company%2C%2>). Additional information on accommodations USU provides are available at the end of the syllabus, and please reach out if you need assistance navigating this.

*Note from the Professor: It is my belief that we are all, myself included, a work-in-progress, especially when it comes to enacting values of inclusive excellence and belonging, which means **we will all make mistakes as we learn**. We are all at different places in our journey. It is my goal that our class remain a safe space to share different perspectives and, yes, at times mess up with the motive of learning and growing together. It is through embracing the discomfort that comes with our own humanity we will grow to become a more community of belonging for all.*

Basic Needs Security

Your well-being is important to me. Please let me know if you are facing food insecurity or cannot meet any other basic needs required for safe and comfortable learning. We will connect you to resources within the university community. Additional student resources are referenced in the last half of the syllabus and are outlined here. (<https://qanr.usu.edu/ndfs/snac/basic-needs>)

Lauren's Promise (<https://www.laurenmccluskey.org/>)

I will listen and believe you if someone is threatening you.

Online Learning & Tech Support

Please review the “technology support” section below for additional resources.

Technology Support for Online Learning

If you have difficulty accessing technology equipment, WiFi, or online digital applications, please let me know immediately and take proactive steps according to the following resources.

Information Technology Support at USU

The first place to go, after contacting me about your technology issue, is USU IT Service Desk: <https://it.usu.edu/service-desk> (<https://it.usu.edu/service-desk>). They can often help you with issues related to USU email, Canvas, and Zoom better and faster than I can.

Email: servicedesk@usu.edu

(<mailto:servicedesk@usu.edu?subject=>)Phone: 435.797.HELP (4357)

Zoom Video Conferencing

Zoom accounts are available to all USU students. More information is available here (<https://www.usu.edu/academic-support/technology/zoom/overview>). If you have not set up your account, you can do so by visiting: zoom.usu.edu (<http://zoom.usu.edu>). We will use Zoom to hold any virtual meetings relevant to this course, and you may also find it useful to hold meetings with your peers throughout the semester.

Technology Rental Programs Across Campus

As a USU student, you have access to various technology check out and rental programs. If you need any technology, such as laptops, headphones, or microphones, to support your participation in this course, please review the campus-wide offerings here: <https://it.usu.edu/labs/campus-tech-resources> (<https://it.usu.edu/labs/campus-tech-resources>). If you still have trouble getting what you need, please contact me as the ITLS department has additional equipment available for check out.

Course Details

The course is shaped by one overarching question: *How do people learn?* Over the semester we break this overarching question into four big questions that will shape how we engage with and build an understanding of how people learn. These questions are:

Big Questions

1. What myths or misunderstandings might we have about learning?
2. What does research tell us about the cognitive, behavioral, social, and cultural processes involved in learning and its outcomes?
3. How can we use technology for learning?
4. How can we design for learning across specific environments and contexts?

Objectives

Course Objectives	IDEA* Objectives
Develop a holistic understanding of the theoretical foundations and contemporary conceptualizations of how people learn.	<p>IDEA Objective 1: Gaining a basic understanding of the subject (e.g., factual knowledge, methods, principles, generalizations, theories).</p> <p>IDEA Objective 11: Learning to analyze and critically evaluate ideas, arguments, and points of view.</p>
Express personal perspectives through constructively and critically engaging with peers around course material through discussion posts.	<p>IDEA Objective 8: Developing skill in expressing myself orally or in writing</p> <p>IDEA Objective 11: Learning to analyze and critically evaluate ideas, arguments, and points of view.</p>
Engage in collective and individual reflection on course topics through peer feedback and reflection assignments.	<p>IDEA Objective 8: Developing skill in expressing myself orally or in writing.</p>

Apply course theories and concepts through completing a design project with the goal of applying theories of how people learn.

IDEA Objective 3: Learning to apply course materials (to improve rational thinking, problem solving and decisions)

*IDEA is the name of the course evaluation system USU uses to evaluate courses. At the end of the semester, you will be asked to evaluate the course based on the above objectives.

Outcomes

This class is centered on understanding how people learn and how to apply the knowledge you build to create designs informed by learning theory. We've designed this course toward three tangible outcomes that you can integrate in your own design portfolio. Outcomes include:

1. [Communication outcome] Provide a clear rationale informed by your own lived experiences about the connections you see between learning theory and design broadly.
2. [Design outcome] Discuss how your design product is theory-informed with specific ties between one or more learning theories and design features. This is a worked example of your own learning theory and design perspectives.
3. [Knowledge outcome] Ultimately the combination of the communication and design outcome will demonstrate your deep understanding of how people learn.

Course Format

This is an online class with requirements for timely asynchronous participation. There may be opportunities for synchronous online participation (e.g., via Zoom) throughout the semester.

Course Materials.

All course materials will be available via Canvas.

Participation in this Course

Although we will employ a variety of teaching/learning techniques, we will rely heavily on group discussions of thinking materials, peer feedback, and reflective writing. The purpose of the learning activities in this class is to build students' capacity to design for learning from a strong holistic understanding of how people learn.

A huge part of being successful in this class aligns with how to be successful in designing for and with humans: active, empathetic, and generous listening. Thus, through our work together, we will practice generous listening, thoughtful contributing, and shaping a community that welcomes a range of opinions. Through the development of a safe environment, requests for

elaboration, clarification, or evidence will come to be seen as encouraging thoughtfulness rather than as personal attacks or "silencing." We all have roles to play in creating our learning community.

Team Discussions

We have structured this class such that you will work in smaller teams, which will give you a chance to meet several of your peers. Over the semester, you will participate in two different teams:

1. Thinking Team – randomly assigned, Aug 25 - Oct 24
2. Interest Team – self-selected based on interest, Oct 27 - Dec 12

Rhythm of the Course

We will follow a 3-week section rhythm in this class throughout the semester. For two weeks we will engage with a set of thinking materials around a shared idea or question and every third week will be a space of individual and collective reflection. The subsequent sections will be published during the reflection weeks of the prior section.

Over the course of the semester, there will be **three types of learning activities to complete**:

1. Community Participation. (30% of Grade)

- Discussion Post (second week of each section, 5 total)
- Respond to Peers (third week of each section, 5 total)

2. Independent Reflection. (30% of Grade)

- Reflection Summary (third week of each section, 4 total)

3. Design Application. (40% of Grade)

- Design Application (end of semester project)

Please see the grade policy below and respective project descriptions in the "Assignments" tab for more information on each of these.

Course Grading Policy

This class is about learning. You will learn in this course what learning is, where it happens, how it's measured, and how to design for it. The problem with teaching a class about learning in an institution that values grades is that grades are not actually a measure of learning. In most classes, grades are an indicator of students' ability to regurgitate information accurately.

In this class, we will follow a very straightforward grading structure centered on *learning as a community-centered and participatory act*. This means that your grade in the class will be determined by your participation in the class community and how this learning experience shapes how you see the world. Reflection is one of the most critical tools to facilitate learning and, therefore, much of your

grade in this class will be determined by your reflecting on your own learning. We have designed a grading structure that aligns with the belief that learning is: collaborative, participatory, and experiential.

Here is a guide to how we will grade each assignment type
(<https://usu.instructure.com/courses/786070/pages/guide-to-assignment-grading>).

Grading Structure

The grading structure below outlines what grade you will receive based on what assignments you choose to complete. **You cannot pass this class without completing the Design Application project.**

Grade	Percentage of Assignments Complete
A	94% or higher
A-	90%-93.9%
B+	87%-89.9%
B	84%-86.9%
B-	80%-83.9%
C+	77%-79.9%
C	70% - 76.9%
D	Complete less than 70% of all assignments
F	Complete less than 60% of all assignments

Late Assignment Policy

Because this course is centered around participation and engagement of shared experience, the timing of assignments is critical to their value. That said, we understand life happens. If you find yourself in a situation where you have missed the Monday 9amMST grace period for an assignment, please reach out to us and request approval to submit the assignment late. We will accept late assignments up to December 8, 2025, **here is a guide for submitting a late assignment in this course.** (<https://usu.instructure.com/courses/786070/pages/guide-to-submitting-a-late-assignment>)

The Design Application project cannot be made up as it is due at the end of the semester when grades are due. If you are having difficulty completing this assignment on time, please reach out to discuss options for how to complete the course.

If you have something going on, please reach out to us (no matter how big or small it feels). We are here to help, but we can't help if we don't know you need it. We understand life happens and it doesn't care what time of the semester it is. If you have a major life event happening during the semester that prohibits you from completing the course at the same level of performance, please reach out to us as you may be eligible to extend the course beyond the semester.

AI Use Policy for ITLS 3130

We are still in the midst of understanding the prospects and perils of AI tools, like ChatGPT. This ongoing conversation has direct and important implications for learning and understanding how people learn. I welcome this discussion in this class. Furthermore, with this in mind, I hold the following values throughout the design and implementation of this course: **integrity**, **respect for persons**, and **writing is art**. After reflecting on these values vis-a-vis the current state of AI, in this course **AI Use is Permitted with Attribution**.

If you plan to use AI in this course, **please review the AI Attribution Guide outlined here** (<https://usu.instructure.com/courses/786070/pages/ai-use-policy-for-itls-3130>) to attribute and acknowledge AI's contribution to your assignment.

Course Schedule

Below we provide an overview of the course. Here is a course guide we developed to help you plan your workload this semester according to how you would like to participate in the course.

Week	Dates	Section	Topic
1	Aug 25-29	Myths & Misunderstandings About Learning	The System of Learning
2	Sept 1-5		Unlearning How People Learn
3	Sept 8-12		[Reflection] What myths or misunderstandings do you have about learning?
4	Sept 15-19	What We Know About How People Learn	What is Learning? [Part 1]
5	Sept 22-26		What is Learning [Part 2]
6	Sept 29-Oct 3		[Reflection] How do you understand learning?
7	Oct 6-10	Where Learning Happens	Forms of Knowledge
8	Oct 13-17		Formal and Informal Learning
9	Oct 20-24		[Reflection] Where are you most interested in designing for learning?

10	Oct 27-31	Learning & Technology	Do mediums matter?
11	Nov 3-7		How has technology changed learning?
12	Nov 10-14		[Reflection] How do you envision using technology for learning?
13	Nov 19-23	Designing For Learning	What counts as learning?
14	Nov 24-28	Thanksgiving Break	No new materials.
15	Dec 1-5	Designing For Learning	How do you know learning is happening?
16	Dec 8-12		[Design Application] Apply your perspective on learning to a design project.

Additional USU-wide Policies

Attendance and Excused Absences Policy

This course is an asynchronous course without a set meeting time. There will be regular due dates for assignments and critiques. Having been in your position as a student, I understand that life can unexpectedly "happen". If you should run into any issues that would prohibit you from participating fully in the class at any point, please contact me as soon as you are able, and we can work out a solution. If you have questions about this please schedule a time to get in touch via Zoom.

Assumption of Risk

All classes, programs, and extracurricular activities within the University involve some risk, and certain ones involve travel. The University provides opportunities to participate in these programs on a voluntary basis. Therefore, students should not participate in them if they do not care to assume the risks. Students can ask the respective program leaders/sponsors about the possible risks a program may generate, and if students are not willing to assume the risks, they should not select that program. By voluntarily participating in classes, programs, and extracurricular activities, a student does so at his or her own risk. General information about University Risk Management policies, insurance coverage, vehicle use policies, and risk management forms can be found at: <http://www.usu.edu/riskmgt> (<http://www.usu.edu/riskmgt>)

Library Services

All USU students attending classes in Logan, at our Regional Campuses, or online can access all databases, e-journals, and e-books regardless of location. Additionally, the library will mail printed books to students, at no charge to them. Students can also borrow books from any Utah academic library. Take advantage of all library services and learn more at libguides.usu.edu/statewide. (<http://libguides.usu.edu/statewide>)

Online Course Fee

A fee of \$15 per credit is applied to all online courses to sustain current digital technologies and support services required for engaging and effective online learning.

Classroom Civility

Utah State University supports the principle of freedom of expression for both faculty and students. The University respects the rights of faculty to teach and students to learn. Maintenance of these rights requires classroom conditions that do not impede the learning process. Disruptive classroom behavior will not be tolerated. An individual engaging in such behavior may be subject to disciplinary action. Read Student Code Article V Section V-3 (<https://studentconduct.usu.edu/studentcode/article5>) for more information.