ITLS 6545

ITLS 6545

Special Topics: Sociocultural Perspectives

Professor: Deborah Fields

Email: deborah.fields@usu.edu

Cell Phone (use with discretion): …….

https://itls.usu.edu/people/faculty/fields/

Office: Online

Office Hours: by appointment (via phone, chat, zoom)

Course Overview

This course explores core books, both classic and contemporary, that take "Sociocultural Perspectives" on learning, motivation, and identity.

The course structure is simple, modeled as a scholarly reading group. We will read one book per two weeks. Six books have been pre-chosen, and the seventh is a book of your choice (pending instructor approval). Each week we will discuss the books together in a Tuesday evening session (you may participate virtually, on the phone, or in person) in addition to online discussion boards. Writing will focus on weekly book reviews with the goal of each student developing notes and abstracts that will help them think critically and gather notes for writing literature reviews in the future.

This is an opportunity to deepen your understanding of learning theory, an asset whether you are in academia, industry, or K12 education. The instructor will happily help students figure out what parts of books should be read more or less carefully based on their personal interests. Learning how to read for both breadth and depth is an excellent skill to develop.

Course Objectives

Upon completion of this course students will:

- Gain a broader understanding and appreciation of sociocultural perspectives of learning, across history and internationally.
- Develop specific skills and competencies in reading core academic, educational texts.

- Learn to analyze and critically evaluate ideas, arguments and points of view in regard to sociocultural theories of learning.

Course Format

We will meet weekly for a synchronous discussion by Zoom on Tuesdays from 7:15-9:45 p.m. (likely we will get out early). This participation is required. By signing up for this course you are committing your participation in this group.

We will also participate in online discussion forums throughout the course as well as peer review each others' book notes.

Asking Questions about the Material

Questions are best asked on a _discussion board_. Many students will benefit from hearing your questions and others' responses. If you have a question, it is very likely that others do too. The discussion board is a great place for us to learn from each other, sharing questions, answers, experiences, perspectives. Questions regarding personal concerns may also be sent to the instructor via email, but most questions should be posted online.

Required Course Readings

- Vygotsky, L. S. (1978). Mind in society (M. Cole, V. John-Steiner, S. Scribner, & E. Souberman, Eds.). _Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press_.
- Rogoff, B. (2003). _The cultural nature of human development_. Oxford University Press.
- Dewey, J. (1934). Democracy in Education. New York: Putnam.
- Cole, M. (1996). _Cultural psychology: A once and future discipline_. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Holland, D. C., Lachiotte, W., Skinner, D. & Cain, B. (1998). _Identity and Agency in Cultural Worlds_. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Heath, S. B. (1983). _Ways with words: Language, life, and work in communities and classrooms._ Cambridge University Press.
- **Book of Choice** (instructor approval required, recommendations are available).

These textbooks are available through the USU bookstore and also through online retailers (where they are often less expensive).

Optional texts. If you have already read _Mind in Society_ you may read Vygotsky's _Thought in Language._ If you have already read _Identity and Agency in Cultural Worlds_ then you may read Wenger's _Communities of Practice._

Note: One book is of your choice, with instructor approval. You need to submit your idea for your book of choice by **October 27** to allow adequate time for reading and ordering. If you're not sure what to read, consider the two alternate books listed above: _Thought and Language_ or _Communities of Practice_. Those are perfectly adequate. Other authors include

Fall 2024

Na'ilah Nasir, Edward Hutchins, Carol Lee, Geoffrey Saxe, Megan Bang, James Wertsch, James Polman, Yrjo Engestrom, Mikhail Bahktin, and many more…

Auto Access eBook: Cultural Nature of Human Development eBook by Rogoff, Democracy and Education eBook by Dewey and Ways with Words eBook, 1e by Heath

This course requires all-inclusive digital materials that are provided to you at a lower price than traditional printed materials. These materials are paid for through an "Auto Access Digital Materials" charge placed on your student account when you registered for the course. **To access the materials, visit the Canvas course site.** For more details, including dates, deadlines, and opt-out info, visit your Bookshelf on Canvas.

For a **tutorial** on the features of "**bookshelf**" for these Auto Access ebooks, see; https://www.vitalsource.com/bookshelf-features

Course Requirements

You are expected to check with the course website regularly and meet all posted deadlines. You are also expected to follow the order of the assignments listed in each learning module, unless otherwise posted.

How much time should I be spending on this class? A general rule of thumb for graduate work is to spend twice as long on homework outside of class as you do in class. For a 3-credit graduate course that amounts to about 9-10 hours a week per class. Students often ask me if they're spending too much or too little time on the course. *That is at your own judgment.* However, here's one guideline:

- 10-12 hours reading per book
- 3-5 hours writing per book
- The amount of writing vs reading is up to you based on your own interests and needs.
- It is of course up to you how much time you spend on the course, and the above is just a rule of thumb by the instructor who cannot possibly tell exactly how many hours you are putting in. *You are always welcome to contact the instructor or bring up for class discussion* the issue of time spent.

Discussion (50%): Face-to-Face (zoom) and Online (discussion)

The main form of this course is in the style of a book group, if a particularly academic one at that. We will have two forms of discussion: online and face-to-face.

-      Online, you are expected to participate in discussion forums each week, submitting comments, questions, thoughts, and responding to your peers' comments, questions and thoughts.

-      Face-to-face we will meet Thursday nights for 2-3 hours to discuss the book of the week.

- You should participate in all discussions actively.

If you tend to be quieter or more shy, be assured that the questions you have are probably in the minds of others. If you tend to speak up frequently in classes, keep in mind that others have things to share and that they may need some space to share them.

Writing Assignments (50%) – 15 points each

Each book you are also expected to turn in writing assignments by 5:00pm before class. The main point of these is to give you notes and writing that you could use in the future, either in your own literature reviews, scholarly work, or in your teaching or design practice. So make these useful!

Each writing assignment should include:

- A **1-2 page reflection** (single-spaced, typical formatting, 2 pages are okay) on the main things you got out of this book. This should be reflective and critical - something you want to keep to look back at in future years. You might include:
  - What are some of the main premises of this book that the author(s) argues for?
  - Why is this author/book famous? Why were these ideas important at the time he/she/they were writing?
  - What is the relevance for these ideas today?
- **3-4 pages of sporadic notes** from the book. *These notes are for you, and we will provide an opportunity for you to share them with your classmates. They will be graded not by quality per se but to ensure you have them for the future. You might type out a quote that you like and write something like 'ooh, remember this for ___ paper.' Or you might write about something you don't understand and note what you think it's about but a question you want to remember to post.*
  - Favorite quotes or sections
  - Personal reflections
  - Sections like 'this is relevant for ....' or 'things to keep in mind when I teach next...' or 'notes for dissertation/paper I'm working on'
  - *These notes are for you, and we will provide an opportunity for you to share them with your classmates. They will be graded not by quality per se but to ensure you have them for the future. You might type out a quote that you like and write something like 'ooh, remember this for ___ paper.' Or you might write about something you <u>don't</u> understand and note what you <u>think</u> it's about but a question you want to remember to post.*
  - Some of these notes you could cut and paste into discussion forums to get feedback from other class members.
- **Summary for Grandma:**
  - The goal of this is for you to figure out how to put in your own words (not academicese) what the book is about and what you're taking away from it.
  - A 3-5 sentence summary to your grandmother/aunt/dad/little sister [i.e., non-academic family member] of the main ideas this author/book conveyed.

Fall 2024

If you think about it, as a scholar, you should be able to associate a few key, main ideas with each author. These are important theoreticians in the field of education, and you should know what ideas they introduced, why they were important at the time, and why they might be relevant for you now. You don't necessarily have to agree with all of their ideas, but you should be able to summarize them.

Course Timeline

Book discussions will take place on the day they are scheduled below. You should have read each book and submitted your writing assignment before class each week.

Be prepared for each class discussion with questions, comments, ideas, and/or reflections.

Week 0   Course intro

Weeks 1-2   Lev Vygotsky, *Mind in Society*

Weeks 3-4   Barbara Rogoff, *The Cultural Nature of Human Development*

Weeks 5-6   John Dewey *Democracy in Education*

Fall Break-ish

Weeks 7-8   Michael Cole *Cultural Psychology*

Weeks 9-10   Dorothy Holland, William Lachiotte Jr., Debra Skinner, & Carole Cain, *Identity and Agency in Figured Worlds*

Weeks 11-12   Shirley Brice Heath, *Ways with Words*

Thanksgiving   NO CLASS

Weeks 13-14   Book of Choice [instructor approval required]

Resubmission Policy

Resubmission of assignments on which you lost points is possible by two weeks from the date I submit feedback, whichever comes first. You only get to resubmit once per assignment. You may only resubmit if your original submission is complete (i.e., if you submit a partial lesson plan by the original due date, you do not get a chance to resubmit). If the original submission was late, then you cannot resubmit.

USU Criteria for Make-Up of Missed Assignments or Projects

Students will be allowed to make up assignments or projects at full credit only if they meet one of the following criteria:

- Incapacitating illness prevents a student from attending classes for a minimum period of two weeks,
- A death in the family,
- Financial responsibilities requiring a student to alter a schedule to secure needed

employment,

- Change in work schedule as required by employer (with verification) or,
- Other emergencies deemed appropriate by the instructor.

If there are extenuating circumstances, a student may petition the instructor for time beyond the deadline. Documentation of the circumstances cited to justify the make-up is required.

Written Assignments

Unless otherwise advised in advance, all written assignments are to be completed in the following format:

1. MS Word file with **your name** and assignment type in the file name.
2. 8.5 x 11, <u>single-spaced</u>.
3. Times or Times New Roman, 11-12 pt. font, **your name** on first page.
4. Submitted by electronic copy through email.

AI Use Strictly Prohibited in Written Assignments

In this course, the use of AI tools like ChatGPT and similar technologies is strictly prohibited. You may not submit work that is wholly or partially generated by AI. An essential outcome of this course is to strengthen your skills as a thinker and communicator by doing your own work. As you personally develop and demonstrate the skills taught in this course, you will be better prepared to perform effectively with or without the assistance of AI and other technologies.

To ensure that students do their own work, assignment submissions may be reviewed by AI detection software such as Copyleaks. If there is strong suspicion or evidence of AI use in a submission, a student may receive a reduced grade and/or be required to resubmit the assignment. Violations will be addressed according to [Article 6 of the USU Student Code](#).

That said, you're welcome to use AI tools <u>if</u> you compare your own ideas and reading notes to them. That sounds like extra work to the professor, but it could be entertaining to see what AI tools come up with in interpreting the authors we are studying. If you do this, please share on class discussion forums with succinct posts, include attribution (tools vary; we want to know which tools you used) and include a reflection on what you post.

10 Pointers for Good Academic Essay Writing

1. A good general rule to follow in the structure of your papers is "tell them what you're going to say, tell them, then tell them what you said". In the introduction, provide a

roadmap of what you are going to say in the paper. It will help your own organization and organizes the paper for the reader to follow your arguments along.

2. Be explicit about your questions, thesis, perspective and put it up front in your introduction. It's best not to leave your reader(s) guessing what the paper is about.
3. Provide signposts or points to your roadmap, e.g., "in this section, the following point…" or "to summarize" or "having covered the…we will now turn to…"
4. Section titles are also good as signposts but be sure that the content of the section reflects the title of the section.
5. Use transition sentences that build from pervious information and connects to the next.
6. Explain terms. Don't put them in quotes and assume the reader will know what you mean. Try very hard not to make assumptions about what the reader knows even though you know who the reader is and he/she might be an expert in your topic. The point is for you to demonstrate that you know the material.
7. Be consistent with your bibliographic referencing style.
8. Be careful not to over-generalize, e.g., "many theorists…" when you are only referencing one study.
9. Don't assume everyone sees or agrees with your perspective, you need to convince the reader of your perspective.
10. Summarize in the conclusion, what you wrote about in the body of the paper. Tie your conclusions back to your original question…how have you proven, answered, shown, presented information that addresses it. Don't introduce new information in the conclusion. It detracts from the cohesiveness.

Grade Policy

The following grading standards will be used in this class:

Grade	Range
A	100 % to 93.0%
A-	< 93.0 % to 90.0%
B+	< 90.0 % to 87.0%
B	< 87.0 % to 83.0%
B-	< 83.0 % to 80.0%
C+	< 80.0 % to 77.0%
C	< 77.0 % to 73.0%
C-	< 73.0 % to 70.0%
D+	< 70.0 % to 67.0%
D	< 67.0 % to 60.0%
F	< 59.0 % to 0.0%

Nonattendance Policy

Students May Be Dropped For Nonattendance

Fall 2024

If a student does not attend a class during the first week of the term or by the second class meeting, whichever comes first, the instructor may submit a request to have the student dropped from the course. ***(This does not remove responsibility from the student to drop courses which he or she does not plan to attend.)*** This option is typically used for classes that are full and the instructor is trying to make a seat available for another student, but may be considered for other courses. Requests must be made during the first 20 percent of the course and will be considered on an individual student basis. Students who are dropped from courses will be notified by the Registrar's Office through their preferred e-mail account (see [USU nonattendance policy](#)).

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 https://libguides.usu.edu/statewide.

Online Course Fee

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

Classroom Behavior

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](#) for more information.

University Policies & Procedures

Appropriate Use of Canvas and Other IT Resources

Canvas and all other course technologies are information technology services provided as tools to further the mission of the university. By using these services, users agree to comply with [USU Policy 550: Appropriate Use of Computing, Networking, and Information Resources](#) and the accompanying [Terms of use for USU IT](#) resources, as well as [Article V-3.B.25.c](#) of the USU Student Code. Using course technologies in ways that are inconsistent with the university's mission or are disruptive will not be tolerated. Disruptive behavior includes any activity that interferes with either the faculty member's ability to conduct the class or the ability of other students to profit from the instructional program.

Classroom Behavior

Fall 2024

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](#) for more information.

Academic Freedom and Professional Responsibilities

Academic freedom is the right to teach, study, discuss, investigate, discover, create, and publish freely. Academic freedom protects the rights of faculty members in teaching and of students in learning. Freedom in research is fundamental to the advancement of truth. Faculty members are entitled to full freedom in teaching, research, and creative activities, subject to the limitations imposed by professional responsibility. [Faculty Code Policy #403](#) further defines academic freedom and professional responsibilities.

Academic Integrity – "The Honor System"

Each student has the right and duty to pursue his or her academic experience free of dishonesty. To enhance the learning environment at Utah State University and to develop student academic integrity, each student agrees to the following Honor Pledge:
"I pledge, on my honor, to conduct myself with the foremost level of academic integrity."
A student who lives by the Honor Pledge is a student who does more than not cheat, falsify, or plagiarize. A student who lives by the Honor Pledge:

- Espouses academic integrity as an underlying and essential principle of the Utah State University community;
- Understands that each act of academic dishonesty devalues every degree that is awarded by this institution; and
- Is a welcomed and valued member of Utah State University.

Academic Dishonesty

The instructor of this course will take appropriate actions in response to Academic Dishonesty, as defined the University's Student Code. Acts of academic dishonesty include but are not limited to:

- **Cheating**: using, attempting to use, or providing others with any unauthorized assistance in taking quizzes, tests, examinations, or in any other academic exercise or activity. Unauthorized assistance includes:
  - Working in a group when the instructor has designated that the quiz, test, examination, or any other academic exercise or activity be done "individually;"
  - Depending on the aid of sources beyond those authorized by the instructor in writing papers, preparing reports, solving problems, or carrying out other assignments;
  - Substituting for another student, or permitting another student to substitute for oneself, in taking an examination or preparing academic work;

- o Acquiring tests or other academic material belonging to a faculty member, staff member, or another student without express permission;
- o Continuing to write after time has been called on a quiz, test, examination, or any other academic exercise or activity;
- o Submitting substantially the same work for credit in more than one class, except with prior approval of the instructor; or engaging in any form of research fraud.
- **Falsification**: altering or fabricating any information or citation in an academic exercise or activity.
- **Plagiarism**: representing, by paraphrase or direct quotation, the published or unpublished work of another person as one's own in any academic exercise or activity without full and clear acknowledgment. It also includes using materials prepared by another person or by an agency engaged in the sale of term papers or other academic materials.

For additional information go to: ARTICLE VI. University Regulations Regarding Academic Integrity

Discrimination and Sexual Misconduct

General Overview

USU strives to provide an environment for students and employees that is free from discrimination and sexual misconduct. If you experience sexual misconduct or discrimination at any point during the semester inside or outside of class, you are encouraged to contact the USU Title IX Coordinator via Distance Education room 400 in Logan, 435-797-1266, titleix@usu.edu, or at equity.usu.edu/report. You can learn more about the USU resources available for individuals who have experienced sexual misconduct at sexualrespect.usu.edu. Resources for individuals who have experienced discrimination are listed at equity.usu.edu/resources.

Required Reporting of Sexual Misconduct and Threats of Harm

USU cares about our students and provides a number of resources and supportive measures to students who may be experiencing thoughts of self-harm or who have experienced sexual misconduct. To ensure students are informed about resources and services available to them, including available grievance or criminal processes for incidents of sexual misconduct, USU has implemented reporting policies and practices that require designated employees to report any information they receive about incidents of sexual misconduct. This reporting policy also assists USU with its efforts to prevent sexual misconduct and keep our campus community safe.

Under USU's sexual misconduct reporting policy, I am designated as a "reporting employee." This means that if you share information with me about incidents of sexual misconduct (sexual harassment, sexual assault, relationship violence, or sex-based stalking), including within a course assignment, , I *will report* that information to the USU Title IX Coordinator. I will also share with you information about designated confidential resources, supportive measures, and how you can file a report with the USU Title IX Coordinator.

Fall 2024

Self-disclosures about sexual misconduct that you experienced are not required for your course work.

Similarly, if you disclose thoughts of harm to self or a threat to others to me, including within a course assignment, I will report the information to the appropriate campus administrators. I will also share with you information about the [mental health and wellness resources](#) available to you.

Withdrawal Policy and "I" Grade Policy

Students are required to complete all courses for which they are registered by the end of the semester. In some cases, a student may be unable to complete all of the coursework because of extenuating circumstances, but not due to poor performance or to retain financial aid. The term 'extenuating' circumstances includes: (1) incapacitating illness which prevents a student from attending classes for a minimum period of two weeks, (2) a death in the immediate family, (3) financial responsibilities requiring a student to alter a work schedule to secure employment, (4) change in work schedule as required by an employer, or (5) other emergencies deemed appropriate by the instructor.

Students with Disabilities

USU welcomes students with disabilities. If you have, or suspect you may have, a physical, mental health, or learning disability that may require accommodations in this course, please contact the [Disability Resource Center (DRC)](#) as early in the semester as possible (University Inn # 101, (435) 797-2444, [drc@usu.edu](#)). All disability related accommodations must be approved by the DRC. Once approved, the DRC will coordinate with faculty to provide accommodations.

Students Who are Pregnant or Have a Pregnancy-Related Condition

If you need academic accommodations related to pregnancy, childbirth, false pregnancy, termination of pregnancy, recovery, or other pregnancy related conditions, please contact the Office of Equity as early as possible. All accommodations related to pregnancy must be approved by the Office of Equity. The Office of Equity will then coordinate with instructors to provide accommodations. The University will not exclude a student from participating in any part of an educational program based on the student's pregnancy or pregnancy related conditions.

Office of Equity: Distance Education, Room 400, Logan Campus, 435-797-1266, [Office of Equity: Pregnancy and Pregnancy Related Conditions](#).

Inclusive Excellence

USU provides resources to help all students feel included as part of the campus and broader USU community. To learn more about the resources available and how to access them, visit the [Inclusive Excellence Office](#).

Grievance Process

Fall 2024

Students who feel they have been unfairly treated may file a grievance through the channels and procedures described in the [Academic Grievances section of the Course Catalog](#).

Full details for USU Academic Policies and Procedures

- [Acceptable Use of University Computing Resources](#)
- [CanLinks to an external site.Academic Policies and Practices (USU Catalog)](#)
- [Student ConductLinks to an external site.](#)
- [Student CodeLinks to an external site.](#)
- [Links to an external site.Academic Freedom and Professional Responsibility Policy](#)

Emergency Procedures

In the case of a drill or real emergency, classes will be notified to evacuate the building via USU official communication channels. Those channels will be: an audible alarm, such as a fire alarm; an Aggie Alert notification; or notification by a USU representative. In the event of a disaster that does not permit enough time for notifications, evacuate as the situation dictates (i.e., when shaking ceases in an earthquake; immediately when a fire is discovered or in the event of other immediate life safety concerns). If it does not inhibit safety, turn off computers and take any personal items with you. Elevators should not be used; instead, use the closest stairs. See [USU Emergency Management](#) for more information.

General Health Protocols

The cold, flu, COVID-19, and other illnesses can have an impact on the health of our university community. USU welcomes the wearing of masks in all university buildings and encourages taking measures to mitigate risk as recommended by federal and state public health officials: getting vaccinated, staying home if you are sick, and frequent hand washing.

Mental Health

Mental health is critically important for the success of USU students. As a student, you may experience a range of issues that can cause barriers to learning, such as strained relationships, increased anxiety, alcohol/drug problems, feeling down, difficulty concentrating and/or lack of motivation. These mental health concerns or stressful events may lead to diminished academic performance or reduce your ability to participate in daily activities. Utah State University provides free services for students to assist them with addressing these and other concerns. You can learn more about the broad range of confidential mental health services available on campus at [Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS)](#).

Students are also encouraged to download the ["SafeUT App"](#) to their smartphones. The SafeUT application is a 24/7 statewide crisis text and tip service that provides real-time crisis intervention to students through texting and a confidential tip program that can help anyone with emotional crises, bullying, relationship problems, mental health, or suicide related issues.

Fall 2024