



## Course Description

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At the heart of all adult education practices is an understanding of adult learning. This course immerses you in some of the learning theories and research. It starts with an examination of the relationship between theory and practice before moving into some of the neurological perspectives of learning. It then focuses on self-directed learning (andragogy), experiential learning, transformative learning, and the embodied, emotional and spiritual dimensions of learning. It also explores some sociocultural and sociomaterial learning perspectives including communities of practice, cultural historical activity theories, and other practice-based learning theories. Finally, it turns into some of the topical area, examining cross-cultural learning, and learning as it intersects the life world of women and the aged and disabled people. This is a course that integrates theory exploration with reflection and imagination of practices. You will be encouraged to develop a critical appreciation of the theories while attending to how they could inform your teaching, learning and other educational or work practices.

## Learning Objectives

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By the end of this course, you will be able to:

- Identify, describe and critically appreciate various theoretical perspectives on adult learning;
- Apply some of the perspectives to their personal and professional practices;
- Develop your own understanding of learning in relation to your research and educational practices.



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## **Assignments and Grades**

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<b>Assignment</b>	<b>Weight</b>	<b>Due date</b>
1) Class participation  (contribution to facilitated class discussion)	20%	On-going
2) Reading sharing in Group Blogs	20%	As per the sign-up sheet - peer evaluated
3) Individual learning project presentation	20%	As per the sign-up sheet
4) Final paper	40%	June 18

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### **Assignment 1: Class participation (20%)**

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Students are expected to contribute to both reading sharing in Group Blogging – see assignment 2 below, and Facilitated Discussion Forum (contribute a minimal of two posts per week). Overall, your class participation should demonstrate your critical and reflective engagement with the course readings, the theories under discussion, as well as your experiences and/or professional practices.

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### **Assignment 2: Reading sharing in group blogs (20%)**

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Group Blogging is puzzle learning exercise for the group to develop an in-depth understanding of the readings. Each week, each person in the group is to help the group understand one piece of reading - **you will need to sign up for the readings in Assignment Sign-up**. The person introducing or "presenting" on the piece of reading should also respond to questions and is responsible for clarification.



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It is up to you as to what form of introduction you wish to use. It could be a ppt, a reading journal, a short audio, a poster... As to the content, the following is suggested: 1) concise summary; 2) key notions and their meaning; 3) critical assessment of the reading and theory (aha moments, disagreement; comparison with other theories; author's use of evidence etc.)

Each week, one to two people in the group should take the responsibility for "summarizing" the key points of your discussion and post them in Facilitated Discussion Forum. **You will need to sign up for this task in Assignment Sign-up.** This summary can take any form. It should not be a comprehensive summary of what you have discussed in the group. It should focus on your 1) key debate, 2) major confusion, 3) epiphany and other discovery.

Since group blogging is designed for you to learn within groups, this assignment is to be graded by your peers.

### **Assignment 3: Individual learning project presentation (20%)**

The purpose of this assignment is for individual students to share her/his research and reflection on a topic of interest that centres issues of learning. Some examples of learning projects include:

1. Reflection on a learning journey from the perspectives of some of the learning theories;
2. A learning project designed from particular learning theories (from the perspective of this particular theory, how we should teach, under what circumstances);
3. An examination of the organization of learning in a particular workplace (work broadly defined);
4. An organizational intervention project informed by or critical examined from a particular perspective of learning;
5. An issue of your interest and you wish to explore how it has been taken up in different learning literatures; ...



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It is recommended that this presentation should be tied closely with your final paper. The form of presentation is up to the individual (e.g., PowerPoint, Prezi, poster, recorded video and audio presentation, animation etc). The presentation should include:

1. What is your topic of interest?
2. What is the goal of your project
3. Why is this topic important? often people refers to the literature and/or professional experiences to address this.
4. How is learning central to the topic of exploration? this may not be necessary if your topic is self-evident.
5. What learning theory or theories will help inform your analysis, why and how? Please use theories as they are relevant to your project.
6. Please invite the class to raise questions and provide feedback.

### **Assignment 4: Final paper (40%)**

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There are two options for the paper. For both options, the paper should be between 18 and 20 pages, double spaced, one-inch margin on all sides, and submitted to the final paper dropbox by the specified due date.

#### Option one: Research paper

For this assignment, you are expected to explore a topic of interest that is relevant to your personal experiences or professional practices. If you aim to submit the paper eventually to a journal, you are more than welcome to adopt the writing and reference style acceptable to the journal. For a paper for generic audience, you may consider the following questions:

- What is the topic of interest or the issue of significance that you are addressing;
- What are the backgrounds of your paper;
- How is learning central to the topic of exploration?
- What learning theories help you to understand the issue that you are addressing and how;
- What implications your paper has for policies and practices when framing your issue from the specific theories of learning.

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#### Option two: Literature review

Select one of the perspectives/theories on adult learning (or determine another one not covered in the course in consultation with the instructor) and engage in a deeper review of the literature on that perspective; read at least 10 more references on that topic. Indicate in the introduction why you selected that topic and conclude with a commentary on what you've learned.

\* Should you like the instructor to give you feedback on an initial draft of the final paper, you can do so provided that you leave the instructor sufficient time to respond to your paper – the typical turnaround time for the instructor is 2 weeks.