

**THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL STUDIES
EDST 518 (22): THEORIES AND RESEARCH ON ADULT LEARNING**

Term: Winter 2 (Jan. 10- Apr 07, 2022)
Time: 4:30-7:30 pm Tues.
Room: Ponderosa Commons North -
Oak/Cedar House 1011

Instructor: Dr. Hongxia Shan
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Office Hours: By appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION

At the heart of all adult education practices is an understanding of adult learning. Overall, the field of adult learning is informed by humanism, social constructivism, developmental psychology, neurosciences, critical research, practice-based research and more recently, non-western learning theories. This course introduces you to the major traditions/schools of thoughts, theories and research on adult learning. It surveys brain-based learning, and the emotional, somatic, and spiritual dimensions of learning, before it moves into traditional adult educational theories such as experiential learning and transformative learning. It then provides a review of communities of practice, and cultural historical activity theories, particularly expansive learning, all of which position learning as an effect of social and cultural practices. It also introduces some non-western perspectives of learning influenced by Buddhism, Confucianism, African-centric epistemology and Indigenous traditions of thoughts. Finally, the class would have opportunities to examine cross/intercultural learning, and the relationships between the use of digital technology and adult learning, two areas of research that need much attention today given the context of globalization, migration, and internationalization of (adult) education.

This is a course that integrates theoretical exploration of adult learning with reflective inquiries into adult education practices, and into who we are as adult learners, in relation to the changing context of learning and work. Throughout the course, you will be encouraged to develop a critical appreciation of learning theories while attending to how they might inform your teaching, learning and other educational or work practices in local contexts.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

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

- *Describe major theoretical perspectives of adult learning, along with the scholarly traditions in which they are embedded;*
- *Identify the strengths and limitations of various theoretical perspectives and research traditions;*
- *Critically appreciate adult learning theories and research and move iteratively between theories, research and your personal and professional practices;*
- *Develop your praxis of adult learning or theoretical heuristic of adult learning to improve your educational research and practices.*

CLASS FORMAT

This course will be delivered through a seminar format. It will draw on the weekly readings as well as your personal and professional experiences working with adults to compare, clarify and synthesize ideas and knowledge. *Since we will depend on one another for our learning, please attend all classes and come prepared for class discussion and other activities.*

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS/ACTIVITIES AND MARKING RUBRICS

Assignment/Activity	Weight	Due date and notes
1: Class participation	15%	10% self-assessment – Apr. 7 5% by instructor
2: Learning theory presentation and discussion facilitation	25%	15% self-assessment – a week after the presentation 10% by instructor
3: Inquiry project presentation – individual or in groups	20%	As per the sign-up sheet
4: Final course essay	40%	Apr. 7