

**AUBURN UNIVERSITY**  
**COURSE SYLLABUS**  
**EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION**

1. **Course Number:** CTEC 7270/8270 (Cross-Listed)  
**Course Title:** Theory-Based Problems in Early Childhood Education: Understanding of Mind and Causality  
**Credit Hours:** 3 semester hours  
**Prerequisites:** None/Master's Degree  
**Co-requisites:** None  
**Instructor:** Angela Love, Ph.D.  
**Contact Information:** [angela.love@auburn.edu](mailto:angela.love@auburn.edu) or call 334.844.6798/844.4434  
**Office Hours:** Tuesdays, 10am – 4:00pm and by appointment

2. **Date Syllabus Prepared:** June 1998, Revised January 2007

3. **Texts or Major Resources: (Required)**

Eisenberg, N. (1995). *Social Development*, v. 15 in series *The Review of Personality and Social Psychology*. Sage Publications (ISBN: 9780803956858)

Research Articles: Selected from a Bibliography of Additional Readings

4. **Course Description:**

In-depth exploration of a problem related to the thought, writings, and research that form the theoretical foundations of constructivist approaches to early childhood education.

5. **Course Objectives:** Students will:

- Examine Piaget's and more contemporary contributions to understandings of children's development of understanding of the mind and causality.
- Compare and contrast Piaget's theoretical perspectives on thought with those of other theorists and researchers.
- Identify the tasks, observations, and questions used to formulate constructivist theories of thought.
- Explore relationships between thought and language suggested by theories and research by recording observations of children.
- Identify theoretical and research questions that may yet be unanswered and are appropriate problems for future research.
- Draw on theoretical perspectives and research to discuss implications for instruction and educational practices in early childhood and throughout schooling.
- Document in-depth understanding by paraphrasing one strand of development (for example, the child's construction of false belief) for others to read and understand.

6. **Course Content and Schedule:**

The course content will vary depending on the particular option selected. The following outline represents a general framework for the specific content.

Week 1	Identifying the questions about young children's thinking on the understanding of mind and causality.
Week 2	Researching and understanding the methods used to address these questions.
Week 3	Introduction Nancy Eisenberg How Infants and Young Children Understand the Causes of Events, Roberta Corrigan
Week 4	Developmental and Individual Differences in Predicting Others' Thoughts and Feelings, Rachel Karniol
Week 5	Applying the Transformation Rule Model Features and Sources of Parents' Attributions about Themselves and Their Children, Joan E Grusec and Norma Mammone
Week 6	Naturally Occurring Interpersonal Expectancies, Lee Jussim and Jacquelynne Eccles
Week 7	Self-Conceptions, Person Conceptions and Their Development Diane N Ruble and Carol S Dweck
Week 8	The Role of Normative Beliefs in Children's Social Behavior Nancy G Guerra, L Rowell Huesmann and Laura Hanish
Week 9	Influences of Affect on Cognitive Processes at Different Ages Daphne Blunt Bugental, Eta K Lin and Joshua E Susskind
Week 10	Why the Change? The Development of Emotional Self-Regulation in Infancy and Early Childhood Lisa J Bridges and Wendy S Grolnick
Week 11	The Role of Emotion Beliefs and Values in Gender Development Stephanie A Shields
Week 12	Social Development and Self-Monitoring William G Graziano and Stefanie B Waschull
Week 13	A Control Theory Approach to Social Development William J Froming et al
Week 14	Educational Implications
Week 15	Student Paper Presentations

## 7. **Course Requirements/Evaluation:**

### **SUMMARIES AND CRITICAL ANALYSES OF READINGS AND ONE RESEARCH ARTICLE (40% OF FINAL GRADE)**

For all class readings, students will prepare a written summary that includes an analysis and critique of theory-based research questions and problems.

Each student will select an article from the bibliography, prepare a summary and analysis of research questions and findings, discuss educational implications, and identify related problems and questions for further research. The summary and critical analysis of the article will be presented in class, and the paper will be submitted to the instructor for editorial comments and grading.

After class discussions of the readings and group consensus on important theoretical points and research problems, the Summaries and Critical Analyses will be evaluated by the student author and

the instructor. Both evaluators will rate each paper for thoroughness and contributions to the class identification and critique of theoretical and research problems, and the grade awarded will be an average of the two scores

**\*\*Each student taking the course above the master's level will select one idea researched by Piaget and paraphrase his explanations in a chapter that is readable at the master's level**

**PROJECT, PAPER, AND PRESENTATION ON A RESEARCH PROBLEM (60% OF THE FINAL GRADE)**

The student will select a theoretical and research problem from the readings, search the literature, and locate relevant research findings. To further explore the problem, the student will formulate questions and/or tasks to use in collecting data on the problem from observations of a child or children. The students will write a summary with interpretations of the findings and include a discussion of educational implications and questions for further research. The paper will be presented to the class.

The paper and presentation will be evaluated on the degree to which

- ❑ the relationship between theory and the research problem is made explicit;
- ❑ previous research on the problem has been explored and reported;
- ❑ the observations and data collected address the problem;
- ❑ interpretations of the data, educational implications, and further research questions are justified;
- ❑ the information in the paper is organized, planned, and presented effectively within the time available.

**\*\*PARAPHRASE OF A CHAPTER OR CHAPTERS**

The student will select from the text the construction of some kind of knowledge of interest. The chapter or chapters related to that topic are to be paraphrased in a way that documents the student's understanding of the ideas and research on that area of knowledge, that set forth those ideas in a comprehensive and clear fashion, and that are understandable at the master's level.

**Grading and Evaluation Procedures:**

ASSIGNMENT	MASTERS	EDS/PHD
Summaries and Critical Analyses of Readings and One Research Article	40%	20%
Project, Paper, and Presentation on a Research Problem	60%	40%
<b>**Paraphrase of a Chapter or Chapters</b>	N/A	40%

Final grades are based on the weight and grade of each of the above requirements. The instructor according to the criteria specified above evaluates all requirements. The grade ranges are:

90 - 99 = A  
80 - 89 = B  
70 - 79 = C  
60 - 69 = D  
00 - 60 = F

**8. Class Policy Statements:**

Participation: Students are expected to participate in all class discussions and participate in all exercises. It is the student's responsibility to contact the instructor if assignment deadlines are not met. Students are responsible for initiating arrangements for missed work.

Attendance/Absences: Attendance is required at each class meeting. If an exam is missed, a make-up exam will be given only for University-approved excuses as outlined in the Tiger Cub. Arrangement to take the make-up exam must be made in advance. Students who miss an exam because of illness need a doctor's statement for verification of sickness and should clear the absence with the instructor the day they return to class. Other unavoidable absences from campus must be documented and cleared with the instructor **in advance**.

Unannounced quizzes: There will be no unannounced quizzes.

Accommodations: Students who need accommodations are asked to arrange a meeting during office hours the first week of classes, or as soon as possible if accommodations are needed immediately. If you have a conflict with my office hours, an alternative time can be arranged. To set up this meeting, please contact me by e-mail. Bring a copy of your Accommodation Memo and an Instructor Verification Form to the meeting. If you do not have an Accommodation Memo but need accommodations, make an appointment with the Program for Students with Disabilities at 1244 Haley Center, 844-2096 (V/TT).

Honesty Code: The University Academic Honesty Code and the Tiger Cub Rules and Regulations pertaining to Cheating will apply to this class.

Professionalism: As faculty, staff, and students interact in professional settings, they are expected to demonstrate professional behaviors as defined in the College's conceptual framework. These professional commitments or dispositions are listed below:

- Engage in responsible and ethical professional practices
- Contribute to collaborative learning communities
- Demonstrate a commitment to diversity
- Model and nurture intellectual vitality

## **9. Justification for Graduate Credit:**

This course provides an in-depth examination of problems related to constructivist theory and research on young children's learning that is critical to the field of early childhood education. Readings from a broad selection of journal articles and texts provide the basis for students to critically analyze theoretical and methodological solutions to problems in early childhood programs and practices. Further, the course challenges students to transform and coordinate earlier ideas with current research and theory for its potential to inform future policy and practice in early childhood education. Taken at the 800-level, this course will be part of the program submitted to the Alabama State Department of Education that will qualify the graduates for the Advanced Level AA Certificate in the State of Alabama. Additionally, this course meets the National Association for the Education of Young Children's Standards for Master's, Specialist's and Doctoral Candidates.