**CTEC 4200**

**Auburn University**

Department: Curriculum & Teaching

Program: Early Childhood Education

Course Title: The Constructivist Teacher:

Strategies and Techniques

Course Number: CTEC 4200

Course Credit: 3 hours

Semester: Fall 2025

Instructor: Lindsay Griffies

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Phone Number: Cell: 334-321-8182

Office: EDUC 2307

Office Hours: By appointment

Schedule: T/Th 1:00-2:15

Classroom: EDUC 1121

Prerequisites: Admission to Teacher Education

\*Not to be distributed

**1. COURSE DESCRIPTION**

**Catalog Description:**

Students construct operational knowledge of established constructivist strategies and techniques, a set of guidelines on which to base wise curriculum decisions, and operational knowledge of the field of early childhood education, including state and national curriculum standards for the field.

**Text:**

**Required:**

Gartrell, Dan (2007) A Guidance Approach for the Encouraging Classroom 4th edition.   
ISBN 978-1418020101

Gronlund, Gaye & Rendon, Thomas (2017) Saving Play: Addressing Standards through Play-Based Learning in Preschool and Kindergarten St. Paul, MN. Redleaf. ISBN-978-1605545301

Helm, Judy, and Katz, Lilian (2011) Young Investigators: The Project Approach in the Early Years. ISBN-978-0807751534

**Course Objectives:**

The Early Childhood program provides the pre-service teacher the opportunity to construct knowledge and refine their practice through experiences that support empirical and theoretical decision-making. To this end, this course will provide pre-service teachers the opportunity to observe and participate in supervised practicum experiences [NAEYC 6.1] with young children of diverse ages and reflecting diverse family systems [NAEYC 6.2 & 6.3] in order to:

1. Set goals to facilitate children's development and skills in communication, inquiry, creative expression, reasoning, and interpersonal relationships. [ECE 2.b.3] [NAEYC 5.7]
2. Develop integrated learning experiences for young children in all areas: cognitive, language, physical, social, emotional, aesthetic and technological. [ECE 2.b.3] [NAEYC 2.1.4 & 2.1.8] [TS 2.viii]
3. Plan, implement, and evaluate developmentally appropriate content and methodologies for young children that integrate all curriculum areas including biological and physical sciences, fine arts, health education, language arts, mathematics, physical education, and social studies.[ECE 2.b.4] [NAEYC 2.1.5, 4.1.1, 5.5 & 5.6]
4. Plan, implement, and evaluate strategies that foster mutual respect and understanding through verbal and nonverbal communication and that insure equitable and effective access to all instructors and materials. [ECE 2.b.3][NAEYC 2.1.2, 5.5 & 5.6] [TS 2.iii]
5. Promote and manage a positive classroom environment. [ECE 2.b.4] [PS 2.c.1 (v)]
6. Evaluate, select, and create materials based on long-range, unit, and daily objectives. [ECE 2.b.4] [NAEYC 4.1.3] [ECE 2.b.7]
7. Use manipulative materials and play as instruments for enhancing development and learning. [ECE 2.b.1] ][NAEYC 2.1.2]  2
8. Select and use appropriate equipment and technology. [PS 2.c.1 (v) & 2.c.2.(iv)] [NAEYC 2.1.6] [TS 2.v]
9. Communicate with parents/guardians for the purpose of involving them in the education of young children. [ECE 2.b.6][NAEYC 3.1.1, 3.1.3, 3.4, 3.5, 4.1.5, & 5.7] [ECE 2.b.9]
10. Use shared reading experiences and the structure of natural learning as a basis for literacy instruction. [ECE 2.b.2] ][NAEYC 2.1.2]
11. Respond to and conference with children at the appropriate developmental level. [ECE 2.b.5]
12. Utilize a variety of instructional methods and materials appropriate for particular topics and situations, emphasizing student participation in hands-on activities and relate to colleagues in a professional manner. [ECE 2.b.4]
13. Implement basic health, nutrition, and safety management practices for young children, including specific procedures for infants and toddlers and procedures regarding childhood illness and communicable diseases.[NAEYC 2.4.3 & NAEYC 2.4.4 & 5.8]
14. Use reflection and self-evaluation as a basis for program planning and modification for the needs of young children, including children with special needs and children from diverse backgrounds. [NAEYC 5.1]
15. Observe, record, and assess children's behavior and development. [ECE 2.a.5]
16. Use school and/or community resources to enhance the programs for young children. [NAEYC 3.4 & 3.5]
17. Function as a member of an instructional team and relate to colleagues in a professional manner. [NAEYC 5.6]
18. Advance children’s development in the use of written language [ECE 2.b.8]
19. Advance children’s use of the stages of the writing process [ECE 2.b.8]

**Course Content:**

**General Topics:**

* Developmentally Appropriate Practice
* Integrated Curriculum
* Effective Teaching Strategies for Active, Engaged Learning
* Multiple Contexts of Early Childhood
* Child Guidance and Classroom Governance

**2. COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

**Attendance:**

This is a discussion-based, participation-heavy course. We will be engaging in interactive session every day, so it is important that you attend every day. Even with excused absences, you may not be able to make up in class sessions missed due to the unique nature of the discussion and experiences in class. Excused absences are defined in the *AU Bulletin*: You may be excused for personal illness, a serious illness or death of someone in your immediate family, a field trip, a religious holiday (one-week prior notice), or a subpoena. For a provisional excuse, please notify me on or before the day you miss by leaving a message by e-mail or telephone. For a fully excused absence (and full attendance/participation credit), you will need to provide documentation. Late assignments will not be accepted except at the discretion of the instructor.

**Grading Plan:**

**Course Assignments:**

\*Please note that this is only a plan; assignments and point totals may change during the semester.

1. Weekly Reading/Discussion Board Assignments = 100 points (avg)

\*Will be posted on Canvas

2. Philosophy Brochure = 15 points

3. Play Assignment = 25 points

4. Project Approach Presentation =50 points

5. Saving Play Presentation =50 points

6. Participation =10 points

7. Final Essay: = 100 points

Participation- This course requires high levels of active engagement in discussion, activities, observations, documentation, positive attitude toward learning, respect, etc. Attendance, professionalism, and interaction is paramount. Points will be deducted for lack of participation in the following ways: absences, tardies, lack of engagement in class activities and discussion, unprofessional behavior.

1. 315-350
2. 280-314
3. 245-279
4. 210-244

Failure- below 210

Failure to turn in key assignments may result in an “incomplete” in the course even if point requirements are met.

**3. University and College Policies**

**Participation**:

All 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 and for initiating arrangements for missed work.

**Unannounced Quizzes:**

There will be no unannounced quizzes.

**Accommodations:**

Students who need special accommodations in class, as provided for by the American Disabilities Act, should arrange a confidential meeting with the instructor during office hours the first week of classes – or as soon as possible if accommodations are needed immediately. You must bring a copy of your Accommodation Memo and an Instructor Verification Form to the meeting. If you do not have these forms but need accommodations, make an appointment with the Program for Students with Disabilities, 1244 Haley Center, 844-2096.

**Academic Honesty Policy:**

All portions of the Auburn University student **Academic Honesty Code** <https://www.auburn.edu/academic/provost/academic-honesty/>(Title XII) will apply to this class. All academic honesty violations or alleged violations will be reported to the Office of the Provost, which will then refer the case to the Academic Honesty Committee.

**Professionalism:**

Faculty, staff, and students in professional settings are expected to demonstrate professional behaviors as defined in the College’s conceptual framework. These professional commitments or dispositions are as follows: Engage in responsible and ethical professional practices; contribute to collaborative learning communities; demonstrate a commitment to diversity; model and nurture intellectual vitality.

**Writing Center:**

The Miller Writing Center provides free support on any writing you are doing while at Auburn, whether for a course or not. Trained consultants are available to work with you as you plan, draft, and revise your writing. For students in distance courses and students temporarily away from Auburn’s campus, the Miller Writing Center offers synchronous online consultations. Please check the Miller Writing Center website <https://auburn.edu/academic/provost/university-writing/miller-writing-center/> for instructions and information about scheduling online appointments. If you have questions about the Miller Writing Center, please email [writctr@auburn.edu](mailto:writctr@auburn.edu) or call 334-844-7475 M-F  7:45am-4:45pm.

**Student eHandbook:**

Please refer to <http://www.auburn.edu/student_info/student_policies/> for all AU student policies.

ECE=Alabama and National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education Standards for Early Childhood Education

PS=Alabama and National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education Standards for Professional Studies, Basic Programs.

NAEYC= National Association for the Education of Young Children

4. TENTATIVE SCHEDULE

**Fall 2025 – 4200 Schedule**

\*This schedule is subject to change. The instructor will announce changes through Canvas announcement. Check Canvas regularly for updates and information.

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| August 19 – Tuesday, First Day of Class, Syllabus,  Introductions, Image of child, teacher, env. | August 21 – Thursday, Intro to ECE, Discuss Philosophies (Assign groups for presentations) |
| August 26– Tuesday  NAEYC position statements | August 28 – Thursday  Philosophy Presentations  **Discussion 1: Due August 29 (Position Statement)** |
| September 2 – Tuesday  **Watch Found In The Forest**  **Discussion 2: Due September 3 (NAEYC Ideals)** | September 4– Thursday  **Guest Speaker** **Discussion 3: Due Sept 5 (NAEYC Ethical Princ)** |
| September 9 – Tuesday  **Read: A Guidance Approach Chapter 1** | September 11 – Thursday  **Read: A Guidance Approach Chapter 2**  **Discussion 4: Due Sept 11 (Guidance Ch 1-2)** |
| September 16 – Tuesday  **Read: A Guidance Approach Chapter 3** | September 18 – Thursday  **Read: A Guidance Approach Chapter 4**  **Discussion 5: Due Sept 18 (Guidance Ch 3-4)** |
| September 23 – Tuesday  **Guest Speaker** | September 25 – Thursday  **Read: A Guidance Approach Chapter 5 & 6**  **Discussion 6: Due Sept 25 (Guidance Ch 5-6)** |
| September 30 – Tuesday **Assign Play Homework**  **Read: A Guidance Approach Chapter 7** | October 2 – Thursday  **Read: A Guidance Approach Chapter 8**  **Discussion 7: Due October 2 (Guidance 7-8)** |
| October 7 – Tuesday **(Midterm) August to June**  **Discussion 8: Due October 9 (August to June)** | October 9– Thursday  **FALL BREAK – NO CLASS** |
| October 14 – Tuesday  **Read: A Guidance Approach Chapter 9**  **Play Homework Due** | October 16 – Thursday  **Read: A Guidance Approach Chapters 10-11**  **Discussion 9: Due Oct 16 (Guidance 9-11)** |
| October 21 – Tuesday  **Guest Speaker** | October 23 – Thursday  **Read: Young Investigators Chapters 1-2, AEEC video** |
| October 28 – Tuesday  **Read: Young Investigators Chapters 3, 4, 5** | October 30 – Thursday  **Read: Young Investigators Chapters 6, 7, 8** |
| November 4 – Tuesday  **Project Approach Presentations** | November 6 – Thursday  **Read Saving Play Chapters 1, 2, 3** |
| November 11 – Tuesday  **Read: Saving Play Chapter 4, 5, 6** | November 13 – Thursday **Guest Speaker**  **Saving Play Presentations Chapters 7, 8, 9**  **Discussion 10: Due November 14** |
| November 18 – Tuesday  **Saving Play Presentations Chapters 10, 11, 12** | November 20 – Thursday  **NO CLASS** |
| November 25 – Tuesday  **NO CLASS – HAPPY THANKSGIVING** | November 27 – Thursday  **NO CLASS – HAPPY THANKSGIVING** |
| December 2 – Tuesday **DISCUSS FINAL PAPER** **Read: Saving Play Chapters 13-14** | December 4 – Thursday **LAST CLASS**  **Philosophy Paper Due: December 10** |