Psychology 390: Psychology Peer Assistantship

Location
Loras College

Psychology Program

Instructor: Jake Kurczek, PhD
Assistant Professor of Neuroscience and Psychology

Office: Henn 193
Phone: 588-7045
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Office Hours: By appointment

Textbook: None
Additional journal articles and materials will be assigned as needed and posted to the course website

Class Website: You will be able to find PDFs of the lectures and discussions posted to the course website

Course Goals and Overview
Similar to the peer assistant position in the MOI program, the Psychology Program has a psychology peer assistant program in the 100-level psychology courses (101: Introductory Psychology and 121: Developmental Psychology). The duties of the PA position will include:
1. Attending the class on a regular basis
2. Preparing for and holding study sessions prior to exams
3. Holding a minimum of two office hours per week
4. Leading at least two class lectures/discussions
5. Meeting with the other PA’s and a psychology professor five times during the semester to discuss individual experiences and teaching in general. The times/days of these course meetings are usually determined at the beginning of the semester
6. Completing a paper on a topic determined by the professor of the course
7. Other duties may be added as decided by the professor of the course. These may include: assisting with in and out of class activities; grading exams; holding workshops on study skills or plagiarism, APA style, etc; and/or helping students with rough drafts of papers or other course projects.

Course Objectives and Outcomes
Psychology Peer Assistantship – Instructor: Jake Kurczek

1. Peer assistants will demonstrate their understanding and application of effective college-level instruction by preparing and leading a class lecture/discussion.
2. Peer assistants will demonstrate their utilization of effective peer mentoring by their class attendance and participation in the course, holding office hours, conducting study sessions, and performance of other duties as decided by the course instructor and PA.
3. Peer assistants will relate the theoretical principles of education and learning, instructional technology, and pedagogy to their PA experience by completing a term paper which applies PA course topics to their classroom experience.

Course Requirements, Policies and Assignments

SEE ASSIGNMENT DETAILS and COURSE INFORMATION for documentation
Course information and assignment details are found in the Syllabi Appendices on the Course Onboarding document called Course Information and Assignment Details (with Assignment Rubrics).

Course requirements
1. Attendance /Participation (100 total points possible): As stated earlier, PA’s are expected to attend all class sessions of the course they were assigned. While other college-sponsored and personal events may necessitate the PA missing a class, it is up to the PA and the course instructor about how to provide grading for attendance. Also, the PA should be regularly participating in the overall course—this includes both participation in in-class discussions and activities, and out-of-class activities such as office hours, study sessions, other projects. The PSY390 instructor will also grade for attendance and participation in the PA course meetings.

2. Term Paper ( 100 points): PA’s will be required to write a term paper which documents their understanding of PA course readings, discussions and other activities from the PA class, and experiences in teaching and participating in the course which they were assigned. This paper will take the main form of a statement of the PA’s developing philosophy of teaching. PA’s will be required to relate their teaching philosophies to the experiences that they have had in the courses to which they were assigned. The topic of this paper and a rubric for its evaluation will be more fully described later in the semester.

3. Class Lecture /Discussion (50 points). Each student will be expected to plan and carry out a class lecture or discussion period. The plan should be made in collaboration with both the course instructor and PA instructor. You will be required to notify the PA instructor of the date and topic of your presentation. Later in the semester, the PA professor will distribute to the PA class and to the course instructors a rubric for evaluating the PA’s lecture/discussion. PA’s will have the opportunity to individually discuss their evaluations with the PA instructor. PA’s are also encouraged to meet with the course instructor before and after the lecture/discussion class period to discuss expectations, the rubric, other important information.

Assessment
As described in the section above, it is necessary for both the PSY390 instructor and course instructor to provide an overall grade for the PA. This is especially important in evaluating the attendance/participation and class lecture/discussion course requirements. The PSY390 instructor may also ask the course instructor to review his/her assigned PA’s term papers (subject to professor availability). For those course requirements evaluated by both professors, the two grades will be averaged to compute the final grade for that course requirement.

Subject-to-change statement: Information contained in this document may be subject to change for a variety of reasons. I intend to follow the class schedule and grading policies as closely as possible, but time constraints, weather, and other events may make adjustments necessary. It is your responsibility to attend class, contact other classmates, and/or contact the PSY390 instructor for course updates, changes, and information.

Class schedule (may be subject to change)
A tentative plan for activities, assignments, and assessment activities on a day-to-day or weekly basis is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Class 1</td>
<td>Introduction to course—Topics of discussion: making connections with students; active learning; Bloom’s taxonomy; running study groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class 2</td>
<td>Pedagogy—Topics of discussion: brainstorming and discussion of upcoming class presentations; introduction to a variety of pedagogical approaches; question and answer regarding evaluations</td>
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<tr>
<td>Class 3</td>
<td>Assessment—Topics of discussion: Individual critique of class presentations and group discussion; rubrics; assessing student work; discussion of teaching philosophy</td>
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<tr>
<td>Class 4</td>
<td>Student-selected topic—Based on individual PA experiences, PA’s select a topic of reading and study for the fourth meeting. Previous topics have included: a more in-depth study of a particular pedagogical method; technology; and academic integrity.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Class 5</td>
<td>Teaching philosophy—Topics of discussion; teaching philosophy paper is due. Discussion of each PA’s teaching philosophy and oral evaluation of the PA experience and all of its components.</td>
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