



ECE 321 Play and Creativity in Early Childhood Education

COURSE SYLLABUS: Spring 2025 – Inaugural Class

Instructor Information

Instructor: Josh Thompson, Ph.D. (he, him)

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Office Hours: before class

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Preferred Form of Communication: email

Communication Response Time: within 24 hours

COURSE INFORMATION

Meets 1/13/2025 through 5/9/2025

Mon 5:00p-7:40p *Campus:* Mesquite Metroplex *Building:* MPLX *Room:* tbd

[Vita](#) [Books/Materials](#) [Campus Map](#) [Directions to Campus](#)

This course will meet in person every other week at the assigned time, Monday 5:00p-7:40p, in Mesquite Metroplex Building, **3819 Towne Crossing Blvd.**

The other weeks, the class will meet via Zoom at the assigned time.

First class, Monday, January 13, will meet in-person, in Mesquite, at 5pm-7.40pm.

Prerequisites: Must Be Admitted to the Educator Preparation Program

Required Text

Mardell, B., Ryan, J., Krechevsky, M., Baker, M., Schulz, T.S., & Liu-Constant, Y. (2023). *A Pedagogy of Play: Supporting Playful Learning in Classrooms and Schools*. Project Zero, Harvard University.

Available online: <https://pz.harvard.edu/sites/default/files/PoP%20Book%203.27.23.pdf>

Supplemental Resources

Course webpage: <http://faculty.tamuc.edu/jthompson/Play>

Bush, D.E., Nell M.L., & Drew, W.F. (2013). *From Play to Practice: Connecting Teachers' Play to Children's Learning*. NAEYC.

Carlson, F.M. (2011). *Big Body Play: Why Boisterous, Vigorous, and Very Physical Play is Essential to Children's Development and Learning*. NAEYC.

- Huber, M. (2015). *Embracing Rough-and-Tumble play: Teaching with the Body in Mind*. Redleaf Press.
- Isbell, R., Yoshizawa, S.A. (2020). *Nurturing Creativity: An Essential Mindset for Young Children's Learning*. NAEYC.
- Keeler, R. (2020). *Adventures in Risky Play: What is Your YES!*. Exchange Press.
- Koralek, D. (2005). *Spotlight on Young Children and the Creative Arts*. NAEYC.
- Koralek, D., Bohart, H., & Charner, K. (2015). *Spotlight on Young Children: Exploring Play*. NAEYC.
- Krechevsky, M., Mardell, B., Rivard, M., & Wilson, D. (2013). *Visible Learners: Promoting Reggio-Inspired Approaches in All Schools*. Jossey-Bass.
- Loewenstein, M, Sturdivant, T.D., & **Thompson, J.** (2022). Learning through play in teacher education. *Young Children*, 77(2) pp. 44-50.
<http://faculty.tamuc.edu/jthompson/documents/Loewenstein.Sturdivant.Thompson.2022.LearningPlayTeacherEd.YC.pdf>
- NAEYC. (2014). *Exploring Creativity in Preschool*. NAEYC.
- NAEYC. (2020). Developmentally appropriate practice. National Association for the Education of Young Children.
- Thompson, J.**, & Pearce, N. (2022). A Toolbox for Engaging Children in Play and Creativity for Learning across the Domains. *Dimensions of Early Childhood*, 50(1), 37-43.
- Walker, K., & **Thompson, J.** (2016). One summer day: Play at Parker-Chase. *Play, Policy, & Practice CONNECTIONS XVII*(1), 26-28.
<https://pppconnections.files.wordpress.com/2016/12/fall-2016-final-revised.pdf>

Course Description

Because children are active learners, this course explores playful learning that helps children create meaning from relationships, the prepared environment, and their overall experiences. This course focuses on relationships

Relationships are key to creating safe, caring, and equitable communities in which children play in order to create themselves. Whole child learning focuses on both cognitive and social-emotional learning with an emphasis on executive functions as a key component. Creativity is not reserved for the fine arts or the elite, but is accessible to all through imagination, problem solving, being original, and judging value.

Key Quotes

Creativity becomes more visible when adults try to be more attentive to the cognitive processes of children than to the results they achieve in various fields of doing and understanding. (Malaguzzi, 2013)

Children are active learners from birth, constantly taking in and organizing information to create meaning through their relationships, their interactions with their environment, and their overall experiences” (NAEYC, 2020, p. 11).

Student Learning Outcomes

Students will be able to

- Demonstrate knowledge of the Fine Arts domain in TEA Prekindergarten guidelines and K-5 TEKS and characteristics, progressions, variations, and interrelationships of development in the learning domains.
- Demonstrate knowledge of developmentally appropriate strategies that promote children's desired outcomes, and the value and role of play in constructing knowledge, building social skills and relationships, and developing problem-solving skills.
- Demonstrate knowledge of the influence of stress and trauma, protective factors, resilience, and supportive relationships on the cognitive and emotional development of young children.
- Demonstrate knowledge of factors related to learning and development of executive function, self-regulation, problem-solving, and conflict resolution skills in young children, including motivation, autonomy, and decision-making and self-help skills.
- Demonstrate knowledge of the relationships between communication, behavior, and learning, as well as the ability to use developmentally appropriate and culturally responsive positive behavior strategies and instructional methods.

EC-3 Examination Framework (TEA)

https://tea.texas.gov/sites/default/files/tx292_framework_final.pdf

Texas Education Agency (TEA)

[Teacher Preparation and Continuing Education Standards](#)

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Key Assignments

Observation of children at play

Participate in cooperative play

Demonstrate proficiency in designing creative learning activities in dramatic arts, movement, music, and visual arts

Performance Based Assessment PBA

From 2D to 3D: Designing a Playful Learning Experience

Minimal Technical Skills Needed

Students will need to use presentation software and other technologies implemented during this course, in addition to university technology requirements.

Instructional Methods

This course consists of a series of activities to assist you in achieving the outcomes/objectives for the course. The student will consistently work on various combinations of assignments, activities, discussions, readings, research, etc.

Student Responsibilities or Tips for Success in the Course

Professionalism at the highest level to be demonstrated for all course activities:

- showing initiative, thoroughness, and thoughtfulness in all course activities
- participating in and contributing to course activities
- showing respect to peers and instructor
- showing pride in one's work
- demonstrate Net Etiquette
- preparation and completion of all course activities
- written assignments will be typed and corrected for grammar, spelling, and punctuation
- check Degree Works for accuracy

GRADING

A holistic grading approach is sought. Rather than a scorecard with points, students must account for their mastery of the course objectives, and thus their grade in the course. This is done through the use of the Professional Behavior Survey. You will self-evaluate your professional behaviors TWICE, once at the beginning, and again at the end of the course.

Assessments

1. Professional Behaviors – regular attendance in f2f classroom, robust presence online in D2L (myLeoOnline), participation in discussions, zoom sessions, complete quizzes and assignments in an orderly and timely manner.
2. Report on analysis of 3 observations of children at play.
3. Design creative learning activities in
 - a. Dramatic arts,
 - b. Movement,
 - c. Music, and
 - d. Visual Arts
4. PBA: From 2D to 3D: Designing a Playful Learning Experience

TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS

LMS

All course sections offered by East Texas A&M University have a corresponding course shell in the myLeo Online Learning Management System (LMS). Below are technical requirements LMS Requirements:

- <https://community.brightspace.com/s/article/Brightspace-Platform-Requirements>
- LMS Browser Support:
https://documentation.brightspace.com/EN/brightspace/requirements/all/browser_support.htm

ACCESS AND NAVIGATION

You will need your campus-wide ID (CWID) and password to log into the course. If you do not know your CWID or have forgotten your password, contact the Center for IT Excellence (CITE) at 903.468.6000 or helpdesk@tamuc.edu.

Note: Personal computer and internet connection problems do not excuse the requirement to complete all course work in a timely and satisfactory manner. Each student needs to have a backup method to deal with these inevitable problems. These methods might include the availability of a backup PC at home or work, the temporary use of a computer at a friend's home, the local library, office service companies, Starbucks, a ETA&MU campus open computer lab, etc.

COMMUNICATION AND SUPPORT

If you have any questions or are having difficulties with the course material, please contact your Instructor.

Technical Support

If you are having technical difficulty with any part of Brightspace, please contact Brightspace Technical Support at 1-877-325-7778. Other support options can be found here:

- <https://community.brightspace.com/support/s/contactsupport>

Interaction with Instructor Statement

The instructor's communication response time is within 24 hours and feedback on assignments is within 4 days after due date.

COURSE AND UNIVERSITY PROCEDURES/POLICIES

Course Specific Procedures/Policies

Refer back to the course information and course requirements sections of the syllabus for course specific procedures/policies.

Syllabus Change Policy

The syllabus is a guide. Circumstances and events, such as student progress, may make it necessary for the instructor to modify the syllabus during the semester. Any changes made to the syllabus will be announced in advance.

University Specific Procedures

Student Conduct

All students enrolled at the University shall follow the tenets of common decency and acceptable behavior conducive to a positive learning environment. The Code of Student Conduct is described in detail in the [Student Guidebook](#).

Students should also consult the Rules of Netiquette for more information regarding how to interact with students in an online forum: <https://www.britannica.com/topic/netiquette>

ETA&MU Attendance

For more information about the attendance policy please visit the [Attendance](#) webpage and

- [Procedure 13.99.99.R0.01](#).
- <http://www.tamuc.edu/admissions/registrar/generalInformation/attendance.aspx>
<http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/13students/academic/13.99.99.R0.01.pdf>

Academic Integrity

Students at East Texas A&M University are expected to maintain high standards of integrity and honesty in all of their scholastic work. For more details and the definition of academic dishonesty see the following procedures:

- [Undergraduate Academic Dishonesty 13.99.99.R0.03](#)
- [Undergraduate Student Academic Dishonesty Form](#)
<http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/documents/13.99.99.R0.03UndergraduateStudentAcademicDishonestyForm.pdf>
<http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/13students/undergraduates/13.99.99.R0.03UndergraduateAcademicDishonesty.pdf>

AI use in course (draft 2, May 25, 2023)

East Texas A&M University acknowledges that there are legitimate uses of Artificial Intelligence, ChatBots, or other software that has the capacity to generate text, or suggest replacements for text beyond individual words, as determined by the instructor of the course.

Any use of such software must be documented. Any undocumented use of such software constitutes an instance of academic dishonesty (plagiarism).

Individual instructors may disallow entirely the use of such software for individual assignments or for the entire course. Students should be aware of such requirements and follow their instructors' guidelines. If no instructions are provided the student should assume that the use of such software is disallowed.

In any case, students are fully responsible for the content of any assignment they submit, regardless of whether they used an AI, in any way. This specifically includes cases in which the AI plagiarized another text or misrepresented sources.

13.99.99.R0.03 Undergraduate Academic Dishonesty
13.99.99.R0.10 Graduate Student Academic Dishonesty

Students with Disabilities-- ADA Statement

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact:

Office of Student Disability Resources and Services

East Texas A&M University
Velma K. Waters Library Rm 162
Phone (903) 886-5150 or (903) 886-5835
Fax (903) 468-8148
Email: studentdisabilityservices@tamuc.edu
Website: [Office of Student Disability Resources and Services](#)

Nondiscrimination Notice

East Texas A&M University will comply in the classroom, and in online courses, with all federal and state laws prohibiting discrimination and related retaliation on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability, age, genetic information or veteran status. Further, an environment free from discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression will be maintained.

Campus Concealed Carry Statement

Texas Senate Bill - 11 (Government Code 411.2031, et al.) authorizes the carrying of a concealed handgun in East Texas A&M University buildings only by persons who have been issued and are in possession of a Texas License to Carry a Handgun. Qualified law enforcement officers or those who are otherwise authorized to carry a concealed handgun in the State of Texas are also permitted to do so. Pursuant to Penal Code (PC) 46.035 and East Texas A&M Rule 34.06.02.R1, license holders may not carry a concealed handgun in restricted locations.

- For a list of locations, please refer to the [Carrying Concealed Handguns On Campus](#) document and/or consult your event organizer.
- Pursuant to PC 46.035, the open carrying of handguns is prohibited on all East Texas A&M campuses. Report violations to the University Police Department at 903-886-5868 or 9-1-1.

East Texas A&M Supports Students' Mental Health

The Counseling Center at East Texas A&M, located in the Halladay Building, Room 203, offers counseling services, educational programming, and connection to community resources for students. Students have 24/7 access to the Counseling Center's crisis assessment services by calling 903-886-5145. For more information regarding Counseling Center events and confidential services, please visit www.tamuc.edu/counselingcenter.

Mental Health and Well-Being

The university aims to provide students with essential knowledge and tools to understand and support mental health. As part of our commitment to your well-being, we offer access to Telus Health, a service available 24/7/365 via chat, phone, or webinar. Scan the QR code to download the app and explore the resources available to you for guidance and support whenever you need it.

**Department or Accrediting Agency Required Content**

See Texas Education Agency (TEA) Teacher Standards under course requirements



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DATE	TOPIC	READING	ASSIGNMENT
January 13 f2f in Mesquite	Pedagogy of Play	Intro Chapter 1	“Getting to Know Your Learners” pp. 130-131 “Explore Thinking Routines” pp. 142-143 Professional Behavior Survey
1/20	Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, no class		
1/27 f2f	Play and Learning	Chapter 2	“Selecting and Facilitating a Design Challenge” pp. 146-147
2/3 online			“Storytelling and Story Acting for Older Learners” pp. 150-151
2/10 f2f	Playful Learning in Schools	Chapter 3	“Supporting Learners with Conflict and Frustration” pp. 160-161
2/17 online			“Playful Learning Planner” pp. 164-165
2/24 f2f	Playful Learning in Classrooms	Chapter 4	1 st Report on Observation of Children at Play
3/3 online			Design creative learning activities in one: Dramatic arts, Movement, Music, or Visual Arts
3/10	Spring Break		

<i>3/17 online</i>			<i>Design creative learning activities in another: Dramatic arts, Movement, Music, or Visual Arts</i>
3/24 f2f	Schoolwide Culture of Playful Learning	Chapter 5	Design creative learning activities in a third: Dramatic arts, Movement, Music, or Visual Arts
<i>3/31 online</i>			2 nd Report on Observation of Children at Play
4/7 f2f	Playful Learning for All	Chapter 6	Design creative learning activities in all four: Dramatic arts, Movement, Music, and Visual Arts
<i>4/14 online</i>			tbd
4/21 f2f			tbd
4/28 f2f			3 rd Report on Observation of Children at Play
5/5 f2f			PBA: From 2D to 3D: Designing a Playful Learning Experience Professional Behavior Survey

All work due Wednesday, May 7, 2025 @ 8pm