ECE 321 01B & 071B Creative Arts for Early Childhood

COURSE SYLLABUS: Spring 2026

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

Instructor: Josh Thompson (cis-, he/him)
Office Location: Ed South 228
Office Hours: Mondays, 3-5pm
Office Phone: 903-886-5537
University Email Address: josh.thompson@etamu.edu
Preferred Form of Communication**: Email**
Communication Response Time: 24 Hours or Less Monday-Friday

COURSE INFORMATION

Course Materials: All materials are embedded within the course or are accessible via the internet or through the Waters Library resource portal.

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.

The *syllabus/schedule are subject to change.*

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. https://faculty.tamuc.edu/jthompson/documents/ThompsonPearce2022ToolboxPlayDIMENSIONS.pdf.

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

This course focuses on creativity and social-emotional development in a positive learning environment. Students will design a playful learning experience that integrates the fine arts and promotes creativity and social-emotional development.

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).

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Student Learning Outcomes (Should be measurable; observable; use action verbs)

1. **Analyze the Role of Play in Child Developmen**t: Students will evaluate the impact of play and creativity on young children's learning across content areas and learning domains.
2. **Integrate Fine Arts and Social-Emotional Learning into Instruction:** Students will plan the desired results for a play-based learning experience that integrates Fine Arts standards and social-emotional learning.
3. **Design Inquiry-Based, Playful Learning Experiences**: Students will create an inquiry-based, integrated learning experience that connects to children's real-world experiences.
4. **Develop and Implement Performance-Based Assessments**: Students will create an authentic developmentally appropriate assessment that measures children engagement, creativity, and social interactions in a play-based learning experience.
5. **Synthesize Learning into a Professional Multimedia Presentation**: Students will synthesize learning across content areas and learning domains.

COURSE RELATED TEA EXPECTATIONS

19 TAC §228.30(d)(3) Prekindergarten Guidelines Social and Emotional Development & Fine Arts
19 TAC §228.30(d)(3) PreK-3 Standards (g) Fine Arts, Theatre, Art Music

Accreditation Standards Associated with this Class

Prekindergarten Guidelines: 1I.C.1-7, I.D.1, VIII.A.1-3, VIII.B.1-2, VIII.C.1
EC: PK-3 Standards: (g) Fine Arts, including Theatre, Art Music
PPR Standards: 3.8k, 3.10k, 3.11k, 3.7s, 3.11s-14s,
EC: PK-3 Test Framework: II.004.A-E, V.013.A-D
PPR Test Framework: I.001.J-L, I.004.A-E

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

The syllabus/schedule are subject to change.

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 camera on, 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

PBA	From 2D to 3D: Designing a Playful Learning Experience	ECE 321 PBA

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	Students will demonstrate understanding of foundational principles, concepts, and methods in social and emotional development focusing on social awareness skills and relationships, as well as of the Fine Arts domains of the TEKS and Texas Prekindergarten Guidelines. Students will modify a passive learning experience into an active learning experience through inquiry learning that incorporates play and creativity, increasing motivation and maximizing learning. The context for learning will first be created to represent an authentic school setting through data and analysis of chosen grade-level in a specific Texas school and district. Information from the context for learning will provide connections between concepts and skills and children's everyday lives to create meaningful, authentic learning experiences through real-world application. Next, students will take an activity sheet from a curriculum of their chosen grade-level and identify the TEKS or prekindergarten guideline the activity sheet supports. The students will then integrate that TEKS or prekindergarten guideline with a Fine Arts standard to create a learning objective that promotes active learning experiences through play providing opportunities for children to build social awareness skills and relationships with others. Students will develop performance-based assessments followed by a learning plan that promotes developmentally appropriate, research-based, and evidence-based practices to maximize learning.
Alignment	**Prekindergarten Guidelines:** 1I.C.1-7, I.D.1, VIII.A.1-3, VIII.B.1-2, VIII.C.1 **EC: PK-3 Standards:** (g) Fine Arts, including Theatre, Art Music **PPR Standards:** 3.8k, 3.10k, 3.11k, 3.7s, 3.11s-14s, **EC: PK-3 Test Framework:** II.004.A-E, V.013.A-D **PPR Test Framework:** I.001.J-L, I.004.A-E **19 TAC §228.30** (d)(3) • PK Guidelines Social and Emotional Development & Fine Arts • PreK-3 Standards (g) Fine Arts, Theatre, Art Music

Interaction with Instructor Statement

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

Course Specific Procedures/Policies
STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES FOR COURSE

CWID and Password

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@etamu.edu.

Technology-Related Issues

The *syllabus/schedule are subject to change.*

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 ETAMU campus open computer lab, etc.

TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS AND SUPPORT

Minimal Technical Skills Needed

Students will need reliable computer and internet access for this course. Students must be able to effectively use myLeo email, myLeo Online D2L, and Microsoft Office.

Learning Management System (LMS) – D2L

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 the technical requirements:

- View the **Learning Management System Requirements Webpage.**

- Learn more on the **LMS Browser Support Webpage.**

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 on the **Brightspace Support Webpage.**

COMMUNICATION AND SUPPORT

Interaction with Instructor Statement

If you have any questions or are having difficulties with the course material, please contact your instructor. Correspondence will always be through university email (your "myLeo" mail) and announcements in myLeo online (D2L). You will not RECEIVE email through D2L, so be sure to check your ETAMU email for communication. Students are encouraged to check university email daily.

Include the Following in Emails with Instructor:

- Course name and subject in the subject line

- Salutation (Good afternoon, Dr. Jackson)

- Proper email etiquette (no "text" emails – use proper grammar and punctuation)

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- Student name and CWID after the body of the email (possibly add to student signature on email)

COURSE AND UNIVERSITY 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.

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 online in the **Student Guidebook.**

Students should also consult the **Rules of Netiquette Webpage** for more information regarding how to interact with students in an online forum.

ETAMU Attendance

For more information about the attendance policy, please view the **Attendance Webpage** and the **Class Attendance Policy**

Academic Integrity

Students at East Texas A&M University are expected to maintain high standards of integrity and honesty in all 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

Graduate Student Academic Dishonesty University Procedure 13.99.99.R0.10

Graduate Student Academic Dishonesty Form

Use of Artificial Intelligence

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).

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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

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@etamu.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 ETAMU 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.

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Pursuant to PC 46.035, the open carrying of handguns is prohibited on all East Texas A&M University campuses. Report violations to the University Police Department at 903-886-5868 or 9-1-1.

East Texas A&M Supports Students' Mental Health – Counseling Services

The Counseling Center at East Texas A&M University, 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 **https://www.etamu.edu/counseling-center/**

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.

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ECE 321 Creativity in Early Childhood Education

COURSE Schedule: Spring 2026

Brief Outline Version, more detail to be developed before first day of class

This course will meet in person every other week at the assigned time, Monday 5:00p-7:40p, in Ed South Room 131 The other weeks, the class will meet via Zoom at the assigned time. *Zoom Link*

DATE	TOPIC	READINGS – before class	ASSIGNMENT
January 12 f2f in Commerce	Ramps & Pathways Pedagogy of Play Observation	Zan & Geiken (2010) Ramps & Pathways: Chapter 1: Pedagogy of Play, pp. 16-23	Bring cardboard and art tools Professional Behavior Survey
1/19	Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, no class		
1/26 f2f	Play and Learning	Chapter 2	
2/2 online Zoom Link	*Storytelling*		
2/9 f2f	Playful Learning in Schools	Chapter 3	
2/16 online Zoom Link	*Planning*		
2/23 f2f	Playful Learning in Classrooms	Chapter 4	
3/2 f2f	*Design*		
3/9	Spring Break		
3/16 online Zoom Link	*Design*		
3/24 f2f	Schoolwide Culture of Playful Learning	Chapter 5	
3/31 online Zoom Link	*Observation*		
4/7 f2f	Playful Learning for All	Chapter 6	
4/14 online Zoom Link	Arts in the Community		
4/21 f2f	Review textbooks for EC Fine Arts		
4/28 online Zoom Link			
5/5 f2f	Performance-based Assessment: Design		
All work due Wednesday, May 6, 2026 @ 8pm			

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