



HIED 621, 01W, Teaching and Learning in Higher Education

COURSE SYLLABUS: FALL 2026

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

Instructor: Professor Michael K. Ponton
Office Hours: Please email me to schedule an e-appointment
University Email Address: Michael.Ponton@etamu.edu
Preferred Form of Communication: Email
Communication Response Time: 24–36 hours

COURSE INFORMATION

Required Textbook

Fink, L. D. (2013). *Creating significant learning experiences, revised and updated: An integrated approach to designing college courses*. Jossey-Bass.

Required Style Guide

American Psychological Association. (2020). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association* (7th ed.).

Course Description

A study of diverse teaching strategies, learning paradigms and issues encountered by the professoriate.

Anonymous comments from previous students:

“A perfect class. This course exemplifies what graduate school should be – challenging our growth as learners and scholars.” (Fall 2019 student)

“Dr. Ponton was an outstanding professor. He provided us with many ‘significant learning’ experiences. He provided very timely and detailed feedback on our written work. I learned a lot from his corrections and detailed explanations on my work. I liked how he actually made some corrections and explained them to me instead of just marking aspects of my written work incorrect. He was very available to answer questions and prompt to respond to questions. He welcomed communicating with his students and made us feel as though we were very important, and that our learning matters. I've been taking courses at Texas A&M University Commerce since 2016 I think, and he was the best professor I ever had. He was an expert in his field, and he knew how to facilitate learning for us. It was

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a privilege to be in class. Also, he is an amazing APA expert. I learned so many details from him. Thank you, Dr. Ponton, for teaching us.” (Fall 2020 student)

“LOVED THIS CLASS!!!! This is the 2nd time I have taken Dr. Ponton and I still think he is fabulous! You can tell he loves the content and loves what he is doing.” (Fall 2020 student)

“This is, by far, the most beneficial class I have ever taken at TAMUC. I highly appreciated the structure of the class. This professor really cares about student success beyond the scope of this class.” (Fall 2021 student)

“Wonderful instructor! He had high expectations, offered detailed feedback, and made everyone feel like an important member of the class.” (Fall 2022 student)

“I learned so much from the opportunity to practically apply the course design content. ... Overall, a challenging course – I feel quite a sense of accomplishment for having successfully completed the course, and I am looking forward to applying all that I have learned!” (Fall 2024 student)

Student Learning Outcomes

1. Understand basic concepts associated with effective teaching and learning in higher education.
2. Understand how to design a course.
3. Further personal learning on effective teaching and learning.
4. Develop autonomy in learning.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Minimal Technical Skills Needed

Proficiency using the D2L learning management system, Microsoft Word, and ETAMU email.

Instructional Methods

This is an entirely online course.

Student Responsibilities or Tips for Success in the Course

Students should access the course minimally every 2 days in order to check announcements and read the postings of colleagues. Students should check their ETAMU email daily to ensure timely receipt of messages from the instructor and University.

Submitted assignments should not have been submitted for any previous courses. The use of AI in completing assignments is prohibited; however, it is permissible to use a search engine (e.g., [google.com/scholar](https://scholar.google.com/)) that uses AI.

Students are expected to submit all assignments no later than their due dates/times. Any assignment submitted past the due date/time (i.e., by the end of the day, ETAMU time, of the respective due date) will receive a zero without exception unless an extension is approved by the instructor *in advance of the due date/time* (note: a request for an extension in advance of the due date/time does not mean an extension is approved; *explicit approval before the due date/time is required to avoid a zero*). Exigencies will be handled on a case-by-case basis.

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GRADING

Final grades in this course will be based on the following scale:

A = 90%–100%

B = 80%–89%

C = 70%–79%

D = 60%–69%

F = 59% or Below

Weights of the assessments in the calculation of the final letter grade.

Forum 1 Posting	5%
Forum 2 Posting	5%
Forum 3 Posting	5%
Personal Learning Syllabus	10%
Personal Learning Syllabus Course Grade	55%
Reflection Paper	20%
TOTAL	100%

Assessments

1. Students should work a *minimum* of 9 hours per week in completing course assignments.
2. The course calendar (which includes due dates for assignments) is included in this syllabus.
3. For each graded forum, respond to the instructor's prompt with a 100-word posting. The grading rubric for this posting will be 60% content and 40% writing (includes grammar and APA usage). Note that "APA usage" refers to proper in-text citations, the format for end-of-posting citations, and miscellaneous construction (e.g., grammar) areas. No other APA requirements are necessary. I will email each student individual feedback via the D2L portal to your ETAMU email account; thus, please notify me if you do not receive any feedback. Please carefully review my edits and comments in the documents I email you (use the All Markup feature in Word to review them) and learn from my feedback; that is, do not repeat any errors in your future postings.

You are strongly encouraged to respond to your colleagues' postings. Although ungraded, your responses will facilitate learning via discussion and build a sense of community.

4. Personal Learning Syllabus: Select a topic that you would like to learn more about under the general topics presented in the course description (i.e., "teaching strategies," "learning paradigms," or "issues encountered by the professoriate"); that is, the topic must focus on content related to teaching and learning in higher education and cannot focus on any content unrelated to this. Informed by ideas presented by Fink, prepare a course syllabus that you will follow over a 7-week period (i.e., Periods 5 through 11 in the course calendar) in order to accomplish your desired learning on the topic you chose. Note that this syllabus must include activities (e.g., assigned readings), at least one graded assignment (e.g., a written paper) that you must complete (i.e., if you assign a 10-page paper, you must write a 10-page paper), and a requirement to adhere to the APA manual. Your personal learning

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syllabus should align with the sections/subsections in this HIED 621 syllabus (which includes a course title and description as well as a course calendar) but exclude the Technology Requirements section and other sections that follow. **The completed syllabus must be emailed to the instructor by the due date/time.**

As the topic of the personal learning syllabus has caused a bit of confusion in the past, let me elaborate further.

i. For the personal learning syllabus, you need to create a 7-week syllabus that is distinct from the HIED 621 syllabus (i.e., do not include aspects of the HIED 621 syllabus); that is, it should represent an entirely separate *course* that you will follow during HIED 621 Periods 5 through 11. You should also create assignments that are doable and are informed by the fact that you will be the course's only student; thus, there are no course shells or peers for discussion so please make sure your syllabus accurately reflects the actual characteristics of your course.

ii. You can choose a book(s) to read, chapters in books to read, articles, YouTube videos, a combination of these, or any other material that you have identified as useful to the topic you want to learn more about, but you must study a topic that furthers your learning of teaching and learning in higher education; that is, it should be designed as an education course and not a course in some other field. You should also not require the reading of Fink's text as you should have already read it by the time you begin designing your personal learning syllabus (as per the HIED 621 syllabus). Sample previous student syllabi were on the following topics: Teaching & Technology, Incorporating New Learning Paradigms in Course Design, Educational Strategies and Theories, The Cognitive Psychology of Learning, Teaching and Learning Techniques and Strategies, The Highly Engaged Student, Incorporating Technology in the College Classroom, Teaching Strategies (Andragogy), Learning Strategies for College Students, History of eLearning, Learning Needs of Diverse Learners in Higher Education, Distance Teaching and Learning, Methodology of Urban and Rural Learning, Issues Encountered by the Professoriate, Student Development in Higher Education, Accelerated Learning as a Teaching Strategy in Higher Education, Disability Services Faculty Development.

The initial work will be choosing this topic (i.e., this requires some thinking that should be informed by Fink's text, the course description, and your personal interests in teaching and learning); after that, a great deal of work will be following the integrated approach to course design as per Fink, which includes identifying the materials from which you will learn. In your syllabus, you must require adherence to the APA guidelines; do not use another style guide.

iii. You will follow your syllabus by completing the assignments you have created (i.e., act as the student) and then evaluate the assignments (i.e., act as the instructor). As per my HIED 621 syllabus, you will email to me the graded assignment(s) along with your grade of the assignment(s) and the overall course grade (include numerical score 0–100) as per your personal learning syllabus.

iv. The purpose of this assignment is to actually do course design! We can read, study, and discuss course design; however, I can assure you that you will learn a great deal regarding course design by engaging in such an authentic activity from both the instructor's and student's perspectives!

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5. Complete Personal Learning Course: **By the due date/time, email to the instructor the graded assignment(s) along with your grade of the assignment(s) and the overall course grade (include numerical score 0–100) as per your personal learning syllabus.**
6. Reflection Paper: In approximately 10 pages, please discuss your reflections on the following: (a) *from the perspective of a learner*, the manner in which following your personal learning syllabus satisfied (or did not satisfy) your desired learning; (b) *from the perspective of an instructor*, what you learned by designing your personal learning course; (c) *from the perspective of a student*, if/how the HIED 621 assignments facilitated your understanding of teaching and learning in higher education; and (d) the HIED 621 course design. **This paper must adhere to the APA guidelines—includes a title page and References page (if applicable)—with the total number of pages not to exceed 10; follow the Student Sample Paper formatting as per Chapter 2 of the APA manual. The paper must be emailed to the instructor by the due date/time.**

The grading rubric for this paper will be 60% content and 40% writing (includes grammar and APA usage).

7. Alignment of student learning outcomes with assessments:

Assignments	Student Learning Outcomes			
	SLO1	SLO2	SLO3	SLO4
Readings	X	X		X
Forum Postings	X			X
Personal Learning Syllabus		X		X
Completion of Syllabus			X	X
Reflection Paper	X	X	X	X

COURSE CALENDAR

Period	Dates	Assignments
1	8/20 – 8/30	Begin Reading Fink Text
2	8/31 – 9/6	Complete Forum 1 Posting (due midnight* 9/6)
3	9/7 – 9/13	Complete Fink Reading
4	9/14 – 9/20	Prepare Personal Learning Syllabus (due midnight* 9/20)
5	9/21 – 9/27	Begin Following Your Personal Learning Syllabus
6	9/28 – 10/4	Continue Following Your Personal Learning Syllabus
7	10/5 – 10/11	Complete Forum 2 Posting (due midnight* 10/11)
8	10/12 – 10/18	Continue Following Your Personal Learning Syllabus
9	10/19 – 10/25	Continue Following Your Personal Learning Syllabus
10	10/26 – 11/1	Complete Forum 3 Posting (due midnight* 11/1)
11	11/2 – 11/8	Complete Your Personal Learning Syllabus; Submit Course Grades (due midnight* 11/8)
12	11/9 – 11/15	Begin Preparing Reflection Paper
13	11/16 – 11/22	Continue Paper Preparation
14	11/23 – 11/29	Complete Paper (due midnight* 11/29)

*End of the day, ETAMU time.

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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

Zoom Video Conferencing Tool

https://inside.tamuc.edu/campuslife/CampusServices/CITESupportCenter/Zoom_Account.aspx?source=universalmenu

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@etamu.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 ETAMU 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>

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.

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Technology-Related Issues

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. Ponton)

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- Proper email etiquette (no “text” emails – use proper grammar and punctuation)
 - Student name and CWID after the body of the email (possibly add to student signature on email)
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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 University Procedure 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](#)

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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).

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 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.

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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.

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 www.tamuc.edu/counsel

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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