



**University of South Dakota**  
**School of Education**  
**Division of Educational Administration**  
**AHED 701: Adult Learning Theory**  
**Syllabus Fall Term 2009**

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<b>Telephone:</b> 605- 677-5812 <b>Fax:</b> 605-677-5438	<b>Class time:</b> Online.
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**I. Course Description:**

The course analyzes the foundational learning theories upon which adult education is based. It examines the techniques of motivation, methodology, and evaluation in adult learning. The course further examines ‘the adult learner’ and the socio-political and other factors that influence paradigm shifts in adult learning including barriers to and motivation for adult learning.

**II. Rationale:**

The USD Reflective Decision Making Model for preparing educators provides the framework supporting the School of Education’s professional programs. Reflective leaders are skilled educators whose practice and decisions integrate theory, research, and experiential wisdom. Reflective decision-making engages administrators in cycles of thought and action based on theoretical, ethical, and professional knowledge.

**III. Instructor’s Teaching Philosophy:**

The goal of graduate education should be to develop critical reflective educators whose practice and decisions integrate theory, research, and experiential wisdom in their professional and personal lives. Furthermore, today’s educators need to establish a necessary link between theories and practice vis-à-vis the realities of globalization. As adult educators engaged in graduate education, we should develop strong theoretical frameworks that will inform our actions as educators and administrators with special focus on the unique characteristics of our clientele. The need to establish praxis

between reflection and action requires us to read extensively in the field and critically locate the literature in the context of our experiences. We will use collaborative learning groups to encourage and arouse intellectual curiosity through dialogue. In a collaborative learning environment we are all co-investigators of knowledge. Thus, we will operate as 'educator-learners' and 'learner-educators'. In spite of the positive interdependence among us, we will ensure individual accountability for the quality of the knowledge that is created. I therefore intend to help you learn and to help myself learn from you by providing the necessary intellectual guide as we collaboratively strive to become reflective leaders and skilled educators and administrators.

#### IV. Required Textbooks and Technology

- Merriam, S., Caffarella, R., & Baumgartner, L. (2007). *Learning in Adulthood: A comprehensive guide*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass (ISBN 13: 978-0-7879-7588-3).
- Knowles, M., Holton III, E & Swanson, R. (2005). *The Adult Learner* (Sixth Edition). Burlington, MA, Elsevier (ISBN 0-7506-7837-2).
- Electronic Reserve:* The following materials will be on electronic reserve on D2L through the ID Weeks Library:
- Avoseh, M.B.M. (2007). Andragogy in second grade: Reflections of an adult educator in elementary education. *Perspectives: The New York Journal of Adult Learning*, 5 (2), 19-27.
- Henry, J. (2000). Experiential Learning: From Theory to Practice. In Nena and Richard Benton (Eds.), *Experiential Learning for the Third Millennium Vol. 1*(pp.16-20).
- Saddington, T. (2000). The Root of Experiential Learning. In Nena and Richard Benton (Eds.), *Experiential Learning for the Third Millennium Vol. 1*(pp.21-25).

#### *Professional Journals/Web Pages:*

- *Adult Education Quarterly*
- *Adult Learning*
- *Perspectives- The New York Journal of Adult Learning*

<http://www.aaace.org/>

<http://www.mvaea.com/>

#### **Technology:**

The technology requirements for this course includes access to a computer that is internet accessible and has Microsoft Office installed. Adobe Acrobat Reader is also required on your computer for ease of downloading documents. I am informed there is a free download at [www.adobe.com](http://www.adobe.com). **Desire2Learn** will be the course management system that will be utilized during the semester. In order to access **Desire2Learn** you need to have a user id and password from the University of South Dakota. Although USD has just changed to **Desire2Learn**, there is a well trained support base put in place to assist students and faculty to get the best out of the new online learning technology. If you do not have a user id or have any technology questions at any time

during the semester please contact the student help desk at (605) 677- 5028 or e-mail [helpdesk@usd.edu](mailto:helpdesk@usd.edu). I am afraid I cannot help you with technical matters because I am still at an inchoate stage of *Desire2Learn* technology.

## V. Course Objectives/Outcomes, Standards, and Assessment

Course Objectives		
<p>The objective of this course is to provide students with the opportunity to analyze the historical, social, ideological and current direction of adult education and learning. In doing so, the curricular objectives are designed to challenge students to critically reflect on how current practice and theory of adult education and learning are impacted by historical principles, socio-political realities and the needs of a market – oriented economy. The readings, discussions, assignments, group activities, and other course requirements will assist students in developing a foundation for their education philosophy and further studies in Adult and Higher Education as reflective educators and administrators.</p>		
Objectives/Outcomes	Standards Code	Assessment Strategies
1. Understand the importance of teaching, learning and administrative practices that affect the cultural, social and philosophical differences in adult learning theory.	SoE – Advanced Professional: 1, 4 DoE - 1	Course readings and discussions, case study analysis, directed questioning and response, lectures.
2. Identify selected literature and research that pertain to the core principles of Adult learning using library and online resources and other methods.	SoE – Advanced Professional: 2, 3, 5 DoE - 8	Online discussion and analysis, activity, class discussion.
3. Discuss Adult Education programs, and the theories, social contexts and philosophies that inform such programs.	SoE – Advanced Professional: 1, 2, 5 DoE - 7	Discussions, course readings and presentations, direct questioning, reflection analysis.
4. Identify the most important issues related to the theories of Adult Education vis-à-vis the challenges of economic globalization and changing	SoE – Advanced Professional: 1, 5 DoE - 2	Collaborative activities, discussions, presentations, dialogue/observations

demographics.		
5. Critically assess how theories of adult education are affected either positively or negatively by current educational practice and philosophy.	SoE – Advanced Professional: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 9, 10 DoE - 8	Reflective activities, discussion, presentations, collaborative activities, course readings, directed questioning
6. Develop adult teaching strategies that accommodate cultural differences, individual learning styles, characteristics, and an awareness of adult learning theories.	SoE – Advanced Professional: 4, 5, 7, 8, 9, 10 DoE - 1	Modeling, presentations, collaborative activities

## VI. Learning Methods and Activities:

**Course Readings:** Each student will be required to do regular reading and analysis of the course materials as well as other related literature on Adult Education theory. Students will be encouraged to reflect on the readings and locate the readings in the context of traditional and contemporary society as well as in their own experiences. Extensive reading is an imperative for getting the best out of this course.

**Facilitating the Discussions:** At the start of most of the modules, I will present introductory and direct prompts on the themes. The prompts will help to stimulate our intellectual curiosity and ensure the focus we need to achieve the objectives of the course. The prompts will be followed by critical discussions around the themes being analyzed. During this time, the key issues of the module/theme and previous modules will be discussed and analyzed with the aim of enlightening current debate. Irrespective of these prompts, individuals and groups are expected to generate issues critical emanating from their understanding of the text. These prompts and issues will form the core of our discussion board and dialogue sessions.

**Participation:** Dialogue is an imperative in most of the theoretical leanings in contemporary adult education and learning. Our focus on collaborative learning requires that everyone actively participates in class discussions on our discussion board. These class dialogues will be at small group and whole class levels. Learners will be expected to critically analyze issues emanating from the direct prompts, readings and contributions from other learners. Our **Desire2Learn** discussion boards will therefore be the main measure of each individual's active participation. **Because of the active nature of the dialogues, late postings are absolutely 'meaningless' and unacceptable. Any late posting will forfeit all its points.**

**Writing assignments:** The skills of writing are becoming increasingly indispensable especially for graduate students who are required to acquire the skills of being able to critically reflect on the literature on the field and be able to draw informed conclusions. Constant writing helps us to build the skill to critically articulate an informed perspective on issues- especially in education. Consequently, we will have writing assignments that will assist us in honing our skills of learning to critically analyze, synthesize and evaluate the literature in adult education and learning.

## **VII. Course Requirements and Assessment:**

### **A. Writing Assignments:**

*Formatting:* All written work should conform to APA 5<sup>th</sup> edition in citing references. The ID Weeks Library has an abbreviated guide on the web. In addition, all papers should be computer-generated with 12-point font and double-spaced.

1. The paper is an opportunity for you to express your theoretical leaning in adult education. The first part of the paper should contain a brief survey of about three theories/models/processes of adult learning. In the second part of the paper, I expect you to identify one theory, model or process of adult learning that you think you most align with. Use arguments from our text, relevant literature and personal experiences to establish your position. This paper should be 3000-3500 words. I advise that you start work on your paper early as possible in order to avoid a last minute work that often lack the quality of a graduate research paper.
2. In addition to the main writing assignment, there will be short assignments that will target our understanding of issues and writing skills.

### **B. Impromptu Assignments/Final Examination:**

Mindful of the fact that adults do not like ‘exams’ and in line with some basics of adult learning will be a lot of continuous assessment through impromptu assignments/tests. The final examination will assess your knowledge and understanding of the theories of adult learning and the extent to which you have understood our reading texts in line with our course objective. The more continuous assessment we have the less the weight of the final exam.

### **D. Participation and Datelines:**

The Adult Learner values her/his time and s/he does not learn in silence. As adult educators and administrators, we must emphasize attendance and active participation in our discussion boards online. Consequently, active participation and prompt postings/responses will earn some points for our meetings on **Desire2Learn** discussion board. The postings are our metaphysical voices that help us arrive at criticality in terms of analysis of issues as they affect education. I therefore appeal to you to post regularly

and to avoid generic postings. Reflect your understanding of the theme and the texts in your postings through critical language and depth.

We are going to strictly abide by the deadlines for all assignments (especially for the weekly modules) throughout this class. It is the sole responsibility of every student to submit every assignment within its due date. Any late assignment will earn an automatic zero or a reduced grade at the discretion of the instructor.

*Criteria for grading:*

- |                        |           |
|------------------------|-----------|
| 1. Research Paper      | 25 points |
| 2. Impromptu tests     | 25 points |
| 3. Final examination   | 20 points |
| 4. Discussion/postings | 30 points |

### **Grading Scale**

A = 100 – 90

B = 89 – 80

C = 79 – 70

D = 69 – 60

### **VII. Important BOR & USD Policies:**

- 1. **Freedom in learning:** Students are responsible for learning the content of any course of study in which they are enrolled. Under Board of Regents and University policy, student academic performance shall be evaluated solely on an academic basis and students should be free to take reasoned exception to the data or views offered in any course of study. Students who believe that an academic evaluation is unrelated to academic standards but is related instead to judgment of their personal opinion or conduct should contact the dean of the college which offers the class to initiate a review of the evaluation.*
- 2. If you have a disability for which you are or may be requesting an accommodation, you are encouraged to contact both your instructor and the Director of the Office of Disability Services, (Service Center 199; 677-6389) as early as possible in the semester.*

For information contact:  
Ernetta L. Fox, Director  
Disability Services  
Room 119 Service Center  
(605)677-6389

[www.usd.edu/ds](http://www.usd.edu/ds); [dservices@usd.edu](mailto:dservices@usd.edu)

3. *No credit can be given for a dishonest assignment. At the discretion of the instructor, a student caught engaging in any form of academic dishonesty may be:*
  - a. *Given a zero for that assignment.*
  - b. *Allowed to rewrite and resubmit the assignment for credit.*
  - c. *Assigned a reduced grade for the course.*
  - d. *Dropped from the course.*
  - e. *Failed in the course.*

### VIII. Tentative Schedule.

<b>Modules</b>	<b>Class Topic</b>
Module 1	Course orientation, Introducing the adult learner and forming collaborative groups. Introduction to Adult Education <i>Text-</i> Merriam et al, chapter 1
Module 2	The learning environment, provision of opportunities, concepts in learning and participation. <i>Text-</i> Merriam et al, chapters 2 & 3 <i>Text-</i> Knowles et al, chapter 2.
Module 3	<b><i>Participation and Andragogy</i></b> Text- <i>Text-</i> Merriam et al, chapters 3 & 4
Module 4	. Andragogy and Theories of Teaching <i>Text-</i> Knowles et al, chapters 4 & 5 and Avoseh on electronic reserve.
Module 5	An andragogical process model, Andragogy in practice and adult learning within the context of Human Resource Development (HRD). <i>Text-</i> Knowles et al, chapters 6, 7 & 8. <b>First paper due</b>
Module 6	<b><i>Self-Directed Learning</i></b> Text: Merriam et al chapter 5.
Module 7	<b><i>Transformational Learning</i></b> Text: Merriam et al chapter 6
Module 8	<b><i>Experience and Learning</i></b> <i>Text-</i> Merriam et al, chapter 7, <i>Electronic Reserve</i> ; Henry & Saddington
Module 9	<b>Learning in Indigenous Societies</b> Native American, African, <i>Text-</i> Merriam et al Chapter 9
Modules 10 & 11	<b>Traditional Learning Theories</b> Behaviorists, Humanists, Cognitive & Constructivist orientations.

	<p><i>Text:</i> Merriam et al Chapter 11 &amp; electronic reserve - Avoseh</p> <p><b>Paper two due</b></p>
Module 12	<p><b><i>Adult education and its relevance to the Community</i></b></p> <p><i>Text-</i> Research and open reading</p>
Module 13	<p><b>Critical Theory</b></p> <p>Postmodern and Feminist perspectives.</p> <p><i>Text-</i> Merriam et al Chapter 10</p>
Module 14	<p><b><i>Between Theory and Practice</i></b></p> <p>Integrating theory and practice</p> <p><i>Text-</i> Merriam et al Chapter 16</p>