

Fall 2019

Sociocultural Approaches to Second Language Learning and Teaching

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Course Dates: Sundays, 9/29, 10/13, 11/24, 12/22, 1/12
On-line discussion: 4 hours

I. COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course provides an overview of sociocultural approaches to second language (L2) learning and teaching by introducing foundational and emergent theories and concepts that have shaped and guided research and teaching practice in this area. It will build on your knowledge of second language acquisition and encourage you to consider how sociocultural approaches can inform work in this area. Topics covered will include, but are not limited to, the quality of interaction desired for L2 learning and development, the role of the first language (L1) in L2 learning, learner agency and identity, and the roles of teachers and peers as socializing agents.

The course will also examine the implications that sociocultural theories have for the teaching of English as a second/foreign language (TESL/TEFL). You will be encouraged to use the concepts and insights provided by this course to reflect on and analyze activities that transpire in your own classrooms. Thus, the major goal of this seminar is to help you deepen your understanding of L2 learning and teaching by means of sociocultural theories. More specifically, the course aims to help you develop a solid understanding of sociocultural concepts and principles and make practical applications of this knowledge in your own situations, and thereby to facilitate your learning and development as EFL/ESL teachers.

II. COURSE OBJECTIVES

Upon successful completion of this course, you will:

- Understand the central concepts and principles of different sociocultural theories;
- Be able to articulate your emerging understanding as it relates to your learning from other courses as well as to your teaching practices;
- Be able to use your knowledge to better understand and evaluate what transpires in your own classrooms; and
- Be able to draw on your experiences as a language learner and teacher to understand, support, or challenge theories and research findings.

III. PREREQUISITE

Second Language Acquisition

IV. REQUIRED READINGS

1. Textbook

Walsh, S. (2011). *Exploring a classroom discourse: Language in action*. New York, NY: Routledge.

2. Reading Packet

I. COURSE REQUIREMENTS & GRADING

1. Post-class Reflections (10%)
2. Teaching Journal (20%)
3. Article Presentations and Discussion Leading (30%)
4. Peer Teaching and Transcription (10%)
5. Term Paper (30%)

Assignments for the First Meeting:

(1) Read the following texts prior to the first meeting:

Chapter 1, Walsh (2011)

(2) Write your language learning/teaching history (details available on Google Drive. I will send you an invitation email when I receive my student list. Please ask the Office or email me directly if don't receive an invitation email by the end of March).

Create a timeline of your language learning/teaching history. Your histories will be shared with your classmates and used as a basis for class discussion.

Course Assignments:

1. Teaching diary

You will keep a teaching diary throughout the course. You are expected to write one entry a week. **See British Council's handout.**

2. *Post-class Reflection*

You are required to submit a written reflection at each meeting. The purpose of this assignment is three-fold: (1) to critically analyze your feelings and reactions to the theoretical material from class discussions and/or assigned readings/videos; (2) to apply theories and concepts you learned in class; (3) to share your thoughts and experiences with classmates and the instructor. You are also expected to pose thought-provoking questions about the previous session. Your participation should not be limited to simply answering your classmates' questions; rather you are expected to engage in constructive and exploratory dialogue with your classmates by responding to and building on others' contributions. Please post your reflections to the class Forum before the following session.

3. *Article Presentations and Discussion Leading*

Each student is required to give three article presentations.

The first two presentations should be given in collaboration with your peer(s) (5% each). Form a pair or a group of three. The third presentation is a solo task (10%). In each of these presentations, you are expected to give a brief summary of what the article was about and discuss the following questions: What are the key questions the author(s) are trying to address? What is the answer to the research questions posed? What is the main message of the article/chapter that the author(s) try to send the readers? Your presentation should be followed by a 10-minute discussion of the article.

4. *Peer Teaching and Transcription*

The purpose of this assignment is to provide you with a chance to reflect on your own teaching through the lens of sociocultural theories. You will develop a detailed lesson plan (of which topic, goal, and length should be appropriate to your peers), and deliver a **30-minute content lesson** for your classmates (Day 4), who will provide you with feedback and suggestions. You will read these comments, listen to the audio-recording (or watch video-recording) of your lesson, transcribe and analyze some of it, and present your findings through a PowerPoint presentation on Day 5.

5. *Term Paper* (3000 words)

Write an essay to demonstrate your engagement with sociocultural research and your learning from this course. This paper should consist of two parts. Part I should focus on the peer teaching assignment (planning, doing, and talking about it with peers).

Part II should focus more on your experiences as a graduate student of TESOL. You should reflect upon and synthesize your learning from this course. You are expected to discuss not only how this course has contributed to your understanding of L2 learning and teaching, but also how this learning might guide your future teaching practices.

3. EXPECTATIONS AND POLICIES

- You are expected to participate actively in all class activities.
- If you fail to attend more than two thirds of classes, you will receive an F regardless of the reasons for absence.
- If you are absent or late, it is **YOUR** responsibility to find out what notes and assignments you missed.
- You are expected to complete all the readings and assignments prior to the class for which they are assigned.
- Late assignments will be accepted **ONLY** under special circumstances and with prior arrangements. You should have all the assignments including class reading completed by the beginning of class.
- Cheating and plagiarism (copying others' work as if it were yours) will **NOT** be tolerated in any case.
- Make sure to proofread your paper.
- This class aims to establish and maintain a positive learning environment based on communication and mutual respect.
- Active participation is critical to effective learning. If you have any questions regarding the course, please don't hesitate to ask the instructor either in or out of class.