COURSE SYLLABUS
STEVenson 96
THEORY AND PRACTICE OF PEER-GUIDED LEARNING
FOR TUTORS, LEARNING ASSISTANTS,
AND ACADEMIC MENTORS

Spring, 2016

Required of all UCSC tutors, learning assistants, and academic mentors hired since
Winter 2016 who have not yet taken the class.

Instructor: Holly Gritsch de Cordova, hcordova@ucsc.edu
Office Hours: Wednesday 4-5 PM and by appointment

Course Meeting Dates:
   Wednesday evenings from 5:00 – 6:45 PM STEV 152
   March 30th – June 3rd

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is designed to provide first-time UCSC tutors, Modified Supplemental
Instruction learning assistants, and academic mentors with the theoretical background and
practical learning/teaching strategies essential for planning and implementing effective
peer-guided learning. The course will focus on learning theory, practical small group and
individual tutoring techniques, communication skills, attaining cultural competence as an
educator, effective university-level, discipline-specific learning strategies, and informal
assessment and evaluation techniques. Students will be grouped according to their
academic disciplines in order to develop and discuss appropriate, discipline-specific
practical approaches reflective of the more general educational principles discussed in the
course.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

1. To introduce student tutors, MSI learning assistants and academic mentors to the
   educational theory relevant to effective peer-guided learning in one-to-one and
   small group settings.

2. To assist student tutors, MSI learning assistants and academic mentors to develop
   teaching techniques so as to implement interactive instructional strategies.

3. To enable student tutors, MSI learning assistants and academic mentors to analyze
   the particular learning demands of their academic disciplines.
4. To assist student tutors, MSI learning assistants and academic mentors to develop materials and methods so as to assist their students to learn and study effectively.

5. To provide a forum for discussing tutoring, teaching, and learning issues related to assisting UCSC students within and across academic disciplines.

6. To develop an understanding of the relationship of cultural difference, stereotype threats, and academic underpreparedness on the self-efficacy and, therefore, academic achievement of individual students.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1. Attend all class sessions and participate in small and large group discussions. (If you miss all or part of a class session, your final course grade may be affected. We recommend that you enroll in the class, selecting a pass/no pass option if you cannot attend all of every scheduled class session.) One absence may be excused by the instructor (more in emergency situations).

2. Complete the assigned reading prior to class.

3. Complete the course assignments to include:
   - Written Response Assignments that focus on readings, your experiences as a tutor or learning assistant or both. You will be given a handout explaining each assignment. Since the purpose of these short assignments is to enliven class discussion, we will not accept late work.
   - A written discussion of a Peer Observation of an MSI or tutoring session led by an experienced tutor or learning assistant in your discipline (must be submitted to earn credit for this course).
   - The Session Planning and Implementation Assignment is intended to enable you to focus on selecting, implementing, and evaluating interactive learning strategies (must be submitted to earn credit for this course).
   - The Practice with Quick Assessment Assignment is designed to allow you to develop and practice quick strategies to promote and assess student learning (must be submitted to earn credit for this course).
   - The Final Position Paper discussing an educationally-related hypothesis which you can support with evidence from your tutoring experience and assigned reading (must be submitted to earn credit for this course).

You will receive a detailed handout describing each assignment.
COURSE GRADING POLICY

Your course grade will be determined by the quality of your class participation and written assignments. As you are unable to participate in class if you are not present, you must attend all but one of the scheduled class sessions. Your response to assignments must exemplify university-level critical/analytic thinking and writing skills.

Class Participation 30%
Response Assignments 10%
Session Planning and Implementation Assignment 10%
Written Discussion of a Peer Observation 15%
Practice with Quick Assessment 10%
Final Position Paper 25%

TEXTBOOK
Course Reader – available at Baytree Bookstore

SCHEDULE OF DISCUSSION TOPICS, READINGS, AND ASSIGNMENTS

Wednesday, March 30th
Overview of the class
Introduction to the role and responsibilities of a tutor, MSI learning assistant, or academic mentor and preparing for your first session
Introduction to interactive learning strategies and their effectiveness in tutoring,
Modified Supplemental Instruction
Explanation and distribution of a response handout

Wednesday, April 6th
Understanding UCSC students’ academic needs, wants, accomplishments, and challenges-
Focus on implementing interactive learning strategies in general and within your academic discipline

READING DUE Section 1 of the Course Reader, Understanding Our Students’ Academic and Personal Experiences and Responses to Our Campus and Learning Support Services’ Programs, pp. 3-52, 70-71, 81-90; 92-114. Section 4 of the Course Reader, Practical Strategies, pp. 247-251.

ASSIGNMENT DUE – Response Assignment 1 (see handout)
Print a copy of a letter from a former employee, letters can be found on the LSS website under Employee Resources.
Bring your course reader to class

Wednesday, April 13th
Discussion and practice with interactive learning strategies and their importance in scaffolding learning
Theoretical foundations of tutoring and MSI
Overview of session planning and implementation assignment
READING DUE – Section 2 of the Course Reader, Cognitive and Affective Theoretical Underpinning of Tutoring and MSI, pp. 115-138 and 149-182. Section 4 of the course reader, p 252 - 289.

ASSIGNMENT DUE Tutor Technique worksheet filled out
Bring your course reader to class

Wednesday, April 20th
Exploration of the relationship between students’ academic self-efficacy and their academic achievement
Title IX

READING DUE – Section 2 of the Course Reader, Academic Self-Efficacy and First Year College Student Performance and Adjustment, Chemers et al. pp. 139-148.

Wednesday, April 27th
Discussion of cultural competency and the stereotype threat: a tutor/learning assistant/academic mentor’s role in creating comfortable and equitable learning environments/opportunities
Overview Observation assignment

READING DUE - Section 3 of the Course Reader, Cultural Competency and Effective Tutoring- Understanding the Stereotype Threat, pp. 183-218, 236-246.

ASSIGNMENT DUE – Session Planning and Implementation Assignment Write-up

Wednesday, May 4th
Assisting students with physical and/or learning disabilities and different learning styles
Discussion and practice of effective communication skills for tutoring, MSI, and mentoring

READING DUE Section 3 of the Course Reader, Cultural Competency and Effective Tutoring- Understanding the Stereotype Threat, pp. 219-235
Section 5 of the Course Reader, Communication and Perception, pp. 291-372

ASSIGNMENT DUE – Response Assignment 2 (see handout)

Wednesday, May 11th
Quick ways to assess students’ learning
Sharing of session planning and implementation assignment

ASSIGNMENT DUE – Write-up of a Peer Observation
Oral presentation of session planning

Wednesday, May 18th
Increasing students critical thinking skills generally and specifically related to your academic discipline
Discussion and developing ways of engaging students in metacognitive thinking

READING DUE – Section 6 of the Course Reader, UCSC Tutor Reflections:
Effective Discipline-Specific Strategies, pp. 375-516; Section 7 of the Course Reader, Facilitating Critical Thinking and Problem Solving, pp. 519-560.

**Wednesday, May 25th**
Presentation of Practice with Quick Assessment
Presentation and discussion of material from the Book *How We Learn* and the chapter “Making Things Difficult for Yourself but in a Good Way: Creating Desirable Difficulties to Enhance Learning.
Small group sharing of final paper planning guide
**READING DUE**- Section 8 of the Course Reader, Effective Ways of Studying to Learn, pp. 561-577.
**ASSIGNMENT DUE** – Final Paper Planning Guide
Reading Response 3 (see handout)
Quick Assessment Assignment Write Up

**Wednesday, June 1st**
Panel discussions of teaching and learning issues

**Wednesday, June 8th (at noon)**
**ASSIGNMENT DUE** – Final Course Paper (see handout; please attach your final paper planning guide)