Course Title: Cultural-Historical Activity Theory (CHAT)
Course Line Number: RPSE 660
Course Credit: 3 credits
Class Meeting Time and Place: Tuesdays 16:15-19:00 – Room: ED L155

Required Text:

Instructor:
Aydin Bal, Ph.D.
Office: Education Building 1000 Bascom Mall, Room 403
E-mail: abal@wisc.edu
Office Hours: by appointment

Course Description:
This course is designed for students interested in cultural-historical activity theory. An interdisciplinary and multi-methodological perspective informs the course; we will review selected scholarship including education, psychology, anthropology, sociology, and learning sciences and review media pieces.

Course Grading Scale and Requirements:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Point Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Analytical reflections (12 x 10 pts.)</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analytical summaries</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In-class participation</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Media Reviews</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Culminating activity</td>
<td>80</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>300</td>
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</table>
Evaluation Procedures:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage Required</th>
<th>Grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>100 – ≥ 93%</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt; 93 – ≥ 88%</td>
<td>A/B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt; 88 – ≥ 84%</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt; 84 – ≥ 79%</td>
<td>B/C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt; 79 – ≥ 74%</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt; 74 – ≥ 68%</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt; 68% or below</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Course/Assignment Policies:

1. Attendance: It is imperative that you attend class. Three absences and/or tardiness may result in a drop of one letter grade. If something occurs which necessitates missing a class, you are responsible for turning in assigned work, obtaining class notes, handouts, and any additional assignments that occurred during the missed class.
2. It is your responsibility to sign in each day that you are in class.
3. If you need to miss class due to participation in university-sanctioned events, you will need to speak to me prior to the missed class.
4. Due dates are not flexible. A penalty of 5 points per day will be deducted for late work. Moreover, late assignments will not be accepted for more than one week after the due date.
5. If you have any questions, concerns, or require permanent or temporary disability accommodations/modifications, please see me*
6. “All forms of student academic dishonesty, including but not limited to, cheating, fabrication, facilitating academic dishonesty and plagiarism**” are prohibited conduct as outlined in the Student Code of Conduct and will be taken very seriously. To learn more about plagiarism and the appropriate ways to paraphrase and cite sources, please refer to the following UW website: www.wisc.edu/writing/Handbook/QuotingSources.html

*Academic Accommodations:
If you wish to have academic accommodations to curriculum, instruction, or assessment due to a documented disability, please contact me (abal@wisc.edu) in the first three weeks. Accommodations will be made for students with disabilities who are registered with the McBurney Disability Resource Center (http://www.mcburney.wisc.edu/)

**Plagiarism:
To take information directly from another source without giving credit or citing the original source is plagiarism. Plagiarism is one of the worst academic sins, for the plagiarist destroys the trust among colleagues and invalidates your credibility as an honest person. It violates the ethical
codes of writing and research. Plagiarism in any form will not be tolerated since it violates university’s polices and standards. All information accessible via the Internet should be assumed to be private property and subject to copyright protection. Internet sources should be credited appropriately, as with the use of any copyrighted material

Additional Notes:
The schedule, policies, and assignments listed in this syllabus will be constructed collectively in the first class of the semester by mutual agreement among course participants.

Course Assignments

In-class Participation: This course utilizes a learner-centered design. Course activities, assignments, and course materials will be collectively determined based on students’ interests in the first two weeks of the class. As the instructor, I will facilitate the course activities and discussions. Hence, your participation is essential to the success of the course. A portion of your grade will be determined by seminar participation. You should complete the readings and actively participate in class discussions such as reading the assigned articles, sharing insights or questions about the course material, responding or providing feedback/clarification to questions posed by peers, contrasting the course readings with your own background experiences, and entertaining alternative points of view in the discussion of readings. You should refer the readings during your responses to questions or comments from others and relate practical and personal experience to the texts. I expect you to pose critical questions during seminar. You need to be present in class in order to participate in the seminar. If you must miss a class, please let me know you will not be joining us. There is no need to share the reason for the absence; however, if you miss three classes without a notification your grade may be negatively impacted. In this case, you should make an appointment to discuss attendance issues with me.

Analytical Reflections: You are expected to submit electronically to the entire group a 1-2 pages (double-spaced) discussion related to a passage or quote from two of the weekly assigned readings. You are expected to submit 12 written discussions. Submit your comments to the discussion board on Canvas before class (by 9:00 PM on Monday). Address the following issues:
1) Transcribe the passage or quote and identify the source.
2) Identify a theoretical and/or methodological issue or question for the group to discuss.
3) How does the selected passage/quote relate to your evolving understanding of CHAT?

Analytical Summaries: We will select one student every week to lead our collective construction of an analytical summary of course discussions. These summaries will be done in the last 10 minutes of class and should focus on the following three aspects:
• **Synthesis.** General agreements or conclusions as well as disagreements and tensions related to the topic under discussion. Conclusions and/or tensions can refer to (theoretical and/or methodological) insights gained through classroom discussion.

• **Moving forward.** How today’s discussion helped us refine our understanding of the target topic?

• **Refining ideas.** What are 2-3 questions or issues to pursue in future discussions?

**Culminating Activity: Personal Reflection.** This activity serves as a safe and supportive intellectual space for you to reflect on your learning during the semester. You will share with the class about the following two points: 1) Personal reflections on your learning in the class, and 2) Your future goals and how CHAT supports your professional trajectory. You are welcome to share any artifacts you develop during the course. You may use a PowerPoint presentation. But it is not required.

**Technology Requirements:**

Students must be able to access the course website, email, the internet, Adobe PDF Reader, and Microsoft Office software to participate in the course.

**Course Website:**

Directions:
1. Go to [www.wisc.edu](http://www.wisc.edu).
   • Find a quick link to Canvas in the My UW-Madison under “Course Services” tab.
2. After logging in, please read the instructions on the top of the center column and choose “Cultural-Historical Activity Theory.” This will bring you to the course’s Canvas site. This Canvas site is where we will post Online Reflections, course documents, messages, and grades.

For assistance with this, contact the DoIT Help Desk 264-HELP or [http://www.doit.wisc.edu/students/](http://www.doit.wisc.edu/students/)