

# CETL 8717 Syllabus

Course Design in Higher Education, 3 credit hours, Fall 2026

## Instructor Information

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Drop-in Hours & Location: Tues/Thurs 10:45am – 12:00pm, CULC 457

## Course Description

In a well-designed course, instructors start with the end in mind and make decisions about what and how to teach based on how best to help students successfully achieve their goals. In this course, you will learn the skills of backwards design, evidence-based teaching, formative and summative assessment, and educational technology as you develop a college course that you might teach in the future.

## Course Learning Outcomes

This course is aligned with the Center for Teaching and Learning's Tech to Teaching (T2T) Certificate program. The T2T learning outcomes are included in parentheses.

1. Explain and apply the backwards design process.
2. Identify and explain evidence-based teaching that supports course design (F3)
  - a. Describe and develop evidence-based teaching methods and learning activities (F3.1)
  - b. Describe and develop methods for formative assessment of student learning (F3.2)
3. Develop a plan for assessing teaching and learning (F4)
  - a. Write specific and measurable learning objectives (F4.1)
  - b. Describe and develop methods for measuring objectives (F4.2)
4. Integrate education technology with effective teaching (F5)
  - a. Explain effective uses of technology in teaching and learning (F5.1)
  - b. Explain universal principles of design for learning (UDL)(F5.2)

## Required Course Materials

There is no required textbook. All resources will be provided through Canvas.

## Grading Policy

You have the option of being graded on a pass/fail (S/F) basis or earn a letter grade. If counting this course toward a minor in Higher Education, you must select the letter grade option.

The [\*specifications grading\*](#) approach will be used in this course. In specifications grading, you complete your assignments based on a set of standards available in advance. You will receive feedback about your work and have the opportunity to revise your assignments until you achieve all of the standards. There is no partial credit, only the opportunity for revision until completion.

To pass this class (S), you must satisfactorily complete a course portfolio that includes the following items. Failure to complete the portfolio will result in an F for the course.

- Course Description
- Learning Objectives
- Assessment plan
- Sample exam or major assignment
- Sample lesson plan
- Syllabus
- Reflection

For students planning to earn a letter grade:

- To earn an A: All requirements for B plus special pedagogy project
- To earn a B: All requirements for C plus microteaching
- To earn a C: Complete course portfolio (as per list required for pass (S) above)
- To earn a D: Course portfolio is missing one element

## Description of Graded Components

### ***Required for all students:***

**Course portfolio (Due Week 15):** You will build your portfolio over the course of the semester (due dates in parentheses below), with the opportunity to receive peer and instructor feedback on each element along the way. The portfolio will include your final, revised documents. The required elements include:

1. **Course Description (Due Week 2):** The description not only states what the course is about but explains why it is important and how it will help students develop knowledge and skills they can apply to the world outside of class.
2. **Learning Objectives (Due Week 3):** The learning objectives state in specific, action-oriented and measurable detail what students will be able to do as a result of the course.
3. **Assessment Plan (Due Week 6):** The assessment plan lays out the big picture of all summative and formative assessments and how they align with the course learning goals.
4. **Sample Lesson Plan (Due Week 10):** Create a written outline of your teaching plan for a single class session during your course, including goals, learning activities and your plan for incorporating technology.
5. **Syllabus (Due Week 14):** The syllabus should include a complete outline for your course including goals, assessments, grading plan, and course policies.
6. **Reflection (Due Week 16):** Write a paragraph for each element on how you have revised it in response to feedback and include a 1-page reflection on the course design process.

***For those aiming to earn the letter grades “A” and “B”:***

**Microteaching (Due Week 10)** In the microteaching session you will teach a portion of the class for which you developed the sample lesson plan and receive feedback from your peers and instructor.

***For those aiming to earn the letter grade “A”:***

**Approaches to Pedagogy Project (Due Week 12)** For this project, you will develop an asynchronous module explaining an advanced pedagogical approach (e.g. team based learning, flipped classes, problem based learning, service learning, etc.) to your colleagues. Imagine that you are making the case why this pedagogical approach is worth considering for your course. In your module, you will explain what the pedagogy is, what evidence exists for its effectiveness, what a typical class session would look like under this model, and weigh the pros and cons of adopting it for your own course.

## Attendance and/or Participation

Given the small size, class meeting schedule, and interactive nature of this class, attendance is generally expected at each class meeting. Classes will not be offered virtually due to the interactive nature of the course, but I encourage you to obtain notes from a classmate and come to me with any questions if you need to miss class.

Students are encouraged to consult Georgia Tech's [official attendance policy](#). In addition to the GT rules, it states "All students are responsible for obtaining an understanding of each instructor's policy regarding absences." Follow [the instructions for notifying instructors](#) when you need to miss class.

## Academic Integrity

Georgia Tech aims to cultivate a community based on trust, academic integrity, and honor. Students are expected to act according to the highest ethical standards. Review [Georgia Tech's Honor Code](#) and the student [Code of Conduct](#).

Any student suspected of cheating or plagiarism on a quiz, exam, or assignment will be reported to the Office of Student Integrity, who will investigate the incident and identify the appropriate penalty for violations.

## Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

If you are a student with learning needs that require special accommodation, [contact the Office of Disability Services](#) (404-894-2563) as soon as possible to make an appointment to discuss your special needs and to obtain an accommodations letter. Please also e-mail me as soon as possible in order to set up a time to discuss your learning needs.

## Student-Faculty Expectations Agreement

At Georgia Tech, we believe that it is important to strive for an atmosphere of mutual respect,

acknowledgement, and responsibility between faculty members and the student body. [The Student-Faculty Expectations](#) articulate some basic expectations that you can have of me and that I have of you. In the end, simple respect for knowledge, hard work, and cordial interactions will help build the environment we seek. Therefore, I encourage you to remain committed to the ideals of Georgia Tech while in this class.

## Pre- &/or Co-Requisites

None

## Extra Credit Opportunities

Extra credit opportunities may or may not be provided at the discretion of the instructor. Any extra credit opportunities that are provided will be made available to all students in the class.

## Use of Generative AI

You may use generative AI programs (e.g. ChatGPT) to help generate ideas and brainstorm. Per Georgia Tech's Honor Code, *you may not submit any work generated by an AI program as your own*. You should be aware that the material generated by these programs may be inaccurate, incomplete, biased or otherwise problematic. If you include material generated by an AI program, it should be cited like any other reference material (with due consideration for the quality of the reference, which may be poor). See [this article](#) for how to cite AI properly. **On all assignments, include the AI Usage Disclosure Statement that will be provided via Canvas.**

## Graduate Student Academic and Professional Success Resources

A list of resources for graduate students is given on the [Office of Graduate and Postdoctoral Education](#) website. Specific information for [current graduate students](#) includes

- [Academic Resources](#) such as the Communications Center, Language Institute, Library, Catalog, Registrar, resources for conducting research, Advocacy and Conflict Resolution resources, and how to manage unexpected situations that may impact your academic performance;
- [Student Resources](#) such as Campus Services, Child Care/Family programs, Health & Wellness, Career Services, and the Student Resource Guide; and
- [Professional Development](#) such as the programming from the Career Center and other professional development resources and events”]

## Student Well-Being

At Georgia Tech, we are concerned about your overall physical, social, and mental well-being. A [comprehensive list](#) of wellness related resources has been compiled and maintained by the Office of the Vice President for Student Engagement and Well-being.