



## DEPAUL UNIVERSITY – The School for New Learning (SNL)

### IN377 – Einstein's Ways of Knowing

Fall 2008 ♦ Blackboard  
Mondays, 9/15 – 11/17/2008

**Instructor**     **Jennifer K. Holtz, Ph.D. (Jennifer)**  
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*Dr. Holtz is a member of SNL's Resident Faculty. Her areas of interest include the actual act of research and characteristics of researchers; medical and research ethics and how creativity affects both teaching and learning in the sciences. Before joining DePaul's faculty, she conducted clinical and medical education research, and taught research methods and research ethics; since joining DePaul, she has authored the SNL Online courses "Creative Brain," "Everyday Biomedical Ethics," "Chauvinism and the Quest for Science" and "Design of the Fittest," and offered the campus-based courses "Women of Science" and "Chronic Illness." Dr. Holtz has served on numerous research and curriculum committees at both the DePaul and SNL levels, and has published extensively in the clinical sciences, clinical education, and in distance learning and assessment in the sciences, including her 2008 book, "Online Science Learning: Best Practices and Technologies," with Dr. Kevin Downing.*

#### **Course Description**

While reading Walter Isaacson's 2007 biography, *Einstein: His Life and Universe*, students will:

1. explore how Albert Einstein learned and compare those methods to their own,
2. explain the external and internal factors affecting Einstein's work and, again, compare them to similar factors in their lives and
3. examine the concept of moral and immoral knowledge in both Einstein's life and their own.

Students will participate in cumulative chapter discussions (via Blackboard®) that result in a final project addressing each of the described issues. The default project is a paper, but students are encouraged to consider other options (e.g. concept map, PowerPoint® presentation) and discuss with the instructor.

#### **Competence Developed**

S3X: Can describe positive and negative factors affecting innovative and transformative knowledge creation in the sciences

#### **Learning Strategies**

Structured largely as a seminar, learning strategies are designed around reading, individual reflection on material read, interactive discussion on material and issues raised. Students are to provide constructive feedback to each other each week. This course is NOT a self-study course. This is a paced course and it is important that you keep up with the course activities and contribute to the course discussions.

#### **Disability Accommodations**

Reasonable accommodations will be provided for students with disabilities on an individualized and flexible basis. The Office of Students with Disabilities (OSD) determines appropriate accommodations through consultation with the student. For certain learning disabilities and/or attention deficit disorders, the Productive Learning Strategies Program (PLuS) determines the appropriate accommodations. See the instructor for more information or call OSD at 773-325-

7290 (phone) or 773-325-7296 (TTY); or call PLS at 773-325-1677.

You are not legally, ethically or morally required to inform me of any disability you might have. However, I am personally familiar with, and supportive of, the needs of those with disabilities, so encourage you to tell me, especially if you believe that your condition might affect your ability to successfully complete any portion of the course. I can't help if I don't know.

## **Text and Resources**

### **Text**

Isaacson, J. (2007). *Einstein: His Life and Universe*. New York; Simon and Schuster.

### **E-Reserves**

Gillon, S.M. (2000). *That's Not What We Meant to Do*. New York: W.W.Norton & Co., Pp. 17-41

Tenner, E. (1996). Ever Since Frankenstein. In: *Why Things Bite Back*. New York: Vintage Books, Pp. 3-32

Pence, G. (2003). Moral Reasoning and Ethical Theories in Medical Ethics. In *Classic Cases in Medical Ethics*. New York: McGraw-Hill, Pp. 1-28

Fishman, Loren. (1996). Feelings and Beliefs. In *The Flight From Science and Reason*. Ed. Paul R. Gross, Norman Levitt, and Martin W. Lewis. New York Academy of Sciences. Pp. 87-95

### **Other Resources**

Provided by instructor

## **Assignments**

*Before you begin the course, please read through this entire syllabus, so that you understand how the assignments build on one another.*

<b>ASSIGNMENT</b>	<b>% OF FINAL GRADE</b>
Personal Notes	25
Guide Questions	25
Blackboard Discussion	35
Final Project	15

### **Personal Notes**

All assignments begin with your Personal Notes, which are those that you make as you read the chapters and optional e-reserves. Your Personal Notes *may* include anything that strikes you as interesting, confusing or otherwise worth mentioning, but *should* include material that relate to the course competence. That is:

- positive factors affecting innovative knowledge creation in the sciences;
- negative factors affecting innovative knowledge creation in the sciences;
- positive factors affecting transformative knowledge creation in the sciences;
- negative factors affecting transformative knowledge creation in the sciences.

Your notes should also include anything that can help you answer the Guide Questions asked by the instructor.

### **Guide Questions**

Instructor-provided Guide Questions are designed to raise key issues related to the competence statement and to ensure that Blackboard Discussion centers on the competence elements. You should use your Personal Notes and e-reserve materials to answer the Guide Questions, but may also use anything else that is helpful to you.

### **Blackboard Discussion**

Discussion in this course will center on the course competence elements through the Guide Questions, but will likely range from the personal opinions of students to explanation of elements of the book that might be confusing. Keep in mind that we *are not* interested in learning the physics behind Einstein's work, so you should not feel obligated to focus unduly on those chapters that address physics (although you are certainly welcome to do so). Our interest lies in the man, how he thought and learned, and how he better positioned himself to learn.

### **Final Project**

The final project for this course is your cumulative reflection on what you've learned about the elements of the competence statement, incorporating a personal reflection on how your personal learning resembles or differs from that we explored about Einstein. Your first thought might be to believe that there are only differences, but by the end of the term, you might feel otherwise.

### **Course Map\***

*\*subject to change, per class needs*

<b>DUE DATE</b>	<b>COURSE ACTIVITY</b>	<b>ASSIGNMENT FOR WEEK...</b>	
9/15	Introductions to class & course	9/16-9/21	Read Chapters 1-3; compile personal notes; address guide questions
9/22	Discussion of Chapter 1-3 notes & questions	9/23-9/28	4-6; compile personal notes; address guide questions
9/29	Discussion of Chapter 4-6 notes & questions	9/30-10/5	7-9; compile personal notes; address guide questions
10/6	Discussion of Chapter 7-9 notes & questions	10/7-10/12	10-12; compile personal notes; address guide questions
10/13	Discussion of Chapter 10-12 notes & questions	10/14-10/19	13-16; compile personal notes; address guide questions
10/20	Discussion of Chapter 13-16 notes & questions	10/21-10/26	Read Chapters 17-19; compile personal notes; address guide questions
10/27	Discussion of Chapter 17-19 notes & questions	10/28-11/2	Read Chapters 20-22; compile personal notes; address guide questions
11/3	Discussion of Chapter 20-22 notes & questions	11/4-11/9	Read Chapters 23-Epilogue; compile personal notes; address guide questions
11/10	Discussion of Chapter 23-Epilogue notes & questions	11/11-11/16	Compile and refine final project
11/17	Posting and discussion of final projects; wrap-up		

### **Assessment**

#### **Assessment Criteria for ALL Writing Assignments**

Because you have already successfully completed College Writing/Academic Writing for Adults, Critical Thinking and Research Seminar, you are responsible for ensuring that your written submissions are appropriately edited for spelling, grammar, structure and all those other aspects that you learned. For written work with in-text citations and references, correct APA style is the only acceptable format.

The best help available to you is The Writing Center (<http://condor.depaul.edu/~writing/>) and SNL's Writing Guide (<http://snl.depaul.edu/writing/Writing%20Help.html>). You are **STRONGLY** encouraged to contact The Writing Center immediately to learn how to access their help, so that you are prepared once your written products are due.

Your work is to be complete—nothing lost to “technical difficulties.” We suggest that you store your work on your hard drive or some other media while you are composing it so work will not be lost because of “technical difficulties” in uploading documents. If documents are submitted in the Assignments area of the course website, you **MUST** be able to produce the document in question if it does not arrive.

Store a backup of your work on removable media – floppy disks, CD-Roms, removable memory devices and/or external hard-drives. You can even put it on your iPod! It is almost impossible to reconstruct your quarter’s work if your hard drive crashes, your machine becomes infested with viruses, or your laptop is stolen in the last 2-3 weeks of the course. In this course, every draft that you submit will be run through TurnItIn plagiarism detection software ([www.turnitin.com](http://www.turnitin.com)).

### **Assessment Criteria for Online Discussion Participation**

Believe it or not, serious, well-known and well-regarded researchers study nothing but discussion, and assessment in this course incorporates that research. You cannot pass this course without participating in the discussions. Simply put, there are two components to discussion assessment—content and delivery. In addition, not all discussion is the same.

In online learning, those types of discussion are easily distinguished. An assignment posting is one in which your discussion is centered on submission of your assignment. Each assignment posting is graded, so you must read the discussion assignment, draft your submission (to be certain that you address each component of the assignment), post your submission, and respond to questions/discussion. Your submissions should clearly indicate that you have read and thought about the related material, as well as any discussion already ongoing, as appropriate. College Writing standards apply, although contractions are acceptable, as they make conversation easier. For example:

#### *Unacceptable*

I liked what the author said about ethical issues, because I feel the same way.

#### *Better*

I liked the way that Pence integrated theory and real ethical issues, such as euthanasia, because it makes the theory easier to understand.

#### *Still Better*

I liked the way that Pence integrated theory and real ethical issues, such as euthanasia, because it makes the theory easier to understand. I’m not certain that I would have understood what he meant by a “delimiting” issue if he hadn’t talked about the examples.

#### *Best*

I liked the way that Pence integrated theory and real ethical issues, such as euthanasia, because it makes the theory easier to understand. I’m not certain that I would have understood what he meant by a “delimiting” issue if he hadn’t talked about the examples. However, I don’t understand the way he uses the word “delimiting;” can someone help me with that? I thought I understood it after reading Mary’s comments, which helped a lot with the whole history of euthanasia, but not quite.

However, that does not mean that every posting must be formally written or include repetition of substantial detail. In subsequent postings, whether you are responding to another student’s assignment posting or discussing your own or others’, conversational discussion is fine. For example:

#### *Assignment Posting*

I liked the way that Pence integrated theory and real ethical issues, such as euthanasia, because it makes the theory easier to understand. I’m not certain that I would have

understood what he meant by a “delimiting” issue if he hadn’t talked about the examples. However, I don’t understand the way he uses the word “delimiting;” can someone help me with that? I thought I understood it after reading Mary’s comments, which helped a lot with the whole history of euthanasia, but not quite.

### *Conversational Response*

Me, too. When I think “delimiting,” I guess I think about making something narrow, but I don’t understand how that applies to how we’re using it.

As long as you distinguish between an assignment posting, in which detail is required, and conversational discussion, you’ll be fine.

What if someone has already said what you planned to say? Well, if it’s an assignment posting, you start a new thread, then go ahead and repeat the content, although you can certainly preface your posting with a transitional comment, such as, “Mary and I are on the same page with this assignment,” if you like. If it’s a conversational discussion, again say something such as, “I agree with Mary,” then explain how you arrived at that thought. Chances are that you took different paths to the same conclusion, and those paths are just as important.

Delivery is much simpler to assess, because inappropriate delivery is obvious. In addition, inappropriate delivery is not acceptable in any type of posting.

- Be courteous—don’t criticize people and don’t belittle what they say. You can critically examine content without being personally offensive.
- NO SHOUTING, THANKS—observe email etiquette.
- Again, College Writing standards apply. Use appropriate capitalization and punctuation; avoid abbreviations and acronyms (nix on the IMHO and LOL).
- Allow time for discussion—post when assigned so that others have adequate time to read and think about your material before responding.

To summarize, assessment of discussion postings depends on 1) the type of posting and 2) appropriate delivery. For assignment postings, you must address each aspect of the assignment and observe College Writing and appropriate delivery standards. For subsequent discussion, you may write more conversationally, but still must observe delivery standards. You are required to respond to discussion threads.

If you do not address each aspect of the assignment in an assignment posting, you will lose points. If you do not participate in conversational follow-up discussion, you will lose points. If you do not follow appropriate delivery standards, you will lose points. If discourteous behavior is involved, your post will be deleted and you will receive NO CREDIT FOR THE ENTIRE ASSIGNMENT.

A = 95 to 100	A- = 91 to 94	B+ = 88 to 90
B = 85 to 87	B- = 81 to 84	C+ = 77 to 80
C = 73 to 76	C- = 69 to 72	D+ = 65 to 68
D = 61 to 64	F = 60 or below	INC

### **Incomplete Grades**

The intent of the Incomplete grade is to allow students extra time to complete their final assignments. This need arises because, in the closing weeks of the course, they have an event of significant magnitude that adversely affects their ability to complete the course, e.g. serious illness, death in the family, overseas deployment, or natural disaster.

You must request an incomplete grade in writing two weeks before the end of the quarter. Incomplete grades will be considered only after you have satisfactorily completed at least 75

percent of the coursework, and you have such an unexpected, uncontrollable event that prevents you from completing your course. Do not assume that you will qualify for an incomplete. Students who are failing the course at the point where they request an incomplete will not receive one, nor will they be granted after the end of the quarter. Incomplete grades are given at the discretion of the instructor.

If you do receive permission from the instructor to take an incomplete in the course, you will be required to complete a contract with the instructor, specifying how you will finish the missing work within the next two quarters (excluding summer). Incompletes not finished by the end of the second quarter (excluding summer) will automatically become an F grade on your transcript.

Instructors may not change incomplete grades after the end of the grace period without the permission of a college-based Exceptions Committee.

NOTE: In the case of a student who has applied for graduation and who has been approved for an Incomplete in his or her final term, the incomplete must be resolved within the four week grace period before final degree certification.

### **Academic Integrity**

DePaul University is a learning community that fosters the pursuit of knowledge and the transmission of ideas within a context that emphasizes a sense of responsibility for oneself, for others and for society at large. Violations of academic integrity, in any of their forms, are, therefore, detrimental to the values of DePaul, to the students' own development as responsible members of society, and to the pursuit of knowledge and the transmission of ideas. Violations include but are not limited to the following categories: cheating; plagiarism; fabrication; falsification or sabotage of research data; destruction or misuse of the university's academic resources; alteration or falsification of academic records; and academic misconduct. Conduct that is punishable under the Academic Integrity Policy could result in additional disciplinary actions by other university officials and possible civil or criminal prosecution. Please refer to your Student Handbook or visit <http://studentaffairs.depaul.edu/homehandbook.html> for further details.

**Plagiarism:** Plagiarism is a major form of academic dishonesty involving the presentation of the work of another as one's own. Plagiarism includes but is not limited to the following:

- The direct copying of any source, such as written and verbal material, computer files, audio disks, video programs or musical scores, whether published or unpublished, in whole or part, without proper acknowledgement that it is someone else's.
- Copying of any source in whole or part with only minor changes in wording or syntax, even with acknowledgement.
- Submitting as one's own work a report, examination paper, computer file, lab report or other assignment that has been prepared by someone else. This includes research papers purchased from any other person or agency.
- The paraphrasing of another's work or ideas without proper acknowledgement.

Plagiarism, like other forms of academic dishonesty, is always a serious matter. If a instructor finds that a student has plagiarized, the appropriate penalty is at the instructor's discretion.

In this course, *every assignment that you submit may be checked* using TurnItIn® plagiarism detection software, and your Final Project submission will be.

### **Protection of Human Subjects**

For more information see: <http://research.depaul.edu/>.

Demonstrating the acquisition of competences in this course can involve “interactions”—interviewing and or observing other people—discussing those interviews or observations with other class members and writing them up in one or more final report(s). As such, these activities qualify as “research” with “human subjects” and are subject to University and Federal guidelines. Because it takes place in the context of this course, your research is exempt from approval by the School for New Learning’s Local Review Board only under the following conditions:

1. The information you collect is **EXCLUSIVELY** for the purpose of classroom discussion and will **NOT** be used after the term is over. If there is any possibility that you will **EVER** use it in further research or for publication, you must obtain approval from the Local Review Board before you begin.
2. You assess and ensure that no “harm”—physical, mental, or social—does or could result from either your interviews and/or observations or your discussion and/or reports.
3. The privacy and confidentiality of those that you interview or observe must be protected. Unless you receive specific permission, in writing, from the person(s) you interview or observe, please change their names, and make sure that their identity cannot be readily ascertained from the information you provide.
4. If you want to use real names and relationships, they must sign an “informed consent” document. For information on creating an “informed consent document” see, for example, <http://www.research.umn.edu/consent>.

### **Time Management and Attendance**

SNL’s online courses are not self-paced and require a regular time commitment **EACH** week throughout the quarter.

You are required to log in to your course at least **FOUR** times a week so that you can participate in the ongoing course discussions.

This course is the equivalent of four credit hours, so you should plan to spend between 6 and 9 hours a week on this course. Online courses are no less time consuming than “face to face” courses. You will have to dedicate some time every day or at least every second day to your studies. A typical four credit hour “face to face” course at SNL involves three hours of classroom meeting per week, plus at least three to six hours of study and homework per week.

This course will require at least the same time commitment, but your learning activities will be spread out through the week. If you have any problems with your technology, or if you need to improve your reading or writing skills, it may take even longer.

The instructor should be notified if your life events do not allow you to participate in the course and the online discussions for more than one week. This is particularly important when there are group discussions or you are working as part of a team.

If you find yourself getting behind, please contact your course instructor immediately.

### **Your Instructor’s Role**

Your instructor’s role in this course is that of a discussion facilitator and learning advisor. It is not their responsibility to make sure you log in regularly and submit your assignments. As instructor, s/he will read all postings to the general discussion forums on a daily basis but may not choose to respond to each posting. You will receive feedback to assignments.

The instructor may choose to designate “office hours” when s/he will be online and available and will immediately respond to questions. Depending on the instructor, this response may be by e-mail, instant messenger or telephone. Otherwise, you will generally receive a response to emailed or posted queries within 48 hours.

Full time DePaul Faculty are highly committed to excellence in instruction; however beyond their teaching role for a given course (e.g. this course) they have many other obligations they must also attend to, such as conducting research and publishing, going to professional conferences, teaching other courses, working on university and other college committees, and assisting their advisees (often > 100) through steps of the degree program. Likewise, a DePaul part-time faculty member typically has a full time job that requires significant daily attention.

It follows that online students should expect to receive feedback from the instructor of this course during the regular business week, but not on the weekend. The instructor will strive to respond to student questions within a day after a message is sent during the week, but may occasionally have other obligations that result in a slower response time. Feedback on assignments will be made as soon as is possible, but assessment and processing may take several days from the time of submission, particularly with longer writing assignments. The instructor may also choose to assess work in batch, waiting until most assignments have been turned in by students. In summary, *this course uses an educational facilitator model, which differs from an on-call customer service model.*

### **Your Role as a Student**

As an online student, you will be taking a proactive approach to your learning. As the course instructor's role is that of a learning guide, your role is that of the leader in your own learning.

You will be managing your own time so that you can complete the readings, activities and assignments for the course, and you will also be expected to take a more active role in peer learning.

You will learn with and from your classmates in the online discussions and group assignments, sharing information and resources and posting your ideas and critiquing and expanding on the ideas of others in a collegial fashion. You are encouraged to bring your questions to the online discussions and respond to each other—do not always wait for the instructor to answer questions.

***If events arise in your life that will prevent your attendance in class for one week or more, it is your responsibility to make sure that your instructor is advised at the first possible opportunity. You, or a friend or family member can do that by email, postal mail or phone. Someone could also send a note to [snlonline@depaul.edu](mailto:snlonline@depaul.edu), or call either of the CDE contact numbers listed on page 1 of this guide. This will allow your instructor to assist you to make up missing work. If these events occur early in the quarter and you wait until the end of the quarter before informing your instructor, do not expect to receive an Incomplete.***