LEARNING SCIENCES

The Learning Sciences concentration involves understanding and promoting learning in a wide range of social contexts. Students learn about the most up-to-date theories of learning and applied design, including new technologies, learning environments, curriculum, social arrangements, and space. Learning Sciences is an appropriate academic choice for students who are interested in education technology, instructional design, museum education, educational research, curriculum design, and workplace learning. Courses examine the role of social and cultural contexts in learning, cognition and the processes through which individual learning takes place, and design and evaluation of learning environments using a variety of tools, techniques, and theoretical perspectives. Students choose interdisciplinary courses from anthropology, linguistics, education, computer science, psychology, and cognitive science. Students must choose one specialization: learning in schools, out-of-school learning, or design of learning environments. Students are strongly encouraged to develop a senior-year capstone project based on one or more learning sciences courses.

Program of Study


LRN_SCI 201-0 Cognition and Action (1 Unit) Perspectives on thinking and learning; how individuals reason and accomplish tasks, both on their own and in interaction with each other and with their immediate environments.

LRN_SCI 202-0 Culture, Language, & Identity (1 Unit) Social and cultural dimensions of learning, particularly how diverse linguistic and cultural tools mediate forms of identity, learning experiences, and participation in and transformation of social life.

LRN_SCI 214-0 Culture and Cognition (1 Unit) Explore the cultural ground of cognition. How do cultural environments structure and orient our conceptual knowledge, and how do these cognitive processes feedback into cultural systems? Key topics include conceptual development, knowledge organization, causal reasoning, moral psychology, and environmental psychology. Jointly, the topics are integrated through a focus on social and ecological thought. We will engage in cultural artifact analyses, field experiences, and research inquiries.

LRN_SCI 301-0 Design of Learning Environments (1 Unit) Conceiving, building, and testing products and services to help people learn. Topics include the human-centered design process, principles for designing learning environments, and agile project management and communication techniques.

LRN_SCI 302-0 Social Contexts of Education (1 Unit) Societal structures that organize, supply, and channel individual learning experiences and how they provide the formal and informal settings in which social interaction takes place, particularly in urban settings. How participation in these socializing settings molds the development of individuals’ capacities and forms their goals. Combined with TEACH_ED 302-0; may not receive credit for both courses.

LRN_SCI 304-0 Intro to Schooling in Communities (1 Unit) Action research methods—including observation/field notes, interviewing, and artifact analysis—as means to understanding how schools work and how theory and practice relate. Includes 30 hours of field experience. Combined with TEACH_ED 304-0; may not receive credit for both courses.

LRN_SCI 306-0 Learning with New Media (1 Unit) Examines ways to study and learn from social media spaces and how digital platforms shape presentation of content and information sharing practices.

LRN_SCI 307-0 Designing Interactive Media and Technology for Learning (1 Unit) Building on theory in the learning sciences and a broad set of multimodal technological tools, students develop and test a collection of learning technologies and examine ways to assess the educational impact of their inventions. Prerequisite: EECS 110-0 or permission of instructor.

LRN_SCI 308-0 Cognition in Context (1 Unit) Concepts and methods for understanding and studying cognition and learning and putting these concepts and methods to use in a design/ change project. Combined with LOC 308-0; may not receive credit for both courses.

LRN_SCI 313-0 Tangible Interaction Design and Learning (1 Unit) Explores the use of tangible interaction to create innovative learning experiences, including distributed cognition, embodied interaction, cultural forms, and design frameworks. Combined with EEC5 313-0; may not receive credit for both courses. Prerequisite: EECS 110-0.

LRN_SCI 338-0 Learning and Teaching with Technology (1 Unit) Theory and practice of designing school environments that integrate new technologies and media. Combined with TEACH_ED 338-0; may not receive credit for both courses.

LRN_SCI 351-0 Topics in Learning Sciences (1 Unit)

LRN_SCI 372-0 Designing and Constructing Models with Multi-agent Languages (1 Unit) Exploration and analysis of multi-agent models, which simulate "emergent" scientific phenomena in a wide variety of content domains. Combined with EEC5 372-0; may not receive credit for both courses.

SESP 114-0 Summer Internship (0 Unit)

SESP 115-0 Internship (0 Unit)

SESP 195-1 Community Engagement (0.5 Unit) Critical reflection on community engagement experiences in relation to broader societal issues. Conceptual frameworks for understanding the meaning and nature of community. For Certificate in Civic Engagement students only.

SESP 195-2 Community Engagement (0.5 Unit) Critical reflection on community engagement experiences in relation to broader societal issues. Conceptual frameworks for understanding the meaning and nature of community. For Certificate in Civic Engagement students only.

SESP 201-0 Human Development: Childhood and Adolescence (1 Unit) Personal, social, and cognitive development from birth through adolescence. Interplay of biological and experiential factors on linguistic and conceptual development, ego, and personality.

SESP 202-0 Introduction to Community Development (1 Unit) Historical and contemporary community-building efforts, focusing on Chicago’s neighborhoods. Community development strategies: the settlement house, community organizing, and community economic development.
SESP 203-0 Human Development: Adulthood and Aging (1 Unit)
Psychological, sociological, and biological factors influencing socialization and development from young and middle adulthood through old age. Influences of family, school, and work on the individual.

SESP 210-0 Introduction to Statistics and Research Methodology (1 Unit)
Definitions and classifications of terms used in quantitative methods; measures of typical and maximum performance, reliability, and validity checks; reporting and displaying data; interpreting results.

SESP 291-1 Peer-Led Learning: Theory and Practice (0.25 Unit)
SESP 291 is the training program for students working as first-time mentors in the Peer Leaders program. It is taken over two academic quarters, with each quarter offering .25 credit (a total of .5 credit). You will receive a “K” grade for fall quarter, which means you are continuing in the course. After winter quarter, you will receive a letter grade which will be retroactively applied to fall quarter.

SESP 291-2 Peer-Led Learning: Theory and Practice (0.25 Unit)

SESP 295-0 Theory and Practice of Community Consulting (1 Unit)
Course on the importance of community capacity building and the community-consulting process; start of preliminary work for the Certificate in Civic Engagement capstone project.

SESP 298-0 Student Organized Seminar (1 Unit)
Courses proposed by students and supervised by faculty sponsors on special topics approved by the SESP undergraduate education director. May be taken only once per quarter; pass/ no credit only. Consultation with the SESP student affairs assistant dean advised.

SESP 299-1 Civic Engagement Capstone Research (1 Unit)
Independent study courses leading to completion of the Certificate in Civic Engagement capstone project.

SESP 299-2 Certificate in Civic Engagement- Capstone Project (1 Unit)
Independent study courses leading to completion of the Certificate in Civic Engagement capstone project.

SESP 303-0 Designing for Social Change (1 Unit)
Processes, challenges, and ethics of designing programs, at home and abroad, for realizing human rights and meaningful social change.

SESP 317-0 Gender and the Life Course (1 Unit)
How gender influences major life stages. Focus on the psychosocial effects of gender on children; young, midlife, and old adults; societal institutions; and selected social policy issues.

SESP 320-0 Race and Education (1 Unit)
Conceptual underpinnings of the construct of race and how conceptions of race have influenced the course of education in the United States.

SESP 351-0 Special Topics (1 Unit)
Advanced work on special topics.

SESP 372-0 Methods of Observing Human Behavior (1 Unit)
Guided practice in systematic and participant observation. Observer bias, field notes, unobtrusive measures.

SESP 382-0 Practicum in Human Development; Learning Sciences (4 Units)
Real-world participant observation in professional activities and projects; development of analytical field studies of the practicum experience based on field notes, recorded observations, and class discussions; culminates in a final research paper. For LRN SCI students only. Prerequisites: SESP 372-0; consent of SESP practicum director 2 quarters before registration (3 quarters if a Summer Session practicum).

SESP 384-0 Practicum in Human Development - Washington, D.C. (4 Units)
See description for SESP 382-0. Offered during Summer Session only. For participants in the Washington, DC, field studies program only. Prerequisites: SESP 372-0; consent of SESP practicum director 3 quarters before registration.

SESP 386-0 Practicum: Human Development & Psychological Svcs. (4 Units)
See description and prerequisites for SESP 382-0. For HDPS students only.

SESP 387-0 Practicum: Learning& Organizational Change (4 Units)
See description and prerequisites for SESP 382-0. For LOC students only.

SESP 388-0 Practicum: Social Policy (4 Units)
See description and prerequisites for SESP 382-0. For SOC POL students only.

SESP 389-0 Practicum in Human Development - San Francisco (4 Units)
See description and prerequisites for SESP 382-0. Offered during Summer Session only. For participants in the San Francisco field studies program only.

SESP 390-0 Research Apprenticeship (1 Unit)
Opportunity to participate in faculty research projects. Prerequisites: consent of the faculty member and the SESP assistant dean for student affairs; submission of completed Request for Independent Study/Special Courses Form at registration.

SESP 391-0 Advanced Research Methods (1 Unit)
Overview of research methods that may be used to design and implement the honors thesis. Prerequisites: SESP 210-0 and SESP 372-0 recommended.

SESP 398-0 Honors Thesis (1 Unit)
Students develop, design, implement, and evaluate a research project under a faculty adviser’s guidance. Prerequisites: senior status; cumulative GPA by the end of winter quarter of the junior year; recommendation for the honors program from SESP 391-0 instructor(s); consent of program director.

SESP 399-0 Independent Study (1 Unit)
Faculty-supervised study of special topics of the student’s own choosing and not covered in regular courses. Prerequisites: consent of the supervising faculty member(s) and the SESP assistant dean for student affairs; submission of completed Request for Independent Study/Special Courses Form at registration.