

PSY 520 (Developmental Psychology)
Spring 2009
MW, 1:00-2:15 PM
S & B, Rm. 104

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Course Description

This course focuses on human development from conception through adolescence. We will begin the course by discussing broad questions/issues in the field of developmental psychology and developmental research methods, followed by current conceptualizations of genetic and environmental influences on development. We will discuss prenatal development and neural development. The course will then focus on theory and research in specific domains of development, including motor development, cognitive and language development, emotional development, and parent-child attachment. We will also discuss potential familial and extrafamilial influences on children's development (i.e., peers, child care/school, mass media). The focus of the class will be on typical rather than atypical development and will emphasize basic research rather than application.

Because the field is so broad and our time is limited, I have not been able to include all of the topics I would like to consider, nor is it possible to consider most topics in great depth. My goal is to introduce you to the major issues, research methods, and topics in the field of developmental psychology and to give you an appreciation of the diversity and challenges of research in this area.

The class format will include a mixture of lecture and discussion centered around assigned readings for each topic.

Readings

There is not a textbook for the class. Readings will consist of book chapters (particularly in the introductory section of the course) and empirical articles. These readings are listed below in the schedule of topics (readings on social development will be available shortly). Copies of readings will be handed out in class or will be available on the course webpage.

Course Requirements and Grading

Article Presentation (20%): Each student will present an empirical article to the class that complements the readings for a particular topic. Presentations will begin once we start to cover specific areas of development (starting with Prenatal Development). Students will be allowed to select a preferred topic, but in the case of duplicate choices a coin toss or some other random method will be used to make topic assignments. More specific guidelines will be provided shortly, but the presentation will be approximately 20 minutes and will include a summary of the article as well as a consideration of its strengths and weaknesses and its relation to the other readings on that topic. Use of Powerpoint is strongly encouraged; in any case, students must provide the class with some type of handout summarizing their presentation.

Papers (70%): There will be two short (5 page) papers assigned during the course of the semester. For each paper, I will provide a choice of two to three integrative questions based on lecture material, readings, and article presentations, and you will select one question. Outside sources are not required (but are certainly not discouraged!).

For the first paper, you will turn in an “initial” draft. I will provide feedback (and a grade) on that draft and based on the feedback you will turn in a “final” draft (worth slightly more than the first draft). For the second paper, you will turn in a final version only; however, I will be happy to provide feedback on rough drafts.

For the first paper, the “initial” draft is worth 20% and the “final” draft is worth 25% of your final grade. The second paper is worth 25% of your final grade.

Random Reading Checks (10%): Because the success of this class depends on active participation by class members (and thus completing the assigned reading), I will periodically begin class by asking you to write down something you found interesting from one or more of the assigned readings for the topic under consideration. You will receive credit for these “checks” as long as your reflections indicate that you have read the assigned material. In each class, the readings you are responsible for completing by the next class will be announced. In general, you should plan to complete the assigned reading for a topic before we begin to cover that topic in class.

Please note that the schedule of topics below is tentative. We may spend more or less time than indicated on particular topics. It is also possible that changes may occur with respect to the timing of assignments; any changes will be announced at least a week in advance.

Dates	Topic
Jan. 7	Syllabus
Jan. 12-14	<p>Developmental Psychology: Definitions and Issues/Questions</p> <p><u>Reading:</u></p> <p>McCall, R. B. (1981). Nature-nurture and the two realms of development: A proposed integration with respect to mental development. <i>Child Development</i>, 52, 1-12.</p>
Jan. 21-26	<p>Research Methods in Developmental Psychology</p> <p><u>Readings:</u></p> <p>Hartmann, D. P., & Pelzel, K. E. (2005). Design, measurement, and analysis in developmental research. In M. H. Bornstein & M. E. Lamb (Eds.), <i>Developmental science: An advanced textbook</i> (5th ed., pp. 103-186). Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.</p> <p>Committee on Integrating the Science of Early Childhood Development (2000). Making causal connections. In J. P. Shonkoff & D. A. Phillips (Eds.), <i>From neurons to neighborhoods: The science of early childhood development</i> (pp. 70-88). Washington, DC: National Academy Press.</p>
Jan. 28-Feb. 2	<p>Genetic and Environmental Influences on Development</p> <p><u>Reading:</u></p> <p>Committee on Integrating the Science of Early Childhood Development (2000). Rethinking nature and nurture. In J. P. Shonkoff & D. A. Phillips (Eds.), <i>From neurons to neighborhoods: The science of early childhood development</i> (pp. 39-56). Washington, DC: National Academy Press.</p>

Feb. 4-9	<p>Prenatal Development</p> <p><u>Readings:</u></p> <p>DeCasper, A. J., & Fifer, W. P. (1980). Of human bonding: Newborns prefer their mothers' voices. <i>Science</i>, 208, 1174-1176.</p> <p>Brown, J. V., Bakeman, R., Coles, C. D., Platzman, K. A., & Lynch, M. E. (2004). Prenatal cocaine exposure: A comparison of 2-year-old children in parental and nonparental care. <i>Child Development</i>, 75, 1282-1295.</p>
Feb. 11-16	<p>Neural Development and Early Experience</p> <p><u>Readings:</u></p> <p>Committee on Integrating the Science of Early Childhood Development (2000). The developing brain. In J. P. Shonkoff & D. A. Phillips (Eds.), <i>From neurons to neighborhoods: The science of early childhood development</i> (pp. 182-218). Washington, DC: National Academy Press.</p> <p>Rutter, M. L., Kreppner, J. M., & O'Connor, T. G. (2001). Specificity and heterogeneity in children's responses to profound institutional privation. <i>British Journal of Psychiatry</i>, 179, 97-103.</p>
Feb. 18-23	<p>Motor Development</p> <p><u>Readings:</u></p> <p>Adolph, K. E. (2008). Learning to move. <i>Current Directions in Psychological Science</i>, 17, 213-218.</p> <p>Adolph, K. E. (2000). Specificity of learning: Why infants fall over a veritable cliff. <i>Psychological Science</i>, 2, 290-295.</p>

Feb. 25-March 2	<p>Cognitive Development</p> <p><u>Readings:</u></p> <p>Baillargeon, R. (1987). Object permanence in 3.5 and 4.5-month-old infants. <i>Developmental Psychology</i>, 23, 655-664.</p> <p>Siegler, R. S. (1994). Cognitive variability: A key to understanding cognitive development. <i>Current Directions in Psychological Science</i>, 3, 1-5.</p> <p>QUESTIONS FOR PAPER 1 DISTRIBUTED FEB. 25th</p>
March 4-March 16	<p>Language Development</p> <p><u>Readings:</u></p> <p>Werker, J. F., & Lalonde, C. E. (1988). The development of speech perception: Initial capabilities and the emergence of phonemic categories. <i>Developmental Psychology</i>, 24, 672-683.</p> <p>Tomasello, M., & Akhtar, N. (1995). Two-year-olds use pragmatic cues to differentiate reference to objects and actions. <i>Cognitive Development</i>, 10, 201-224.</p> <p>INITIAL DRAFT OF PAPER 1 DUE MARCH 6th; RETURNED MARCH 16th</p>
March 18-23	<p>Emotional Development</p> <p>Readings TBA</p> <p>FINAL DRAFT OF PAPER 1 DUE MARCH 23rd</p>
March 25-30	<p>Attachment</p> <p>Readings TBA</p>
April 6-8	<p>Socialization within the Family</p> <p>Readings TBA</p>
April 13-15	<p>Extrafamilial Influences: Peer Relationships</p> <p>Readings TBA</p>
April 20-27	<p>Extrafamilial Influences: Child Care/School; Mass Media</p> <p>Readings TBA</p> <p>SECOND PAPER DUE MAY 4th</p>