

Psych 313: Child Psychology Spring 2012

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Class sessions: Tuesday and Thursdays 10:30-11:45
Office hours: Thursdays 1:30-2:30, or by appt
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Course Objectives

The goal of this course is to provide an introduction to the study of developmental psychology from conception through to the onset of adolescence. The emphasis is on basic concepts and theories of child growth and development as these apply to the psychological processes of perception, cognition, social interactions, affective, and moral development. In addition to learning basic developmental concepts, students are expected to acquire an understanding of how factors within the child, family, and broader society shape the process of development, and how this knowledge can be applied to benefit children and families.

Class Structure

During the first class meeting, students will be divided into discussion groups that will remain consistent throughout the semester. The first 20 minutes of class will be devoted to small group discussions about the readings for the day. The remainder of the class will be larger class discussion and lecture.

Graded Activities

Exams: There will be four exams in total, of which only three will contribute to your final grade. Thus, you may use the highest three exam scores toward your overall grade. There will be no make-up exams. If you miss one exam, your grade will be based in the other 3 exams. If you miss 2 exams, you will receive a 0 as one of your three scores. Dates of exams: 2/28, 3/29, 4/12, and 5/3.

In Class Debate: For this activity you will be assigned to either the pro or co side on a controversial issue related to child development. You and your teammates will be asked to orally summarize the major arguments supporting your position and to defend it. Additionally, after the debate you will provide a 2-3 page written summary of the major points raised during the debate and your personal position on the matter. You will only complete the written assignment for the debate you competed in. Debate: 3/6, paper due 3/8.

Popular press assignment: For this assignment, you will be required to find a news article (popular press) based on research conducted with children. You will then find the original journal article (that the popular press article is based on- not information provided by a foundation or group, but an actual published article) read the article. I would like you to turn in a 4-5 page paper describing the research and discussing whether or not the popular press article accurately reflects the methods, findings, and conclusions of the journal article. For example, a recent article in the New York Times: The American Academy of Pediatrics is warning that a harsh early environment can lay the groundwork for lifelong achievement gaps, health problems and poverty. <http://nyti.ms/yG7PIb> . We will talk about how to go about this project in class. Due 4/24.

Assessment Strategy

Exams: 3/4 scores 15 points each for a total of 45 points

Popular press article: 15 points

Debate: 10 points for debate and 10 for paper

Participation: 20 points

Total of 100 points

Grade Breakdown:

A+ 100 – 97	B+ 89 – 87	C+ 79 – 77	D 69 - 60
A 96 – 93	B 86 – 83	C 76 – 73	F 59 and below
A- 92 – 90	B- 82 – 80	C- 72 - 70	

Required Texts: Sigler, R.S., DeLoache, J.S., and Eisenberg, N. How Children Develop, 3rd edition. Other readings will be provided electronically.

READINGS AND TOPICS BY CLASS SESSION

January	24	Intro	
	26	Themes	text: pages 1-24
	31	Theories	text: chapter 9
February	2	Research methods	text: pages 24-38
	7	Prenatal development	text: pages 41-66 & Child Trends
	9	Birth outcomes	text: pages 67-80 & Field
	14	Infancy	text: chapter 5
	16	Nature and nurture	text: pages 85-102
	21	Brain development	text: pages 102-115 & Tottenham
	23	Physical development	text: pages 115-123
	28	Exam 1	
March	1	Debate prep	
	6	Debates in class	
	8	Attachment	text: chapter 11
		Debate paper due	
	20	Family	text: chapter 12 & NICHD
	22	Language & communication	text: chapter 6 & Hart and Risley
	27	Theories of cog development	text: chapter 4
	29	Exam 2	
April	3	Conceptual development	text: chapter 7
	5	IQ and achievement	text: chapter 8 & Cohen
	10	Early intervention	Heckman
	12	Exam 3	
	17	Emotional development	text: chapter 10 & Casey
	19	Peers	text: chapter 13 & Graham
	24	Moral	text: chapter 14
		popular press article review due	
	26	Gender development	text: chapter 15
May	1	Revisiting themes	text: chapter 16
	3	Exam 4	

CLASS POLICIES

- 1) **Technology:** Cell phones must be turned off during class. Computers may only be used off-line to take notes.
- 2) **Attendance:** Your attendance is expected. Exams will be based on material covered in class as well as the text and readings.
- 3) **Academic Integrity:** Academic dishonesty consists of cheating, fabricating, facilitating academic dishonesty, and plagiarism. Instances of this include submitting someone else's work as your own, submitting your own work from another class, and failing to cite information properly. Academic dishonesty in any form will **NOT** be tolerated and any sign of dishonesty will be reported to the appropriate University officials. Students should refer to the University (<http://www.gmu.edu/departments/unilife/honorcode.html>) for more information.
- 4) **Special Needs:** If you are a student with a disability and you need academic accommodations, please see me and contact the Disability Resource Center (DRC; 222 Student Union I) at 703-993-2474. All academic accommodations must be arranged through that office.
- 5) **Other help:** Life is stressful and we all need a little support sometimes. Students are encouraged to contact Counseling Services (364 Student Union I) at 993-2385 for assistance with any kind of psychological/life problem or crisis situation. I can help with referrals for students with particular counseling needs so please feel free to talk with me.
- 6) **Religious Observances:** Students will not be penalized in any way for participation in religious observances. It is the student's responsibility to contact me prior to the absence to arrange for make-up work or examination.
- 7) **Calendar Issues:**
 - a. Last day to Add course—January 31
 - b. Last day to Drop course—February 24