

PSYCHOLOGY 3620: Developmental Psychology

Section 001, Fall 2026

Tuesday, Thursday; 12:45-2:05p; Matt 311

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Course Goals and Overview: This course focuses on human development from a psychological perspective, with an emphasis on the early part of the life course (ages birth to 18 years). As such, we will focus on normative development in cognitive, emotional, and social domains across infancy, childhood, and adolescence. The overarching objectives of the course are to: 1) understand the conceptual and methodological issues relevant to studying early development, 2) cultivate a sophisticated understanding of biopsychosocial development during this portion of the life-span, and 3) consider a variety of “hot topics” pertinent to each developmental period.

The basic format of this course will consist of lectures, selected multimedia components, a semester long group project, and in class discussion. Daily attendance is not technically required but it is **very, very strongly encouraged**. As we will not be using a textbook, lecture material is your primary source for Weekly Quizzes described below. Further, throughout the course, in-class activities (i.e. **requiring attendance**) will include Response forms and the opportunity to earn extra-extra credit points, presenting another benefit of regular attendance (see Movie Responses and in-class Extra credit below).

Course Policies: This course is designed to foster and maintain a positive learning environment. Your attention is expected during lectures, thus outside material and other distracters should be put up, and laptops/cellphones should be used for note-taking only (otherwise, please silence/put away). **Remember: your unrelated activities will distract other students as well!** Likewise, your active participation during discussions will be encouraged and questions or comments at any time during lectures are welcomed. Importantly, all comments and responses should be friendly and respectful of the other students in the class. Finally, class will begin promptly at the scheduled time. Some quizzes and activity forms will be handed out at the start of class; if you are not there to receive the form you will not receive credit for the activity. If extraordinary circumstances exist that require some deviation from these policies (e.g., family emergency), please see me **before** class. Please feel free to share any further suggestions for maintaining a positive learning environment that you may have.

In regard to INCLEMENT WEATHER, class will be held if the University is open. Students should not jeopardize their safety, however, to attend class. Every reasonable effort will be made to accommodate those unable to make it to class due to weather problems. If there is any question about whether the class will meet, students should check the announcement board for this class on Canvas.

Canvas: Canvas will serve as the primary resource for course updates, store class materials (e.g., power point lecture outlines), host the links to online course assessment activities (e.g., quizzes), and provide our gradebook. Simply go to <https://unt.instructure.com/login/ldap> and enter your EUID and password to access the webpage for this course. Students should monitor the announcement board regularly and check the announcement board and syllabus prior to e-mailing/calling the instructor or TA about administrative issues.

Measurement and Examination of Student Achievement: Final grades are allocated as follows:

<u>Weekly Quizzes (9):</u>	90 points	<u>Letter Grade:</u>	<u>Percent</u>	<u>Points Required**</u>
<u>Movie Responses (4):</u>	100 points	A	90-100	270-300
<u>Signature Assignment</u>		B	80-89	240-269
Collaborative Prep (3):	30 points	C	70-79	210-239
Bibliography	30 points	D	60-69	180-209
Peer Evaluations	10 points	F	0-59	< 180
Presentation	40 points			
Base Total Points:	300 points			
+++++++				
	Special Topics (4x2 points):		8 points	
	Service Activity (2x3 points):		6 points	

****Grades will NOT be rounded up; extra activities are made available for this reason****

Weekly Quizzes: Almost every week there will be a quiz on the material presented in the prior two-three class periods (i.e. since the last quiz). Quizzes will open on Tuesdays at 2:05p (after class) and close that Thursday at 12:45p (right before class/new material). **Weekly quizzes can be opened/started only once**, but there will be no time limit on completion outside of the 12:45p Thursday deadline. If you so choose, you may use your notes, lecture recordings, even internet searches (though be warned – there’s tons of incorrect info out there!!); however, questions can be answered using your memory and understanding of the recent material with typical engagement with class presentations. Indeed, ‘working backwards’ (i.e., using quizzes to search material) will likely take much longer (and be far less interesting) than listening, taking notes ahead of time, and knocking it out. Given the open note/time-to-complete structure, **you are NOT to share questions via any modality with anyone else** (e.g., other students, electronic forums). Such behavior undermines the entire purpose of a class, and is one of the few behaviors that will be considered cheating in the current course. There are 9 quizzes (90 points) built into the point structure of the course; however, there will be 10 quizzes available, so points from your lowest quiz will be dropped. **In addition to the structure noted above, for this reason there will be no make-ups on weekly quizzes.**

Movie Responses: There will be four (4) movie responses at specific times throughout the course, each worth 25 points. These will include a series of ‘short answer’ questions addressing a relevant documentary that we will watch in class together. **Students must be in class to receive credit for the activity, and answers must be written on the form provided.** Importantly, grading will be based on an objective scale: opinions expressed will not influence grades awarded (also, see Social Justice below).

Movie Response days are detailed in the schedule below (barring uncontrollable schedule changes, such as shifts due to inclement weather closure); if you have an approved University activity (e.g., required athletics), relevant accommodation through the Office of Disability Access, or the Dean of Students Office has emailed me to confirm additional accommodation (<https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/dean-of-students>), please email our TAs and myself to schedule a make-up. If you miss for any other reason/do not have such documentation, a no-questions make-up day will be held during our assigned Finals week class period – for this (1) you must find and watch the video ahead/on your own (videos will not be shown; they will be announced once shown in class so you will have advance notice), and (2) 10 points will be taken off the top, so quizzes taken on make-up day will only be worth up to 15 points.

Signature Assignment (team activity): This project proposal will investigate the application of developmental psychology to social responsibility. The goal of the project proposal is to plan and present a blended living community that could solve loneliness, employment, and unaffordable housing for university students and the elderly. The final project will be developed using PowerPoint software and converted into a streaming YouTube video. Citations and references included in the project will be written in current APA format.

Note that generative AI can be a valuable tool, but it is not a replacement for human decision making and critical thinking. For projects such as these, such resources may serve as helpful starting points, but they (1) should NEVER be trusted (always verify with additional research and trusted sources), and (2) should NEVER be used to create the majority of the work, or components of the final/submitted product. All submissions should reflect the collaborative efforts of the student team, above and beyond anything initially provided by generative AI (or any other source), including critically evaluated, reviewed, and developed ideas as well as any written or oral presentation of such.

To facilitate project development, there are a number of group assignments to be completed throughout the semester. Materials to support these activities are/will be available on Canvas; all assignments are to be submitted by the specified deadline using the links provided on Canvas.

After forming groups of 5 today, you will need to complete and upload the Team Contract (10 points) before 12:45p on 9/10. Skills assessment forms also are available on Canvas to facilitate this discussion with your colleagues (these are for you to use if you wish; you do NOT need to turn these in/they are not graded).

Next, your first Team Brainstorm (initial planning/thoughts; 10 points) document must be completed and uploaded before 12:45p on 10/6. Your team will then complete/upload an annotated Bibliography (30 points) presenting peer-reviewed resources used in your project development by 12:45p on 10/22. The final preparation activity will be revisiting and revising your Team Brainstorm draft, and submitting your Team Brainstorm Revisited/2 document by 12:45p on 11/12. **Late submissions of any of the activities above will not be accepted;** please plan your completion and upload timing accordingly.

Your Group Presentation (40 points) is to be completed and uploaded by 5p, Thursday 11/19 (just before Fall break); presentation grades will be docked 1 point for each day late (starting after 5p on 11/19!). Storyboard Developer forms also are available on Canvas to facilitate this preparation (carefully review the instructions and then use the document if you wish; you do NOT turn these in/they are not graded).

Finally, your Peer Evaluations (10 points) are to be completed using the form provided and uploaded by 5p on our last day of class, 12/3; evaluations will be taken into consideration when assigning individual grades for the final Group Presentation.

Extra Credit Opportunities:

Special topics-extra credit: There will be four (4) special topics activities available at specific times throughout the course, each worth 2 points. These will include a mix of multiple choice, fill in the blank, and/or short answer questions addressing a relevant multimedia component (e.g., podcast, video clip). You can re-open and continue to work on the special topics questions throughout the availability period as needed. Please see below and the additional course calendar for specific days and times each will be available. Importantly, grading will be based on an objective scale: opinions expressed will not influence grades awarded (also, see Social Justice below). Finally, although I strongly encourage you to discuss the content with others, **writing and work here must be your own**. This is an individual activity, and thus use of generative AI, or sharing responses/extensive information prior to both parties completing the assessment is one of the few behaviors that will be considered cheating in the current course.

Service activity-extra credit: At any point prior to Finals Week you may complete and turn in a brief description of a service activity relevant to course objectives. You may do this twice, and will receive up to three (3) points of credit for each. Activities must take at least one hour of your time (not including write-up), and you must clearly detail both what you did and how it connects to content discussed in this course. The recipient(s) must be individuals outside of your home and immediate family, and the service must be one of time and effort, NOT just product/financial donation. Get creative here! Some activities may be more obvious (e.g., reading to kids, helping a child with homework), and others may require a little more thought (e.g., delivering meals aids in addressing limitations in the exo-/macrosystem). As long as you are giving back in some way, I know it can be connected to the course! Completion forms will be available for viewing throughout the semester, and both your TA and I are happy to answer questions as needed. As with all other aspects of the course, this is an individual activity, and **work/reports made must be your own**. Here are just a few links to get you thinking about some of the many, many things you could do:

<https://www.servedenton.org/volunteer>

<https://unitedwaydallas.org/updates/virtual-volunteering-opportunities/>

<https://www.volunteermatch.org/search?l=Denton,%20TX,%20USA>

<https://www.catchafire.org/>

<https://www.dosomething.org/us>

<https://girlsinc.org/take-action/advocacy/>

<https://translatorswithoutborders.org/>

<https://librivox.org/pages/volunteer-for-librivox/>

In class-extra credit: The opportunity to earn a few extra-extra credit points for engaging in in-class activities will occur throughout the course. Extra credit opportunities will take the form of in-class review and/or discussion. There will be no specific studying/preparation required; you'll simply have to be present for that class, and engage in the activity (worth 1 point each).

Academic Honesty: The University of North Texas is committed to the highest standards of academic integrity. It is a violation of University guidelines regarding academic dishonesty to cheat, plagiarize, forge, or commit fraud. Accordingly, severe penalties will follow from the discovery of any representation of another individual's work (in any form) as your own. Further, both/any/all parties involved, regardless of stated intent, will be held responsible for the incident. Cheating in any form can result in a "F" for the course, and violators of the Code of Conduct will be referred to the Academic Integrity Office for action. If cheating is suspected but definitive proof is not available, we also reserve the right to re-administer any examination in question. See policy number 18.1.16 (Student Standards of Academic Integrity) at <http://policy.unt.edu/> for more information.

Specific Accommodations: If you need (or just want to ensure that you have in place) specific accommodations, or feel there is anything that I need to know that might improve your learning environment in this class, please discuss this with me as soon as possible. Remember, UNT requires that students go through the [Office of Disability Access](#) before receiving any accommodations for a course. Specifically: |

The University of North Texas makes reasonable accommodation for students with disabilities. Students needing a reasonable academic accommodations must first register with the Office of Disability Access (ODA) to verify their eligibility. If a disability is verified, the student will request their letter of accommodation. ODA will provide faculty with a reasonable accommodation letter via email to begin a private discussion regarding a student's specific needs in a course. Students may request reasonable accommodations at any time, however, ODA notices of reasonable accommodation should be provided as early as possible in the semester to avoid any delay in implementation. Note that students must obtain a new letter of reasonable accommodation for every semester and must meet with each faculty member prior to implementation in each class. Students are strongly encouraged to meet with faculty regarding their accommodations during office hours or by appointment. Faculty members have the authority to ask students to discuss such letters during their designated office hours to protect the privacy of the student. For additional information, refer to the Office of Disability Access website at <https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/office-disability-access> or contact them by phone at 940.565.4323. |

To ensure that we adapt the course appropriately, I do need to meet with you to discuss the course structure, options, your preferences, etc. BEFORE any accommodations can be put into place. |

Social Justice: The University of North Texas prohibits discrimination and harassment because of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, age, disability, genetic information, veteran status, or any other characteristic protected under applicable federal or state law (please see <https://policy.unt.edu/policy/16-004>). I concur with this commitment and expect to maintain a positive learning environment based upon open communication, mutual respect, and non-discrimination.

Classroom Behavior: Student behavior that interferes with an instructor's ability to conduct a class or other students' opportunity to learn is unacceptable and disruptive and will not be tolerated in any instructional forum at UNT. Students engaging in unacceptable behavior will be directed to leave the classroom and I may refer the student to the Dean of Students to consider whether the student's conduct violated the Code of Student Conduct (<https://policy.unt.edu/policy/07-012>). |

CLASS SCHEDULE

The instructor reserves the right to change the schedule as necessary; some topics will cross over specified weeks.
REMEMBER!

Quizzes open after class on Tuesdays (2:05p), close BEFORE class start on Thursdays (12:45p)

<u>Date and Topic</u>	<u>Base Assessment</u>
<i>Part I: Foundations</i>	
8/18 Welcome and Course Overview	
8/20 Issues and Approaches	
8/25 Historical & Theoretical Foundations*	Quiz 1 opens; closes 12:45p 8/27
8/27 Research Design & Biological Foundations	
9/1 Movie Day! – <u>Movie Response 1</u>	Quiz 2 opens; closes 12:45p 9/3
9/3 Changing Shape of Development	
9/9 NO CLASS – Project Work Day**	
<i>Part II: Cognitive Development</i>	
9/10 Foundations	<u>Team Contract</u> due BEFORE CLASS
9/15 Early Childhood	Quiz 3 opens; closes 12:45p 9/17
9/17 Middle Childhood*	
9/22 Social Context of Cognitive Development	Quiz 4 opens; closes 12:45p 9/24
9/24 Movie Day! – <u>Movie Response 2</u>	
9/29 Adolescence	Quiz 5 opens; closes 12:45p 10/1
10/1 NO CLASS – Project Work Day**	
<i>Part III: Socio-Emotional Development, Part I</i>	
10/6 Personality (foundational work)	<u>Team Brainstorm</u> due BEFORE CLASS
10/8 Temperament & Early Emotions*	
10/13 Child and Adolescent Emotion	Quiz 6 opens; closes 12:45p 10/15
10/15 Puberty	
10/20 NO CLASS – Project Work Day	
10/22 Common Issues in Adolescence	<u>Bibliography</u> due BEFORE CLASS
10/27 Movie Day! – <u>Movie Response 3 **</u>	Quiz 7 opens; closes 12:45p 10/29
<i>Part IV: Socio-Emotional Development, Part II</i>	
10/29 Infants and Transition to Parenting	
11/3 Early Social Development*	Quiz 8 opens; closes 12:45p 11/5
11/5 The Developing 'Self' and Identity	
11/10 Moral Development	Quiz 9 opens; closes 12:45p 11/12
11/12 NO CLASS – Project work day	<u>Team Brainstorm</u> due BEFORE CLASS
11/17 NO CLASS – Project work day	
11/19 NO CLASS – Project work day	
11/25 & 27 NO CLASS – THANKSGIVING BREAK!	<u>Group Presentation Video</u> due by 5p
12/1 Social Development in Context	Quiz 10 opens; closes 12:45 12/3
12/3 Movie Day! – <u>Movie Response 4**</u>	<u>Peer evaluations</u> due by 5p

Class Final Period – Tuesday December 8th, 1-3p (Movie Response Make-up Day)

*Section special topics extra credit opens 12:01am

**Section special topics extra credit closes 11:59pm