

Child Psychology
PSY 2301, 1731 Fall 2013

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Office: N624
Office Hours: Mon., Weds: 5:00 PM to 6:00 PM, by
appointment

Class Meetings: Mondays, 6:00-8:30PM
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Course Description:

This course will provide an overview of the basic principles in development from prenatal to adolescent. There will be an emphasis on a transactional approach to development. We will begin with the history of developmental psychology, and research methodologies. We will discuss the contexts in which children live, with a particular focus on family, peers, and the larger cultural context. Then, we will examine physical, cognitive, and socio-emotional development, with consideration of the cultural context, and focusing within each on examples of current research. Application of child development principles will be used via a community service-learning project.

ASSIGNMENT:

INDIVIDUAL PROJECT=20%

You will conduct one individual project worth 100 points. The project is meant to be a fun and interesting way to increase your comprehension of course material and to help you apply child development principles to everyday life. It is also meant to work in a creative and innovative manner in integrating multiple psychological concepts. Below are 5 potential projects to choose from, although you are not limited to these 5 potential projects and may choose your own idea. If you choose your own idea, you must receive approval from me first. Choose projects which you will enjoy (i.e., which fit your own interests, skills, and creativity level) and which will stimulate your thinking about topics in this course. A brief description of potential projects is listed below. Be aware that some projects may require you to read ahead in the text or get outside sources. You must send me a proposal (briefly describing the project you will do and any relevant details), due week 8 --midnight, 2012 via Blackboard. Please note that these projects can require several days to a week to complete, so plan accordingly (i.e., do not procrastinate!). *All projects must have a community-service impact. All projects must have a community-service impact. That is, each project will require that establishing a contact with a NYC nonprofit agency and or community group, and create their project based on the needs of the agency or group. We will discuss this more in detail throughout the semester. You will write a summary of the project and/or findings and present the project/findings to the class.*

Proposal (10 points)—Week 8, BB

- Send a 1 paragraph proposal describing your selection and choice of theory(ies) and community/group to be used

Draft 3 page paper (15 points)—Week 15 BB

- Send a draft 3-page paper on topic. This is on a pass/fail—that is turn in the FULL three pages, and you automatically receive the 15 points (as long as it is not plagiarized).

FINAL PRODUCT DUE ON LAST DAY OF CLASS

Content (45 points)

- Identified the community service component
- Identified the appropriate child development principles
- Link with and extend beyond class/text material are appropriate with “product”
- Insights, comments, and interpretations

Clarity & Organization (10 points)

- Overall organization and structure of your project

- Clarity of explanations (use of examples, clear descriptions)
- Clear flow of information
- Spelling/Punctuation

Presentation (20 points) ---Please note, I will not accept your work unless you are present during the final presentation day

- Present your work

Examples of Potential Individual Projects

Project #1: Create a blog ...**note:** if you choose this, you must start blogging early on the semester. IT MUST BE LIVE on the Internet.

For this project, you will create a blog (that means it's your voice and your ideas on the blog and what you think) devoted to a specific topic (s) or theory (ies) in child development over the semester time period that will inform your local community about the topic(s). The overall goal of the tutorial is to inform and educate a visitor on the blog about your chosen topic and inform them of your thoughts. You should assume that your visitor is intelligent but not necessarily familiar with the field of psychology (i.e., aim at the level of an introductory psychology student). Your site should be both useful and visually interesting, and should contain (a) pictures or graphics, (b) hot links to related information or relevant sites, and (c) references.

Note that students are responsible for getting their projects up and running on the web. The day the assignment is due, you will simply turn in the correct URL, and I will grade it directly on the web. Summarize a 3-5 page paper on your topic, why it was chosen, who is the audience, and how will this help the audience develop or learn better.

Project #2: Write a children's story

Write a short story for children that will be focused in the needs of children in your community (at least 10 pages or more) (e.g., include acts of altruism, aggression and discrimination, etc.) Make sure to look at a few children's stories in order to get an idea of how to proceed. You can aim your story at any age level below 10 (but be sure to specify your story's target audience). Write a 3-5 page paper explaining (1) whether any of the acts committed in the story might be emulated by the readers of your community, (2) which events would have the created impact on the readers, given past research/theory, and (3) describe how your story concepts and ideas illustrate the theories and what we have learned in class. Make appropriate references to the textbook and articles you have read. Please note that your story should be neatly presented (i.e., like an actual book) and should contain illustrations. Bring your book on presentation day.

Project #3: Design a Toy

Design a toy or game that fasters the healthy development of children within your community (e.g., social, cognitive, physical development). Write a 3-5 page paper (1) discussing the theory (ies) you used to help create the toy, (2) describing the toy, and articulating the positive and negative (if any) aspects of your toy, including the developmental stage for which the toy was designed for (e.g. infancy, early childhood, etc), and (3) discuss how the toy promotes social, cognitive, and or/physical development. Bring the toy to class on presentation day.

Project #4: Design a public service campaign

For this project, imagine that you are a professional specializing in persuasive communications and letter you have been hired to bring about a positive change in children's behavior within the community (e.g., you might want to get them to exercise more, to adopt one or more healthy behaviors, to volunteer, to be more compassionate, or to decrease bullying in school or cyber-bullying, etc.) Your final product will consist of a 3-5 page typed paper that includes a list of your specific goals, an outline of the steps you would take to achieve them, and a thorough discussion of the theoretical principles (e.g., modeling, reinforcement, dissonance) that underlie your persuasive techniques. You are to provide tangible evidence of your campaign (e.g., a video-clip, pamphlet, etc.) on presentation day.

Project #5: Conduct an experiment

(e.g. cartoons and aggression or anything else that might be of interest)

Conduct the following experiment. Videotape a television cartoon (or rent one) that contains a lot of violence and one that contains virtually no violence. Then recruit 6 participants to watch the violent cartoon, and 6 participants to watch the mild cartoon. You may use college students, staff, non-students, etc. ... choose any group of adults you wish, but make sure to get all 12 individuals from the same group. You should also try to have the same number of males and females in each group. After participants watch the cartoon, give them a sheet of paper and ask them to write a one paragraph story about a boy named Tim. Read these stories (taking care not to see which condition each participant is in), and code them on a 4-point scale from "not much aggression in story" to "a lot of aggression in story." Next, see if your mean rating of the stories in the two groups is different (using a t-test)—I can help you with this. (If you would prefer to use another measure of aggression, that's OK, but check with me first). Did you find more aggression in one of the groups? Use your findings to educate your community by writing a 3-5 page paper describing the results of your experiment, including a section on whether or not your findings are consistent with past research. You are to present your findings on presentation day.

Learning Objectives and Assessment:

Learning Objectives	Assessment: Instructional Activity, Evaluation Methods and Criteria
To examine the theoretical approaches that underlie child development	Classroom discussion theoretical approaches; quizzes and exams to identify factual material; in-class and online participation activities on identification and application of theories, individual project/presentation
To describe and understand the importance of child development from social and cultural perspectives.	Class discussion examining current research articles and projects examining social and cultural perspectives; in-class or on-line group discussion and participation activities on the implications of these perspective; Response to Preschool in Three Culture
Familiarity with major developmental periods and relevant issues	Classroom discussions comparing the different developmental periods; quiz, in-class and online participation activities.
Understanding of the transactional/interactional	Classroom discussions examining transactional

approach	approach; exam, in-class and online participation activities.
Discussion of current developmental issues and debates	Classroom discussions examining peer-reviewed articles; in-class and online participation activities.
Exposure to important research areas in field	Classroom discussions examining past and current peer-reviewed articles; in-class and online participation activities.
Critical evaluation of research and conclusions drawn from research	Classroom discussions examining peer-reviewed articles; in-class and online participation activities.

General Education Goals and Objectives:

Learning Objectives	Assessment: Instructional Activity, Evaluation Methods and Criteria
Knowledge: To develop an understanding of the key concepts and methods of analysis used in developmental research; to develop analytical and critical thinking capabilities through comparing and contrasting the application of various theories and concepts to the understanding child development	Discussion of theories and concepts with a focus on developing the ability to distinguish their major differences; Students should be able to articulate these through class and on-line discussions, in written assignments, participation activities, and the individual project
Skills: Develop and apply the requisite tools and skills necessary to identify and understand the types of theories and methods best suited for investigating different types of child developmental outcomes.	Students should be able to demonstrate an understanding of the basic types of research methods and to assess which would be most suited for a particular research problem or investigation. They should be able to clearly express in writing and in class discussions, their research design and theory and why it the most effective method to address their individual project's goals.
Integration: Development of student's ability to create research questions that is based upon and builds upon a critical appraisal of existing research across disciplines.	Students should be able to formulate the kinds of questions that would be used in different types of research projects; assessment of this ability would be measured through the individual project, on exams and in class discussions and participation activities focused on this learning outcome.