



Introduction to Child Psychology

COURSE DETAILS

Course Designator and Number: MONT XXXX

Number of Credits: 3

Language of Instruction: English

Contact Hours: 45

Instructor: Dr. Olga den Besten

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course will examine normative physical, social, and cognitive development from the prenatal period through middle childhood (up to adolescence). The major goals include fostering an understanding of the usefulness of a developmental approach to psychological issues, familiarizing students with current research and methodology in child psychology, and engaging students in the experiences of developmental psychology through observation and analysis of child behavior.

Course Objectives

This course fulfills the Council on Liberal Education's (LE) Social Science core. We will examine how developmental scientists describe and analyze child development by surveying the modern field of child psychology and describing theories, research methods, and empirical findings on a range of topics about cognitive, emotional, behavioral, and social development.

A liberal education invites students to investigate the world from new perspectives, learn new ways of thinking that will be useful in many areas of life, and grow as an active citizen and lifelong learner. This course will enhance a liberal education by teaching a developmental approach. The ability to think in terms of processes of change will enhance students' ability to solve problems and consider issues across disciplines, and the emphasis on critical analysis will benefit their approach to research both in scientific and popular press realms.

Methodology

Classes will include a combination of lecture, active learning, video, and discussion. Classroom discussions will highlight important content from the text but also cover material not in the textbook. Final essays will cover readings and class content. **Therefore, it is crucial to attend class and take notes.** With the exception of students who have explicit permission from the instructor, students are expected to take their own notes in class. In the event that an emergency prevents you from coming to class, it is advisable to get notes from another student taking the class.

Everyone is responsible for participating actively and thoughtfully in class discussions and activities. For this purpose, **please complete the readings *before* class.**

This course will consider controversial and sensitive issues. A variety of historical and contemporary perspectives on issues of childhood will be considered. Debate and disagreement are a key component of active and critical learning; however, discussions will be held in the spirit of tolerance and mutual respect for different points of view.

Course Prerequisites

Some background in psychology or developmental science is required.

Required Readings/Materials

- Lightfoot, C., Cole, M., and Cole, S.R. (2018). *The development of children: 8th edition*. NY: Worth.

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Grading

Grading Rubric

Letter grade	Score or percentage	Description
A	93–100	Achievement that is outstanding relative to the level necessary to meet course requirements.
A-	90–92	Achievement that is significantly above the level necessary to meet course requirements.
B+	87–89	
B	83–86	
B-	80–82	Achievement that meets the course requirements in every respect.
C+	77–79	Achievement that meets the course requirements in every respect.
C	73–76	Achievement that meets the course requirements in every respect.
C-	70–72	Achievement that is worthy of credit even though it fails to meet fully the course requirements.
D+	67–69	
D	60–66	
F	0–59	Represents failure (or no credit) and signifies that the work was either (1) completed but at a level of achievement that is not worthy of credit or (2) was not completed and there was no agreement between the instructor and the student that the

		student would be awarded an I.
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Summary of How Grades Are Weighted

Assignments	Percentage of grade
Participation in class	25%
Essay	50%
Active Learning Assignments (ALAs)	25%
Overall grade	100%

Assessment Details

Participation in class

Attendance and active participation in class is very important to your success in this course. Students should be present at all classes and come prepared to discuss the readings as outlined in the syllabus.

Essay

Students will write a 4-page paper on one of the topics of the course of their own choice. The essay should demonstrate the students' theoretical knowledge of child development acquired during the course. Illustrating the argument by one's real-life experience, material from the press, or/and literature or films will be a plus. The required number of direct citations is 5; that of references is 10.

Active Learning Assignments (ALAs)

These are either short written assignments (approximately half-page-long) to be completed in class for active learning points or a group project. For example, each student may be asked

to write out and hand in a brief response to a class film or an issue discussed in class. Other ALAs will require discussion with classmates seated nearby.

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COURSE CONTENT

Unit 1

Introduction

- Introduction to the course and review of syllabus. The study of human development: central issues, theories, methods.

Unit 2

Biocultural foundations. The coevolution of culture & biology.

- Assignment: Chapter 2, pp. 49-77.

Unit 3

Prenatal development & birth.

- Assignment: Chapter 3, pp. 79-119.

Unit 4

Infancy: the first three months.

- Assignment: Chapter 4, pp. 120-159.

Unit 5

Physical & cognitive development in infancy.

- Assignment: Chapter 5, pp. 161-195.

Unit 6

Social & emotional development in infancy.

- Assignment: Chapter 6, pp. 197-223.

Unit 7

Language acquisition in early childhood.

- Assignment: Chapter 7, pp. 227–259.

Unit 8

Physical & cognitive development in early childhood.

- Assignment: Chapter 8, pp. 261–291.

Unit 9

Social & emotional development in early childhood.

- Assignment: Chapter 9, pp. 293–327.

Unit 10

Contexts of development: family, non-parental child care, communities, & media.

- Assignment: Chapter 10, pp. 329–367.

Unit 11

Middle childhood. Physical & cognitive development.

- Assignment: Chapter 11, pp. 371–407.

Unit 12

School as a context for development.

- Assignment: Chapter 12, pp. 409–439.

Unit 13

Social & emotional development in middle childhood.

- Assignment: Chapter 13, pp. 441-473.

POLICIES

Attendance Policy

Students are expected to be on time and attend all classes while abroad. Many instructors assess both attendance and participation when assigning a final course grade. Attendance alone does not guarantee a positive participation grade; the student should be prepared for class and engage in class discussion. See the on-site syllabus for specific class requirements.

University of Minnesota Policies & Procedures

Academic integrity is essential to a positive teaching and learning environment. All students enrolled in University courses are expected to complete coursework responsibilities with fairness and honesty. Failure to do so by seeking unfair advantage over others or misrepresenting someone else's work as your own can result in disciplinary action. The University Student Conduct Code defines scholastic dishonesty as follows:

Scholastic Dishonesty

Scholastic dishonesty means plagiarizing; cheating on assignments or examinations; engaging in unauthorized collaboration on academic work; taking, acquiring, or using test materials without faculty permission; submitting false or incomplete records of academic achievement; acting alone or in cooperation with another to falsify records or to obtain dishonestly grades, honors, awards, or professional endorsement; altering forging, or misusing a University academic record; or fabricating or falsifying data, research procedures, or data analysis.

Within this course, a student responsible for scholastic dishonesty can be assigned a penalty up to and including an "F" or "N" for the course. If you have any questions regarding the expectations for a specific assignment or exam, ask.

Student Conduct

The University of Minnesota has specific policies concerning student conduct. This information can be found on the Learning Abroad Center website.

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