

PSYC 211: Developmental Psychology

Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday 9:30-11:20 am, Robinson B220

Instructor Information:

Kari Visconti, PhD
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Office Hours: Tuesdays from 12:00-1:00 or by appointment

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Course Description:

Developmental psychology is the study of growth and change over the course of the human lifespan. This course is intended to give students a general understanding of development science, including theories, research methods, and patterns of growth and development. Specifically, we will cover processes of physical, cognitive, social, and emotional development from birth through the end of life.

Note: All processes of development and change in the human life could potentially fall under the umbrella of developmental psychology. This course is intended to be an introduction to the field of developmental science and, as such, will focus on a subset of the most fundamental topics.

Course Goals and Objectives:

Through this course, students should:

1. Gain knowledge of key processes and events which affect lifespan development
2. Become familiar with key figures and theories in the field of lifespan development
3. Apply theory and research to "real-life" situations and issues
4. Gain writing skills specifically pertaining to summarizing, synthesizing, and critically reviewing issues of human development

Course Format:

This course will be structured as an interactive lecture. Students are expected to have completed the assigned readings prior to class and to come with any questions or comments. Students will be regularly asked to participate in in-class exercises and discussions.

Required Text:

Berk, L. E. (2013). *Development through the lifespan (6th ed.)*. New Jersey: Pearson.

Additional course materials will be provided through Blackboard.

Technology Requirements:

A Blackboard course site will be used to provide additional readings and course-related announcements; students are advised to check Blackboard on a daily basis. Further, students are required to use their GMU email accounts when communicating with the instructor about course-related matters. I will not send course information or updates to any email address other than those supported by GMU. Please **include "PSYC211" in the subject line of your email.**

Course Requirements and Assignments:

Grades for this course will come from four areas, including attendance and participations, My Virtual Life activities and discussions, reading responses, and three exams. Points are allotted as follows:

1. Attendance and Participation – 10%

Attendance in this course is required. Students are expected to attend classes and remain actively engaged in class activities and group discussions. Documentation is required in the event that students will be absent from class and excusal will be given at the instructor's discretion.

2. My Virtual Life – 20%

Students will use the MyVirtualLife program to "raise" a virtual child and continue on through the lifespan. Students will use this experience as the basis of small, in-class activities and discussions and writing assignments.

3. Reading Responses – 30%

Students will write three reading responses to the topics covered in class by answering a series of discussion questions. Potential discussion questions will be provided at the start of the week and students will select one question from each topic. Responses should be 1-2 paragraphs per question and due dates are listed on the calendar.

4. Exams – 40%

Three exams will be given during the course of the semester. Dates are listed on the calendar.

Grading Procedures:

Final grades will be determined using the following criteria:

A+: > 97%	B+: 89-88%	C+: 79-78%	D+: 69-68%	F: <60%
A: 97-93%	B: 87-83%	C: 77-73%	D: 67-63%	
A-: 92-90%	B-: 82-80%	C-: 72-70%	D-: 62-60%	

The amount of material that we will cover in this course is equivalent to a traditional semester schedule, however we will be doing so in the span of six weeks. That means the pace of this course will be faster than a traditional semester. Students will be expected to put in the same amount of time outside of class as they would in a traditional semester, but compressed into the summer term. Given this pace, it is particularly important during the summer sessions to stay on top of your grade. Students are encouraged to talk to me as soon as possible if they have concerns about their performance or the accuracy of their grades. **Please do not wait until the end of the semester!**

Honor Code:

The integrity of the University community is affected by the individual choices made by each of us. GMU has an Honor Code with clear guidelines regarding academic integrity. Three fundamental and rather simple principles to follow at all times are that: (1) all work submitted be your own; (2) when using the work or ideas of others, including fellow students, give full credit through accurate citations; and (3) if you are uncertain about the ground rules on a particular assignment, ask for clarification. No grade is important enough to justify academic misconduct. Plagiarism means using the exact words, opinions, or factual information from another person without giving the person credit. Writers give credit through accepted documentation styles, such as parenthetical citation, footnotes, or endnotes. Paraphrased material must also be cited, using APA format. A simple listing of books or articles is not sufficient. Plagiarism is the equivalent of intellectual robbery and cannot be tolerated in the academic setting. If you have any doubts about what constitutes plagiarism, please see me. I reserve the right to enter a failing grade to any student found guilty of an honor code violation. (*Statement adapted from The Office of Academic Integrity; <http://oai.gmu.edu>*)

Other University Policies:

The University deadlines for adding and dropping courses are as follows:

Last day to **add** classes: July 2, 2014

Last day to **drop** classes with no tuition penalty: July 2, 2014

Final drop deadline (50% tuition penalty): July 8, 2014

University Catalog: <http://catalog.gmu.edu/>

University Policies: <http://universitypolicy.gmu.edu>

If you are a student with a disability and you need academic accommodations, please see me and contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS) at 993-2474, <http://ods.gmu.edu>. All academic accommodations must be arranged through the ODS.

George Mason University promotes a living and learning environment for outstanding growth and productivity among its students, faculty and staff. Through its curriculum, programs, policies, procedures, services and resources, Mason strives to maintain a quality environment for work, study and personal growth. An emphasis upon diversity and inclusion throughout the campus community is essential to achieve these goals. For more information about diversity at Mason, visit <http://diversity.gmu.edu>.

Additional Mason Resources:

George Mason University also has a number of academic support and other resources to facilitate student success. Please reference the following links for more information about these resources.

Counseling and Psychological Services: <http://caps.gmu.edu>

Learning Services: <http://caps.gmu.edu/learningservices>

University Career Services: <http://careers.gmu.edu>

Writing Center: <http://writingcenter.gmu.edu>

Graduate and Professional Student Association: <http://gapsa.gmu.edu>

A Note about Scheduling and Dates:

The topics and dates (including the due dates of assignments) listed on the course calendar are tentative and may be changed as necessary to adapt to the pace of the class and students' understanding of the material.

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Course Calendar

Week 1: Monday, June 30 – Thursday, July 3 – Introduction and Foundations of Development

Monday, June 30	Topic: Introduction to the Course Required Reading: Syllabus
Tuesday, July 1	Topic: History, Theory, and Research Strategies Required Reading: Chapter 1
Wednesday, July 2	Topic: Biological and Environmental Foundations Required Reading: Chapter 2
Thursday, July 3	Topic: Prenatal Development, Birth, and the Newborn Baby Required Reading: Chapter 3 Due: Reading Response #1

Week 2: Monday, July 7 – Thursday, July 10 – Infancy and Toddlerhood

Monday, July 7	Topic: Physical development in Infancy and Toddlerhood Required Reading: Chapter 4 Due: MyVirtualLife Milestone #1
Tuesday, July 8	Topic: Cognitive Development in Infancy and Toddlerhood Required Reading: Chapter 5
Wednesday, July 9	Topic: Emotional and Social Development in Infancy and Toddlerhood, Required Reading: Chapter 6 Exam #1 Review Session
Thursday, July 10	Exam #1

Week 3: Monday, July 14 – Thursday, July 17 – Early and Middle Childhood

Monday, July 14	Topic: Physical and Cognitive Development in Early Childhood Required Reading: Chapter 7 Due: MyVirtualLife Milestone #2
Tuesday, July 15	Topic: Emotional and Social Development in Early Childhood Required Reading: Chapter 8
Wednesday, July 16	Topic: Physical and Cognitive Development in Middle Childhood Required Reading: Chapter 9
Thursday, July 17	Topic: Emotional and Social Development in Middle Childhood Required Reading: Chapter 10 Due: Reading Responses #2

Week 4: Monday, July 21 – Thursday, July 24 – Adolescence

Monday, July 21	<i>Topic: Physical and Cognitive Development in Adolescence</i> <i>Required Reading: Chapter 11</i> Due: MyVirtualLife Milestone #3
Tuesday, July 22	<i>Topic: Emotional and Social Development in Adolescence</i> <i>Required Reading: Chapter 12</i>
Wednesday, July 23	<i>Topic: Adolescence, continued</i> Exam #2 Review Session
Thursday, July 24	Exam #2

Week 5: Monday, July 28 – Thursday, July 31 – Early and Middle Adulthood

Monday, July 28	<i>Topic: Physical and Cognitive Development in Early Adulthood</i> <i>Required Reading: Chapter 13</i> Due: MyVirtualLife Milestone #4
Tuesday, July 29	<i>Topic: Emotional and Social Development in Early Adulthood</i> <i>Required Reading: Chapter 14</i>
Wednesday, July 30	<i>Topic: Physical and Cognitive Development in Middle Adulthood</i> <i>Required Reading: Chapter 15</i>
Thursday, July 31	<i>Topic: Emotional and Social Development in Middle Adulthood</i> <i>Required Reading: Chapter 16</i> Due: Reading Responses #3

Week 6: Monday, August 4 – Thursday, August 7 – Late Adulthood and End of Life

Monday, August 4	<i>Topic: Physical and Cognitive Development in Late Adulthood</i> <i>Required Reading: Chapter 17</i> Due: MyVirtualLife Milestone #5
Tuesday, August 5	<i>Topic: Emotional and Social Development in Late Adulthood</i> <i>Required Reading: Chapter 18</i>
Wednesday, August 6	<i>Topic: Death, Dying, and Bereavement</i> <i>Required Reading: Chapter 19</i> Exam #3 Review Session
Thursday, August 7	Exam #3