

PSYC211-003: Developmental Psychology

Mondays & Wednesdays 9:00-10:15am, Planetary Hall 124

Instructor Information

Sarah Thomas Giff, M.A.

Office: David King Hall 1032 (basement level- to the left of the Coke machine)

Email: sthoma39@masonlive.gmu.edu (this is my preferred method of contact)

Office Hours: Thursdays 9:30-10:30am, or by appointment

Mailbox: located on the 2nd floor of David King Hall, down the hall from the Undergrad Office

Recommended Textbook

Title: Development through the Lifespan (6th Edition)

Author: Laura E. Berk

ISBN: 10: 0205957609

This textbook is highly recommended, not required. If you prefer, you may purchase the online text which is a little cheaper. The text will also be on reserve for students for 2 hours at a time at the Gateway Library in the Johnson Center.

Course Description and Goals

Developmental psychology is the study of the ways in which humans change over time.

Sometimes this change is represented as growth, and other times as decline. In this course, we will examine development from birth through old age with a focus on the physical, cognitive, social, and emotional aspects of development through various contexts.

The goals of this course are to (1) Provide students with a basic understanding of the principles of developmental psychology; (2) Enhance student's ability to comprehend and think critically about topics within the psychological field, (3) Apply knowledge about development to real-world situations.

Course Requirements and Assignments

1. Exams (4 exams, 20 points each, 80 points total)

There will be a total of 4 non-cumulative exams during the semester. They will be all multiple-choice questions. All exams will be given online through Blackboard and are open notes/book, however you may NOT consult with other classmates about the exams.

Exams will be available starting at least 48 hours before the due date and the exam will end at 11:59pm on the day it is assigned, however you will have 2 hours to complete the test from the time you begin. Class will be cancelled on the day of the exam. Absolutely No make-ups are permitted.

2. Discussion Leader (10 points total)

Each student is responsible for leading one small group article discussion during designated class periods. Students will be placed into groups of 5 and during each Article Discussion class period (see syllabus for dates, 5 classes in total) one student in each group will be the discussion leader. He/she will be expected to lead their group in a discussion of the articles assigned for that day for 20-25 minutes. The group leader will turn in discussion questions through Blackboard that will be used during the discussion leading. These discussion questions will be graded.

3. Discussion Participant (10 points total)

When not leading discussion groups, students will gain points for attending discussion classes, reading the articles, and for participating thoughtfully in their discussion groups.

4. Interview Project (30 points total)

You will complete a final project in which you must demonstrate your understanding of development by evaluating theoretical and empirical claims and relating them to information obtained through an interview. You may choose to interview anyone of any age.

You need to choose **three** aspects of development that interest you (e.g., identity, gender, parenting, marriage, aging, etc.) and think about how you might assess these aspects during an interview in a way that is developmentally-appropriate for who you are interviewing. Make sure to match the questions to a particular stage of development. For instance, if you interview an adolescent make sure the questions refer to adolescence! And if you interview a child, make sure your questions are at the level a child can understand. Construct a list of at least 4 questions per area of interest (totaling at least 12 questions). These questions will focus on assessing your three aspects of development based on the theories, research findings, and everyday examples we have discussed in the course. You must create your list prior to the interview. During the interview, you should make notes about what you discussed. I would prefer you to interview someone NOT in your family; however, you can if you need/want to. Please make sure the person you talk with will answer your questions honestly.

Following the interview, you will write a paper relating your findings to key ideas discussed in our course, noting how your findings are similar to or different from the theories, research findings, and everyday examples we discussed (focusing on the three constructs chosen). You should refer to information from the book, outside articles, and Powerpoint slides. This paper should be approximately 3-4 pages in length, 12 point Times New Roman font, 1' margins, double-spaced.

A rubric will be available on Blackboard. Additionally, an example will be posted on Blackboard for your review. Feel free to meet with me at any point to discuss choosing your 3 constructs and/or questions, determining appropriate ways to assess these constructs, or relating your findings to the course material.

5. Presentation (20 points)

Students will each present a brief overview of their interview project for 5 minutes. This presentation will cover ONE of the three constructs of development that you assessed during the interview project. It will also explain how that one construct relates to the course themes that we have covered. Minimal visual aids are required – this means simply using 1-2 slides, or providing a handout that can be projected on the screen. More information, along with a grading rubric is provided on Blackboard.

Points and Grade Calculation

Assignment	Possible Points
Exams – 4 total	80
Discussion Leader	10
Discussion Participant	10
Interview Project	35
Presentation	15
Total points	150

Grades will simply be calculated by the amount of total points earned in the course; since it is out of 150 points, your calculations will be simple. For example, if you get 120 points in the class, you have an 80%, which will be a B-.

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

Honor Code

Students in this course are expected to behave at all times in a manner consistent with the GMU Honor System and Code. (<http://mason.gmu.edu/~montecin/plagiarism.htm>). Students are encouraged to study together as much as possible throughout the course, however, no assistance, sharing of information, or discussion of exam items or answers between students may take place. For all work, the name that appears on the paper must be the author. Violations of the Honor Code will not be tolerated in this course and will be immediately reported according to GMU procedures. The instructor reserves the right to use software to determine the extent to which the work is the student's. The instructor for this course reserves the right to enter a failing grade to any student found guilty of an honor code violation.

Other University Policies

Life is stressful and we all need a little support sometimes. Students are encouraged to contact Counseling & Psychological Services (caps.gmu.edu) 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 for help with anything.

If you are a student with a disability and you need academic accommodations, please see me and contact the Disability Resource Center (DRC) at 709-993-2474. All academic accommodations must be arranged through that office.

Mason uses electronic mail to provide official information to students. Examples include communications from course instructors, notices from the library, notices about academic standing, financial aid information, class materials, assignments, questions, and instructor feedback. Students are responsible for the content of university communication sent to their Mason e-mail account, and are required to activate that account and check it regularly. As a tip, please include your G-number and the course section in the subject of the email in all email correspondences with all instructors.

Disclaimer & Class Cancellation Policy

The instructor reserves the right to change the syllabus and its content. Any changes will be announced orally and in writing via email. If class is cancelled for any reason (weather-related or otherwise) students will be notified via email and an online make-up class period will be provided.

Important Campus-Wide Dates

First day of classes	August 28
Labor Day (No Classes)	Sept 4
Last day to add classes - Last day to drop with no tuition penalty	Sept 5
Last day to drop with a 33% tuition penalty	Sept 19
Final Drop Deadline (67% tuition penalty)	Sept 29
Selective Withdrawal Period (undergraduate students only)	Oct 2- Oct 27
Columbus Day Recess (Mon classes meet on Tues)	Oct 9
Thanksgiving Recess	Nov 22-26
Last day of classes	Dec 9
Reading Days	Dec 11-12
Exam Period (beginning at 7:30 a.m.)	Dec 13 – Dec 20

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!

Course Schedule

Week 1: Introduction	
Mon, Aug 28	Syllabus & Discussion Leader Sign-Up
Wed, Aug 30	Chapter 2/3 – Environmental Influence & Prenatal Development
Week 2: Newborns	
Mon, Sept 4	NO CLASS- LABOR DAY
Wed, Sept 6	Chapter 3 – Birth and Newborns
Week 3: Infants & Toddlers	
Mon, Sept 11	Chapter 4 – Physical Development (Infants & Toddlers)
Wed, Sept 13	Chapter 5 – Cognitive Development (Infants & Toddlers)
Week 4: Infants & Toddlers	
Mon, Sept 18	Article Discussion 1 (Zimmerman et al., 2007; Sesame Street Effect, 2015)
Wed, Sept 20	No Class – Exam 1: Chapters 2-5 due on Blackboard by 11:59pm
Week 5: Early Childhood	
Mon, Sept 25	Chapter 6 – Social/Emotional (Infants & Toddlers)
Wed, Sept 27	Chapter 7 – Physical & Cognitive Development (Early Childhood)
Week 6: Early Childhood	
Mon, Oct 2	Chapter 8 – Social & Emotional (Early Childhood)
Wed, Oct 5	Article Discussion 2 (Vygotsky, 1978; Kuhn et al., 2014)
Week 7: Middle Childhood	
Tues, Oct 10	Chapter 9 – Physical & Cognitive (Middle Childhood) <i>CLASS MEETS ON TUESDAY OCTOBER 10 INSTEAD OF MONDAY</i>
Wed, Oct 11	Chapter 10 – Social & Emotional (Middle Childhood)
Week 9: Adolescence	
Mon, Oct 16	No Class – Exam 2, Chapters 6-10 due on Blackboard by 11:59pm
Wed, Oct 18	Chapter 11 – Physical & Cognitive (Adolescence)
Week 10: Adolescence & Early Adulthood	

Mon, Oct 23	Chapter 12 – Social & Emotional (Adolescence)
Wed, Oct 25	Chapter 13/14 – Cognitive, Emotional, & Social (Early Adult)
Week 11: Early Adulthood	
Mon, Oct 30	NO CLASS
Wed, Nov 1	Article Discussion 3 (Arnett, 2000; Henig, 2010)
Week 12: Middle Adulthood	
Mon, Nov 6	No Class – Exam 3, Chapters 11-14 due on Blackboard by 11:59pm
Wed, Nov 8	Chapter 15/16 – Social, Emotional, & Cognitive (Middle Adulthood)
Week 13: Late Adulthood	
Mon, Nov 13	Article Discussion 4 (Sullivan, 2011; Farr & Patterson, 2013)
Wed, Nov 15	Chapter 17/18 – Social, Emotional, & Cognitive (Late Adulthood)
Week 14: Late Adulthood	
Mon, Nov 20	Article Discussion 5 (Leland, 2008; Dellmann-Jenkins et al., 2002)
Wed, Nov 22	NO CLASS-THANKSGIVING BREAK
Week 15: Movie & Presentations	
Mon, Nov 27	Movie Day/Catch up Interview Project due on Blackboard by 11:59pm
Wed, Nov 29	Presentations
Week 16: Presentations	
Mon, Dec 4	Presentations
Wed Dec 6	Presentations & Review
Finals Week	
Finals Week Mon Dec 18th	Exam 4, Chapters 15-18 due on Blackboard by 11:59pm

Have a great break!