

**PSYC 211 - Developmental Psychology**  
**Course Syllabus**  
Last Updated 1/12/2021

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**Office Hours: Wednesdays 10am-11am**

**Link in left-hand menu of Blackboard**

**Course Description**

Developmental science is the study of how humans change and stay the same throughout the course of their lives. As a survey course, we cover large swaths of human development touching on major developmental theories including perspectives of childhood, adolescence, adulthood, and old age.

**Student Learning Objectives:**

- Describe key developmental processes and events which affect lifespan development
- Explain the relative role of context in developmental phenomena
- Apply developmental theory to real-life situations

**Textbook and Readings**

All readings are required.

Textbook: Santrock, J. W. (2018). *A Topical Approach to Life-Span Development*, 9<sup>th</sup> Edition. McGraw Hill

Other readings as assigned and available on Blackboard.

**Technology**

Except for the course textbook, all course materials will be housed on Blackboard. “Attending” class involves participating in the activities for each module. Modules consist of viewing videos, reading posts, participating in group discussions, participating in class discussions, taking tests, and conducting an interview. All of these activities take place through Blackboard.

**Blackboard Login Instructions**

Online materials for this class can be accessed through Blackboard. You must check our course webpage frequently for course content, assignments, and discussions. This course is 100% online. Access to [MyMason](#) and GMU email are required to participate successfully in this course. Check [the IT Support Center](#) website. Navigate to [the Student Support page](#) for help and information about Blackboard. In the menu bar to the left you will find all the tools you need to become familiar with for this course. Take time to learn each. Make sure you run a system check a few days before class. Become familiar with the attributes of Blackboard and online learning.

**Hardware:** You will need access to a Windows or Macintosh computer with at least 2 GB of RAM and access to a fast and reliable broadband internet connection (e.g., cable, DSL). A larger screen is recommended for better visibility of course material. You will need speakers or headphones to hear recorded content and a headset with a microphone is recommended for the best experience. For the amount of Hard Disk Space required taking a distance education course, consider and allow for:

1. the storage amount needed to install any additional software and
2. space to store work that you will do for the course.

If you consider the purchase of a new computer, please go to [Technology Buying Guide](#) [http://itservices.gmu.edu/services/view-service.cfm?customel\\_dataPageID\\_4609=6233](http://itservices.gmu.edu/services/view-service.cfm?customel_dataPageID_4609=6233) to see recommendations.

Students owning Macs or Linux should be aware that some courses may use software that only runs on Windows. You can set up a Mac computer with Boot Camp or virtualization software so Windows will also run on it. Watch [this video](#) about using Windows on a Mac. Computers running Linux can also be configured with virtualization software or configured to dual boot with Windows.

**Software:** This course uses Blackboard as the learning management system. You will need a browser and operating system that are listed compatible or certified with the Blackboard version available on the [myMason Portal](#). (See [supported browsers and operating systems](#).) You will certainly need plugins that will allow you to stream videos through Kaltura and YouTube. You will also need PowerPoint and Acrobat reader. It is possible that course materials may need additional software such as [Flash](#), [Java](#), and [Windows Media Player](#), [QuickTime](#) and/or [Real Media Player](#). Your computer should be capable of running current versions of those applications. Also, make sure your computer is protected from viruses by running anti-virus software.

Note: If necessary, please verify with your systems administrators that you will be able to install the necessary applications and that system or corporate firewalls do not block access to any sites or media types.

### **The 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 test 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.

Students may not reproduce (including uploading to the Internet) any portion of any test. Students who attempt to photograph or in any way capture information about tests for others' use will be reported for an honor violation, even if the violation happens after the end of the term.

### **Miscellaneous**

The final day to add or drop with no tuition liability is Friday February 12th. Final drop deadline is Tuesday February 16<sup>th</sup>.

Barring a major disruption of Blackboard, University holidays will not affect our schedule given that you can work within the timeline provided and adjust the pace as you see fit.

Notice of mandatory reporting of sexual assault, interpersonal violence, and stalking. As a faculty member, I am designated a "Responsible Employee," and must report all disclosures of sexual assault, interpersonal violence, and stalking to Mason's Title IX Coordinator per University Policy 1412. If you wish to speak with someone confidentially, please contact one of Mason's confidential resources, such as Student Support and

Advocacy Center (703-993-2380). You may seek assistance from Mason's Title IX Coordinator by calling 703-993-8730.

Official Communications via GMU Email: Mason uses email 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.

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.

Information about Student Privacy and Student Rights under FERPA can be found at:

<http://registrar.gmu.edu/ferpa/>

A variety of student services are available:

- Distance Education Services, University Libraries (<http://library.gmu.edu/distance> )
- Writing Center (<http://writingcenter.gmu.edu/> )
- Counseling and Psychological Services (<http://caps.gmu.edu/> )

## **Course Requirements and Assignments**

### **Unit Quizzes 50%**

Each of the five modules will have a quiz that covers both the lectures and the readings. These quizzes will primarily consist of multiple-choice questions and may have 1-2 short essay questions. The quizzes will have a time limit. Quizzes are open book, but only class materials are allowed on the quiz – no use of internet searches, discussions with others in or out of the class, etc. The quiz must be completed by the assigned due date or will receive a score of zero, except under extraordinary circumstances, or arranged in advance.

### **Discussion Posts 30%**

For each module there will be several lectures, external videos, and readings. The purpose of the discussion responses is to relate content in the module in answering the starter question. The discussions will happen in GROUPS. Each person is assigned to a discussion GROUP of 7-10 students. Threads in the group questions just for the group. You will be assigned roles that you are expected to fulfill including Starter, Critic, Connector, or Secretary.

Starter – you will need to provide the initial post(s) for the group. This means that your post is due on Saturday, so that other people have time to well in advance of when other people need to post.

Critic – your job is to disagree with the initial post in some fashion. You may also address what's missing from the starter response or where might things may be going off track. You need to provide your response by Monday.

Connector – your job is to connect ideas that have come up to materials that have come up in other aspects of the course. This might be from this unit, or other units. You need to provide your response by Monday.

Secretary – your job is to provide a draft ‘final’ response on the group’s behalf. If there is more than one secretary, you will need to work with the other secretary. You need to post a draft by Monday to your group for feedback and a final post to the class discussion board by Tuesday at noon.

No matter what your role, you are expected to respond to two other posts by classmates by Saturday.

On the group discussion board, informal/colloquial responses are okay. However, for the post that is to the class discussion board, more formal language should be used with correct spelling, punctuation, and grammar. Students are expected to express understandings based on the lecture/readings, even if relying a personal anecdote. Discussion posting deadlines may vary.

### Interview 20%

Each student will conduct an interview/observation and write up what they found. The purpose of the interview is the see how concepts that were discussed in class play out in real life. The interview is to center on a particular age range. After conducting the interview, students will write up a 5-7 page (double spaced) reaction. The reaction will primarily relate what was said in the interview to material from class and from readings. Short quotations may be used in support of your points. Questions asked to the interviewee need to be included as an appendix. Any interview write up submitted after the due date will not be accepted.

The interview is expected to last 30-minutes. Questions should highlight elements raised in class, but they can be far-ranging in scope. The interview does not need to take place in person, but may not take place via email. You have the following options:

1. **Infancy–childhood:** Interview a parent of a young child. Observe the child if you can. Parent may not be your parent.
2. **Adolescence:** Interview an adolescent (in middle or high school). May interview the parent in addition (but not instead) to the adolescent. The adolescent may not be in your immediate family.
3. **Adulthood:** Interview someone over the age of 60. May not be a parent, but may be a grandparent.

All interview write-ups are due on April 27<sup>th</sup> at noon. Submissions will be checked for plagiarism using SafeAssign.

Grades will be calculated as follows:

> 93% = A, 90 – 92 = A-

87 – 89 = B+, 83 – 86 = B, 80 – 82 = B-

77 – 79 = C+, 73 – 76 = C, 70 – 72 = C-

60 – 69 = D

< 60 = F

## Course Schedule

Week Beginning

Week Date Topics Santrock Chapter or External Video Link

### MODULE 1 – PRENATAL, BRAIN, AND PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Week Monday

Week 1 Jan. 25 Syllabus Intro  
The lifespan perspective Ch. 1 (The Life-span Perspective)  
Paul Baltes Life-span Perspective <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=89S-s51RPPs>

**Due by Tuesday  
at Noon,**

**February 2nd** Group Discussion: Group Introductions

Week 2 Tuesday, Feb. 2 Prenatal Development; How a baby develops during pregnancy Ch. 2 (Prenatal Development; Birth and Postpartum Period)  
Why Don't all Babies Thrive?

Brain Development; Preventing Shaken Baby Syndrome Ch. 3 (The Brain)

**Due by Tuesday  
at Noon,**

**February 9th** Class Discussion Post: The Nun Study

Week 3 Tuesday, Feb. 9th Physical Development & Motor Skills Ch. 3 (Body Growth and Change); Ch. 5 (Motor Development)

Physical Development: The First Five Years on YouTube (19:10) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0JNqwegKzOg>

**Due by Tuesday  
at Noon,**

**February 16th** Quiz 1

### MODULE 2 – SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL & COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT

Week Tuesday, Attachment; Ch. 10 (Attachment and Love)

k 4 Feb. 16th Konrad Lorenz - Imprinting, Harry Harlow - Contact Comfort  
 This Emotional Life Ep. 1 on YouTube (2:30-19:10) <https://youtu.be/9VybK30Ez0?t=148>  
 Social-Emotional Development Ch. 10 (Exploring Emotion; Development of Emotion); <https://casel.org/core-competencies/>  
 Babies | Love by Netflix on YouTube (47:50) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YOv5jDFtvsI>  
**Due by Tuesday at Noon, February 23rd** Group Discussion: Emotion Recognition

Wee Tuesday, k 5 Feb 23rd Cognitive Development: Piaget Ch. 6 (Piaget's Theory of Cognitive Development; Applying and Evaluating Piaget's Theory)  
 The Developing Child (27:33)(you can skip object permanance portion)  
 Cognitive Development: Information Processing Ch. 7 (The Information-Processing Approach; Thinking)  
 How your brain's executive function works -- and how to improve it <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qAC-5hTK-4c>  
**Due by Tuesday at Noon, March 2nd** Class Discussion Post: Emotion Dysregulation

Wee Tuesday, k 6 Mar. 2nd Perception How does Attention affect Perception (link) <http://www.gla.ac.uk/departments/philosophy/cspe/illusions/changeblindness/>  
 Nova: Change Blindness <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VkrrVozZR2c>  
 Young schizophrenic at her mind's mercy [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UTUMt05\\_nCI&feature=emb\\_logo](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UTUMt05_nCI&feature=emb_logo)

**Due by Tuesday  
at Noon, March  
9th Quiz 2**

### MODULE 3 – LANGUAGE AND ADOLESCENT DEVELOPMENT

Language  
Development 1, 2,  
3, 4;

Week 7 Tuesday, Mar. 9th Broca's/Wernicke's Aphasia Ch. 9

*Babies | First Words by Netflix on YouTube (50:41)*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BFtbXwnBRg8>

**Due by Tuesday  
at Noon, March**

**16th** Group Discussion: Possible Interviewees

Week 8 Tuesday, Mar. 16th Adolescence Problems During Adolescence Identity Peers and the Sociocultural World Ch. 11 (Identity)

World

Ch. 15 (Peer Relations in Childhood and Adolescence; Friendship)

**Due by Tuesday  
at Noon, March**

**23rd** Class Discussion Post: Teen Drivers

Week 9 Tuesday, Mar., 23th Sex, Gender, and Sexuality - and Culture

<https://nobaproject.com/modules/the-psychology-of-human-sexuality>

Girl toys vs boy toys: The experiment - BBC Stories

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nWu44AqF0iI>

Gender identity: 'How colonialism killed my culture's gender fluidity'

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AqEgsHGiK-s>

**Due by Tuesday  
at Noon, March**

**30th** Quiz 3

## MODULE 4 – ADULTHOOD I

Tuesday,

Week 10 Mar., 30th Stages of Moral Reasoning Ch. 13  
Moral Personality Parenting Ch. 14 (Parenting)

**Due by Tuesday  
at Noon, April**

**6th** Group Discussion: How were you parented?

Week 11 Tuesday, April 6th Motivation & Rewards Ch. 16 (Achievement)  
The surprising truth about what motivates us  
Emerging Adulthood; Why does it take so long to grow up today?

**Due by Tuesday  
at Noon, April**

**13th** Final Class Discussion Post: Emerging Adulthood

Tuesday,

Week 12 April 13th Relationships & Marriage; Divorce Ch. 14 (The Diversity of Adult Lifestyles)  
Love Sense: from Infant to Adult (Sue Johnson and Ed Tronick) [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OyCHT9AbD\\_Y](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OyCHT9AbD_Y)

Sue Johnson Emotionally Focused Couples Therapy (EFT) in Action Video <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xaHms5z-yuM>

**Due by Tuesday  
at Noon, April**

**20th** Quiz 4

## MODULE 5 – ADULTHOOD II

Week Tuesday, Work & Ch. 16 (Careers, Work, and Retirement)

k 13 April  
20th

Retirement

Q&A: We're in  
our 30s. How  
much should we  
be saving  
(article/video)

Ch. 3 (Longevity and Biological Aging), More Antioxidants in your Diet  
Biological Aging May Not Mean Better Health

**Due by Tuesday  
at Noon, April  
27th INTERVIEWS**

Tuesday,  
Wee April  
k 14 27th

Successful Aging;  
Jack LaLanne at  
Age 95; Wii  
Bowling

**Due by Friday,  
end of day, April  
30th Quiz 5**