

Instructor

Vjosa Poshka | she/her (What's this?)

Email

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Questions? Concerns? Tea?

Feel free to email me with questions or concerns you may have after reviewing the syllabus and FAQs on Blackboard. I will do my best to respond to all emails within two business days. Alternatively, I highly encourage you to check-in with me via Zoom by scheduling a meeting (see "Schedule Meeting" tab on Blackboard or click [here](#)). **Short and sweet touch bases >>> drawn out email threads.**

Required Text

Papers, texts, and any other resources are posted on Blackboard.

Add/Drop Deadlines

Last day to add/drop with no tuition liability: 5/19

Course Overview

- Surveying basic concepts and principles of physical, cognitive, social, and emotional development across the lifespan via theory, empirical findings, different points of view
- Fulfilling Mason CORE (Social & Behavioral Sciences Learning Outcomes)

Course Objectives

- Learning the basics of developmental psychology
- Delving into how researchers develop & test hypotheses
- Applying in-class concepts to everyday situations

Grading Scale

A+	97-100	A	93-96	A-	90-92
B+	87-89	B	83-86	B-	80-82
C+	77-79	C	73-76	C-	70-72
		D	65-69		
		F	Failing		

Course Requirements**MEME/GIF/BLURB**

x2, 5 points each
(10%)

Submit one meme/GIF (or write a 1-2 sentence blurb) during the first week of classes describing how you feel going into the course; and another at the end describing how you feel that the class is over.

Goal: ease in and out of the course

REFLECTIONS

x5, 10 points each
(50%)

Informal, one-page reflections on course topics of your choice.

Goal: demonstrate how you digest content; maintain engagement; encourage you to think critically about the material

COMM TASKS

x5, 4 points each
(20%)

Effective communication is key in navigating academia and more generally, our lives. Throughout the session, you will be expected to complete informal tasks that facilitate our communication skills.

Goal: maintain engagement; develop and encourage effective communication skills

INTERVIEW

20 points total
(20%)

You will initially select two relatively specific constructs of interest discussed in the course. Next, you will formulate at least four questions related to each construct (for a total of at least eight questions) that reveal your understanding of the course material. You may have to review lectures ahead of time and refer to additional sources in coming up with your interview questions. You will submit your questions, notes on the interviewee's responses, and a one-page summary on the main takeaways of the interview, their significance, and their connection to course material. Your questions should be inspired by the material we discuss in the course, and tap into the interviewee's lived experiences. Moreover, they should be open-ended and circle back to theory and empirical findings throughout.

Goal: approach topics in psychology critically by developing and providing means for investigating areas of interest; expand on acquired knowledge; incorporate other individuals' lived experiences in research-based informal investigations

Me, Myself, and I: As Beyoncé's legendary song goes, it's all we've got in the end. Your health and well-being are priority. Let me know how I can support your experience as a student in this course.

Technology: The use of technology—a device able to connect to the internet—as well as access to Blackboard, and your MasonLive email account are required for this course. Direct all emails to me with the subject line **“PSYCH 211-Your Name”**.

Deadlines & Extensions

Late submissions are no fun. Given that all assignments are due by 5pm, same-day submissions after 5pm will be penalized by 10%. For every day that an assignment is submitted past the deadline, there will be a 20% assignment penalty.

Any messages regarding upcoming assignments must be sent at least 48 hours prior to the assignment deadline to ensure an in-time response from me. If you send me a message about an assignment a few hours before the assignment is due, I can't commit to replying before the deadline, and you will accept responsibility for not submitting work on time. Asking questions about assignments as a delay tactic will not be tolerated.

Extensions on assignments will be reserved only for 1) serious hospitalization or illness that has been documented and judged by me as preventing you from a) preparing adequately for the retention checks; b) reviewing the asynchronous lectures, or c) completing any other assignment; 2) death or serious illness in your family; 3) religious holidays that you may recognize. Documentation must be provided by health officials (e.g., a physician or member of the Student Health Services staff) in the case of illness; an immediate family member in the case of death or serious illness in the family; and official paperwork in the case of court dates. Decisions regarding extensions/makeups under these circumstances will be made on a case-by-case basis.

Accommodations: Disability Services at Mason is committed to upholding the letter and spirit of the laws that ensure equal treatment of people with disabilities. Please reach out if you require accommodations.

Honor Code: Mason's Honor Code requires all members of this community to maintain the highest standards of academic honesty and integrity. Cheating, plagiarism, lying, and stealing are all prohibited. All violations of the Honor Code will be reported to the Honor Committee.

Our online classroom is a safe space, and there are ground rules that apply to everyone. We commit to upholding fairness, equity, and celebrating diversity. **We will:** make this class welcoming and open for everyone; be aware of our prejudices and how our words affect others; and give others room to explore, define, embrace and express their identities.

Title IX: George Mason University is committed to providing a learning, living and working environment that is free from discrimination and a campus that is free of sexual misconduct and other acts of interpersonal violence in order to promote community well-being and student success. We encourage students who believe that they have been sexually harassed, assaulted or subjected to sexual misconduct to seek assistance and support. As a designated *“Responsible Employee”*, I am required to report all disclosures of sexual assault, interpersonal violence, and stalking.

Meme/GIF/Blurb (10%)

At the beginning of the session, you need to find a meme/GIF or write a 1-2 sentence blurb describing how you feel about the course based on what you know, so far. It has to be clean and appropriate. Other than that, you're free to find memes/GIFs online and submit them as they are or tweak them, or make your own. Take the creative liberty and run with it! You will do the same thing at the end of the semester, but in that case, your meme/GIF/blurb should reflect how you feel about the class at that point.

Reflections (50%)

Throughout the session, you will submit five reflections on one of the topics that we cover in the course. Importantly, these reflections are **not** summaries of the material. Instead, they are meant to be informal, short and sweet, one-page papers that demonstrate your thought process. Consider reflections an opportunity for you to ask [questions](#) (e.g., "OK, I get that children like helpers over hinderers, but can we really say they understand when someone is helping or not?"), [offer opinions](#) (e.g., "we should keep pushing these interventions but maybe we should also look into how SES affects these things"), [pull from personal experiences](#) (e.g., "I'm a bilingual and I have a hard time accepting claims that you're better at your native language once you learn a foreign language"), or [make connections](#) (e.g., "this reminds me of sociology class where we talked about the dichotomy of individualism vs. collectivism").

Each reflection is worth ten points (5 reflections = 50 points = 50% of your final grade).

Thorough elaboration of topic demonstrated through questions, opinions, connections, etc.	7
12-pt font size, Arial/Times New Roman, double-spaced, one-page, file opens correctly (i.e, uncorrupted) and is reader-friendly, no semantic/syntactical errors	3

Comm(unication) Tasks (20%)

Given that communication is a key element to navigating the academic and social world, it is pivotal that we develop our skills in interacting with one another. We will cover email etiquette (i.e., emailing faculty), paraphrasing information, and others. Detailed instructions for each comm task and grading criteria will be provided on Blackboard.

Interview (20%)

You will demonstrate your understanding of developmental constructs by evaluating theoretical and empirical claims and relating them to information obtained through an interview.

Step 1: Select interviewee and constructs

Choose who you would like to interview. Note: the age of the interviewee may determine what constructs you settle on. You are free to interview whomever you would like (e.g., friends, family members)—yet, in order to get as much out of this exercise as possible, it is valuable to interview individuals with lived experiences different from yours.

You need to select **two** constructs of development that interest you (e.g., identity, parenting, language, aging, etc.), and think about how you might assess these aspects during an interview. Make sure to match the questions to a particular stage of development. For example, if you interview a teen TikTok sensation, make sure the questions refer to adolescence (e.g., don't ask about pretend play!).

Step 2: Create interview questions

Construct a list of at least 4 questions per construct of interest (totaling at least 8 questions). The questions you decide upon should focus on the constructs which means they should be inspired by theories, research findings, and everyday examples that we touch upon in the course. You will want to create a list prior to the interview, and take notes during the interview. Finally, you will write a one-page summary on how the interview went, and your main takeaways from the discussion between you and your interviewee. In creating your questions, make that they are open-ended and provide sufficient context and explanation of theory/claims.

Example: Your chosen construct is **bilingualism**. Your interviewee is a friend who grew up in a bilingual environment.

Exhibit A: Do you consider yourself to be bilingual?

Exhibit B: One of the challenges in the domain of bilingualism is how we define and measure bilingualism. Some researchers argue that language proficiency—how well you can engage in two or more languages—is the metric to go with. INSERT EXAMPLE OF LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY HERE. According to this framework, given that you have taken Other researchers claim that language dominance, which encompasses the importance and use of one language rather than the other, is more representative. INSERT EXAMPLE OF LANGUAGE DOMINANCE HERE. In your experience, to what extent do you consider language proficiency to be weighted more in defining bilingualism over dominance, or vice versa?

Exhibit A is a very narrow question, and does not demonstrate any connection to or understanding of course material, so it allows for little elaboration on the interviewee's part. **Exhibit B** illustrates different empirical claims & includes examples—all of which inform an open-ended question.

Interview Grading Rubric

Points	Construct 1	Construct 2	Takeaway Summary	Technical
5	Identification and clear support of first construct from course material, clear connections made between course material and interview questions	Identification and support of second construct from course material, clear connections made between course material and interview questions	Several takeaways included, significance stated, clear connections to course material	No errors in spelling, grammar, or formatting, reader-friendly
4	Identification and clear support of first construct from course material, some substantial connections between course material and questions	Identification and clear support of second construct from course material, some substantial connections between course material and questions	Several takeaways included, and explanation of why they stand out as significant	1 or 2 errors in spelling, grammar, or formatting, reader-friendly
3	Identification and clear support of first construct from course material, loose connections	Identification and clear support of second construct from course material, loose connections	Several takeaways included	3 errors in spelling, grammar, or formatting, reader-friendly
2	Identifies first construct, mainly mentions class material, little discussion of class material	Identifies second construct, mainly mentions class material, little discussion of class material	One takeaway included clearly, significance explained	4 errors in spelling, grammar, or formatting, reader-friendly
1	Identifies first construct, no discussion of class material	Identifies second construct, no discussion of class material	One takeaway included clearly	5 errors in spelling, grammar, formatting, not reader-friendly
0	No second construct is identified or discussed	No second construct is identified or discussed	No summary/ takeaway is included	6+ errors in spelling, grammar, formatting, not reader-friendly

Additional points/criteria:

-5 points for the use of direct quotes in interview questions

-2 points for each source referenced in interview questions and not cited in APA format i.e., missing in-question citation and full reference

Note: I will not look at or “pre-grade” your interview questions prior to the deadline. If you have general questions, please set up a time to meet and go over them.

Course Topics & Deadlines (subject to change)

Topics
Syllabus, Introduction
The Life-Span Perspective and Biological Beginnings
Physical Development and Biological Aging
Health
Motor, Sensory, and Perceptual Development
Cognitive Developmental Approaches
Information Processing
Intelligence
Language Development
Emotional Development
The Self, Identity and Personality
Gender and Sexuality
Race, Ethnicity, Intersectionality
Moral Development, Values, & Religion
Families, Lifestyles, and Parenting
Peers and the Sociocultural World
Schools, Achievement, and Work
Death, Dying and Grieving

Assignment	Deadline
Meme/GIF/Blurb #1	5pm on 5/19
Comm task #1	5pm on 5/21
Reflection #1 (on any topic)	5pm on 5/24
Comm task #2	5pm on 5/26
Reflection #2 (on any topic)	5pm on 5/28
Comm task #3	5pm on 6/1
Reflection #3 (on any topic)	5pm on 6/3
Comm task #4	5pm on 6/7
Reflection #4 (on any topic)	5pm on 6/9
Comm task #5	5pm on 6/11
Reflection #5 (on any topic)	5pm on 6/14
Meme/GIF/Blurb #2	5pm on 6/15
Interview	5pm on 6/15