Psychology 592-002: Infancy
Fall 2012: Mondays 1:30-4:10, Innovation Hall 338

Rachel Chazan Cohen, PhD
Office Hours: T & Th 1:30-2:30, or by appt
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Course Description: This class will cover the developmental period from birth to age three and the major developmental domains (neurological, perception, cognition, language, emotion, and social development) while focusing on the family context and the parent-child relationship as the proximal environment within which development occurs. We will discuss theoretical, methodological, and applied issues such as interventions and policies for infants and their families. The course is designed as a seminar in which graduate student scholars prepare for each class by reviewing the readings in depth and preparing to discuss issues, ask questions, and apply what they have learned.

Format and requirements: Most classes will consist mainly of class discussions, with some lecture, and article presentations by students (20 minutes). Each class will have a 10 minute break.

- This course is designed to be a discussion-based seminar and thus reliant on all participants. It is imperative that everyone come to class prepared to participate. Each class will include a discussion of a real world application of the week’s topic. Students should come to class prepared to talk about themes/issues/questions across the readings that strike them as interesting, as well as reactions to the material, either theory or empirical. For example: Are there parts of an argument in a chapter or article that especially appeals to you or that you disagree with? Are the measures and research design appropriate for the questions being studied? Are the conclusions justified? How can this information be applied, either in early interventions or in educational/child care settings?
- At the beginning of the semester, each will choose an empirical article related to the course material on a specific day. Please have your topic (date) chosen by 9/24. On the selected day, you will present the article and your critique to the class. You should be prepared to present for about 10 minutes on the research questions, design and findings, incorporating your views on strengths and weaknesses. This will be followed by class discussion/questions led by you.
- The final project will be the proposal of an intervention (prevention, intervention for a specific disorder, curriculum, or community level intervention) for infants and toddlers as well as an evaluation. The 20-25 double-spaced page paper will be evaluated on the basis of the theoretical framework and the justification for the intended population, type of intervention, evaluation design, and proposed measures. An abstract (1 page) will be submitted by November 12, when each student will very briefly discuss in class. Each student should schedule an individual meeting with me to discuss their project. Students will give a 10-15 minute presentation on their project in the last class. The final project will include (a) 1 page abstract; (b) description of planned intervention and targets for intervention; (c) literature review that provides rationale for intervention; (d) the proposed research design including measures (e) a brief results section that states the hypotheses and tells how the data will be analyzed.

Evaluation:
Participation 25%
Article presentation (sign up by 9/24) 10%
In-class presentation of Intervention plan (abstract and final) 15%
Intervention plan (abstract and full paper) 50%

All students must adhere to the university honor policy. If you are a student with 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.

August 27: Introduction and Theories of Infant Development

September 10: Prenatal and Neonatal Development
Chapter 4 of text

September 17: No class Rosh Hashannah

September 24: Research Methods
Chapters 1 & 3 in text

October 1: The Nervous System and Sensorimotor Development

October 9 (Tuesday—no class October 8): Cultural context

October 15: In class movie—Babies
**October 22: Parent-Child Relationship and Attachment**

Chapter 11 of text


Leiberman, A. F., Angels in the Nursery. *Infant Mental Health Journal*.

**October 29: Emotional Development and Temperament  (Abstract due)**

Chapter 10 of text


Discussion about final projects

**November 5: Development of Communication and Language**

Chapter 9 of text


**November 12: Cognitive and Intellectual Development**

Chapters 7 & 8 of text


**Abstracts due for final project**

**November 19: Environmental risk and poverty**


**November 26: Longitudinal Outcomes of Early Development**


**December 3: Class presentations of final projects**

Chapter 12 of text

**CLASS POLICIES**

1) **Technology**: Cell phones must be turned off during class. Computers may only be used off-line to take notes.

2) **Official Communications via GMU E-mail**: 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.

3) **Academic Integrity**: Academic dishonesty consists of cheating, fabricating, facilitating academic dishonesty, and plagiarism. Instances of this include submitting someone else’s work as your own, submitting your own work from another class, and failing to cite information properly. Academic dishonesty in any form will **NOT** be tolerated and any sign of dishonesty will be reported to the appropriate University officials. Students should refer to the University (http://www.gmu.edu/departments/unilife/honorcode.html) for more information.

4) **Special Needs**: If you are a student with a disability and you need academic accommodations, please see me and contact the Disability Resource Center (DRC; 222 Student Union I) at 703-993-2474. All academic accommodations must be arranged through that office.

5) **Religious Observances**: Students will not be penalized in any way for participation in religious observances. It is the student’s responsibility to contact me prior to the absence to arrange for make-up work or examination.

6) **Calendar Issues**:
   a. Last day to Add course—September 4
   b. Last day to Drop course—September 28