Welcome to Social and Emotional Development in Children! In this course, we will examine significant issues in social and emotional development. This course is designed to give the student a thorough grounding in developmental theories describing children’s (1) abilities to interact and form relationships with others; and (2) their emotional lives. Empirical results from eclectic theoretical and methodological perspectives also will be emphasized. In class and in our writing, we’ll be articulating theories and ideas clearly and concisely, unpacking arguments into their components and analyzing the logic of these parts, integrating the different aspects of development, and generating new ideas based on theory & research. Every class period we will end by discussing “how can these issues/findings be applied?”

Course Format and Requirements:
- We will hold this class as a true seminar of thinkers. I will lecture at the beginning of each class period. The majority of the class, however, will be discussion-based and thus reliant on the energies of all the participants. Given this format and the size of the class, it is imperative that everyone come prepared to participate in each class (having read assigned textbook chapters and articles on Blackboard).
- You must write Thought Paragraphs for each class (Weeks 2 through 15), explained later in the syllabus. These will be used to facilitate small group discussion and will be submitted at the end of each class.
- You must give a presentation with a partner. This presentation will summarize, analyze, and integrate all of the readings due that class period (textbook chapters and articles). This presentation should be between 15 and 20 minutes in length. Do not simply lecture--be creative! Some suggestions are adding visuals, role playing, having questions for discussion, discussing application of the topics, creating an in-service training session based on the readings, relating the topic to your primary field of interest, etc. Submit a short presentation paper (four pages) at the end of the class on which your presentation was based.
- A research grant proposal will be developed throughout the semester. Proposed research should address a carefully delineated question reflecting your knowledge about issues in social-emotional development. Ideally, the chosen topic will have its origins in the readings/class discussion, but the final package will be a unique creation based on the required readings, plenty of additional reading, and the author’s particular interests, skills, knowledge base, and personal flair. See the end of the syllabus for details.

Evaluation
Class participation 15%; thought paragraphs 15%; presentation 15%; presentation paper 15%; grant proposal 30%; grant proposal oral presentation 5%, suggestions for improvements to colleagues’ grant proposals (after oral presentations) 5%.

The last day to add this class is 9/4. The last day to drop without tuition penalty is 9/28. If you are a student with a disability and you need academic accommodations, please see me and contact the Disability Resource Center (DRC) at 703-993-2474. All academic accommodations must be arranged through that office.

Five points will be subtracted each day papers are late. All work is to be done individually and according to the letter and spirit of the George mason University Honor Code. Essentially, when you are responsible for a task, you will perform that task. When you rely on someone else’s work in an aspect of the performance of that task, you will give full credit in the proper, accepted form. Another aspect of academic integrity is the free play of ideas. Vigorous discussion and debate are encouraged in this course, with the firm expectation that all aspects of the class will be conducted with civility and respect for differing ideas, perspectives, and traditions. You must use your MasonLIVE email account to receive important University information, including messages related to this class. See http://masonlive.gmu.edu for more information.
Thought Paragraphs:

These paragraphs will be used as a springboard for small group discussion and submitted to the professor at the end of class. These will serve multiple goals—to apprise us what each other thought was important in the readings, what was confusing or illogical, where the connections are to other work, and in what new and interesting directions the work leads us. They will follow a five-part format. They are graded pass/fail, but are absolutely essential for class success.

The first paragraph should summarize what the big points are for the class meeting. In the readings, you have “the answers,” and the goal of this first paragraph is to identify what the questions are (what the researcher was attempting to study and determine). Please indicate how completely you think the question is answered, and put asterisks by the questions you are most interested in exploring during class time. You are not merely summarizing the articles—you are integrating across articles about the important main points.

The second paragraph should be an analysis. You have two choices for this paragraph. You can either: (a) find a problem with the research you read, and/or (b) ask a specific question about how something was done. For the first choice, you can analyze whether the goals of the research were actually achieved, thus investigating whether the theory and method are walking together hand in hand. Or you can ask whether alternative hypotheses might as easily explain the data. Or you can ask whether cohort effects might explain developmental differences; or the particular type of statistical analysis that was used; etc. Also use the second choice when there are statistical analyses, claims, connections that you do not understand (e.g., “The authors claim significance for hypothesis 1, but I do not see where they demonstrate this”).

The third paragraph focuses on integration. Integration can include connections between or to (a) the readings within a weekly topic, (b) material that we covered earlier in the semester, (c) content from other courses, general readings, etc., and (d) one’s own areas of expertise.

The fourth paragraph involves generating ideas for the future. Weaving hypotheses is a lot of fun, and a central skill in psychology. You can begin with “if-then” statements, or “The real question really is . . . and I predict that . . . .” Or you can add a twist to someone else’s hypothesis that suggests different outcomes (or causes) by age, ethnicity, gender, life experience, etc. Or try to figure a distinct application to practice with typically or atypically developing children. Always try to come up with something uniquely yours in this paragraph.

The fifth paragraph should contain a minimum of three questions, honing the most interesting or confusing or relevant aspects of the first four paragraphs, in a form that can be presented for small-group discussion. Questions should be open-ended and complex enough to generate a robust discussion, rather than requiring a one-sentence or yes/no answer.

Research grant proposals:

The proposal should be written in NIH grant proposal format. The following should be included: (a) the aims of the proposed research; (b) a relevant literature review; (c) the significance of the proposed research; (d) a clear and detailed method section; (e) a brief results section that reiterates the hypotheses and tells how the data will be analyzed; and (f) a human subjects ethics assurance. Proposal packets from NIH are available on the web and can be used as templates. While you should model your proposal after the format of an NIH grant proposal, content is much more important than form so do not get bogged down in the details of how it should be formatted. Your proposal should be complete and thoughtful, but is not expected to be fundable! Maximum length: 10 single-spaced pages.

You will give a brief oral presentation of your ideas (about 10 minutes) to the class, approximately one-third and two-thirds of the way through the semester. The purpose of the presentations are (a) to ensure that you begin and continue to work on your grant proposal; (b) to pick your colleagues’ brains for their expertise and good ideas, and (c) to help your colleagues develop and improve their ideas.

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<th>Date</th>
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| 1. 8/30 (or 8/23) | Greetings, introductions, logistics | **SH** Introduction by the Editors; Chapters 1 &4 *(when beginning a new section in Smith and Hart, please read their introduction as a general rule)*  
**MDAC** pp.1-18, all Part III  
| 2. 9/6 | The Study of Social Development: Theoretical Perspectives and Methodologic al Issues | **SH** Chapters 2, 3  
**MDAC** pp 40-70  
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Official Communications via GMU E-mail: Mason uses electronic mail to provide official information to students. Examples include communications from course instructors, notices form 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.