

PSYC 313 – Child Development (Spring 2024)
Online Asynchronous

Instructor: Sabine Doebel, Ph.D., sdoebel@gmu.edu

Weekly Office Hour: Fridays at 2pm on Zoom

Note: I aim to respond to emails within 24 hours but may take longer weekends/holidays.

Course Description

Children around the world grow up in vastly different environments and yet face a similar challenge—they must grow up to become competent members of their societies. How do they achieve this? Human childhoods are long in comparison to other mammals, yet it is nevertheless amazing how much a human child can learn in a relatively short period of time. In this course, you'll be introduced to theories and research that reveal fascinating truths about child development and how it happens. We will start with theories and the scientific method and, with this foundation, we will explore and learn about social, emotional, and cognitive development starting from before birth all the way to adolescence.

Learning Objectives

At the end of this class, you will be able to:

1. Describe and apply key concepts, methods, and theories in the study of child development;
2. Understand the challenges and strengths that characterize children at different ages;
3. Understand strengths and limitations of methods used to study children at different ages;
4. Think fluently about the role of context and culture in development;
5. Apply what you learn about development to support and advocate for others.

Course Readings

We will use the below textbook in this course which you can obtain at the bookstore or via Amazon. There are electronic versions that are more affordable than the print version. You will only be expected to closely review the content I address in the course.

Tamis-Lemonda, Catherine. *Child Development: Context, Culture, and Cascades*. First edition.

Course Website

We will use Blackboard as the primary website from which you will be able to access course content, assignments, and assessments. Each week's content will be found within a content folder.

Asking Questions of the Professor

Questions concerning your grade and participation, accommodations, and things of that nature should be sent from your gmu address to my gmu address. Friendly tip: when communicating with your profs, beginning your email with “Dear Professor” or “Hi Professor” is a good practice. You can expect that I will always address you respectfully.

Grade Components

Weekly “Journal Entry” Assignment (45 points; 45% of grade)

These one-page assignments will be due every Sunday at 11:59pm EST on Blackboard. You will receive 1 point for submitting these by the due date for a total of 15 points *simply for submitting the assignment on time*. You will not receive the “on time” point if you submit late or if what you submit is obviously incomplete. These submissions will not be graded for content until the end of the semester. At the end of the semester, you will resubmit these assignments in one single document and will receive a holistic grade for your assignments (~2 points per page, for a total of 30 possible points). Specific instructions will be provided prior to each week’s assignment. Assignments must address the prompts to receive full points.

Quizzes (30%)

There will be quizzes each week, due on Sundays at 11:59EST on Blackboard. The number of items on the quizzes will vary but will typically be 8 multiple choice questions and will cover content from the textbook and lecture. There may be bonus credit.

Final Exam (25%)

The exam will be held on Blackboard on Friday May 3rd, 2024. Please take a moment now to block this date off in your schedule. The exam will be available from 8am that day and you will have 1 hour to complete it once you start it. Like the midterm, the exam will consist of ~40 questions, a mix of multiple choice, true/false, and fill-in-the-blank that cover content from the whole semester. The exam will be completed remotely via Blackboard. Like the midterm, you cannot leave the exam once started (if you switch tabs you may risk losing your progress). I will share a study guide later in the semester. Those who miss the exam will earn a zero on this portion of the course, likely resulting in a failing grade.

Professor’s Policy Regarding Deadlines for This Course

If you submit the weekly reflection assignment late, you will not get the ‘in time’ point. If quizzes are submitted late, you will not lose points but I strongly encourage you to keep up with the weekly schedule.

Other General Class Policies

Inclusivity

Everyone is welcome in my class. I value individuals and their differences including but not limited to race, ethnicity, gender expression and identity, sexual orientation, national origin, socioeconomic status, first language, religion, age, and disability. Discrimination of any kind

will not be endorsed or tolerated. This course acknowledges and embraces diverse experiences and perspectives.

Gender identity and pronoun use

If you like, you can share your gender pronouns with me and how best to address you in class and via email. I use she/her and you can address me as “Prof. Doebel” or “Prof” for short!

Email policy

As noted, I aim to respond to messages within 24 h during the week. Please allow more time for emails sent on or just before weekends and holidays.

Late Work

Please aim to complete your work according to the schedule to the best of your ability, as you may find it difficult to catch up otherwise.

Grading Scale

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

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. If it becomes known to me that you may have violated the honor code, I am required to refer this to the Office of Academic Integrity. This applies to any suspected use of AI to complete quizzes or assignments. Familiarize yourself with the honor code and what happens if you are referred for an HC violation: <https://oai.gmu.edu/mason-honor-code/>

Accommodations

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.

Notice of Mandatory Reporting of Sexual Assault, Interpersonal Violence, and Stalking

I am a 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 (703-993-3686). 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.

Deadlines for Adding and Dropping this Class

It is your responsibility to know these deadlines and to drop the class if you decide not to continue. Please see the academic calendar here: <https://registrar.gmu.edu/calendars/>

Information about Student Privacy and Student Rights under FERPA

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

Student Services

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

Class Schedule with Topics and Key Dates

Please see the next page for the schedule with topics and key dates. I will make every effort not to change this schedule and any changes that may occur will be communicated in advance and will not be to your disadvantage.

[Schedule on next page]

Brief Schedule and Key Dates

Week	Week of:	Topic	Tamis-Lemonda Chapter	What is due (by Sunday 11:59EST)
1	01/16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Why study children? What are theories & why are they useful for understanding child development? 	Ch. 1, pp. 2-28	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Journal entry 1 Quiz 1
2	01/22	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conducting research; methods for studying child development; scientific rigor 	Ch. 1, pp. 30-46	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Journal entry 2 Quiz 2
3	01/29	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Heredity, gene x environment interactions, brain development 	Ch. 2, pp. 52-80	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Journal entry 3 Quiz 3
4	02/05	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prenatal development 	Ch. 3, pp. 90-119	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Journal entry 4 Quiz 4
5	02/12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Perceptual and motor development 	Ch. 4, pp. 127-162	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Journal entry 5 Quiz 5
6	02/19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cognitive development in infancy and toddlerhood 	Ch. 5, pp. 170-198	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Journal entry 6 Quiz 6
7	02/26	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Language development 	Ch. 6, pp. 210-239	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Journal entry 7 Quiz 7
8	03/04	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Enjoy your break</i> 	No readings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Journal entry 8 Quiz 8
--	03/11	Emotional & social development; temperament & attachment	Ch. 7, pp. 250-288	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No assignments
9	03/18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cognitive development in early childhood; executive function 	Ch. 9, pp. 327-348	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Journal entry 9 Quiz 9
10	03/25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cognitive development in early childhood; social cognition 	Ch. 9, pp. 349-355	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Journal entry 10 Quiz 10
11	04/01	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Literacy, language, & mathematical understanding 	Ch. 9, pp. 356-372; Ch. 12 (skim)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Journal entry 11 Quiz 11
12	04/08	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Emotional development in early to middle childhood 	Ch. 10, pp. 378-383, Ch. 13, pp. 503-526	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Journal entry 12 Quiz 12
13	04/15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Social development in early to middle childhood 	Ch. 10, pp. 389-414, Ch. 13, pp. 514-540	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Journal entry 13 Quiz 13
14	04/22	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cognitive development in middle childhood 	Ch. 12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Journal entry 14 Quiz 14
15	04/29	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adolescent cognitive, social, & emotional development 	Ch. 15, pp. 588-599; Ch. 16, pp. 624-638	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Submit journal entry 15 <u>with all previous entries in one file.</u> Quiz 15
FINAL EXAM: Friday <u>May 3rd, 2024</u> ← <i>protip: mark this in your calendar now.</i>				