

# INTRODUCTION TO DEVELOPMENTAL PSYCHOLOGY

## PSYB20F - FALL SESSION

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### Objectives:

This course will cover a number of fundamental topics in developmental psychology. Major theories, essential constructs, and current research findings will be discussed in order to understand how the child develops physically, cognitively, emotionally, and socially. Topics are organized chronologically beginning with prenatal development and continuing through selected issues in adolescence and life-span development.

### Text:

Required: Berk. L. E. (1994). Child development (3rd ed.). Toronto, Canada: Allyn and Bacon.

Recommended: Jarvis, P. & Creasey, G. (1994). Study guide for child development (3rd ed.). Toronto, Canada: Allyn & Bacon.

### Course Requirements:

The final mark for this course will be based on two 4-5 page assignments (10% each), two term exams (20% each), and a final exam (40%). Each exam will cover only the material discussed since the last exam, but the final exam WILL BE cumulative.

A written description of the assignments will be handed out in class. The due dates for the assignments are October 19 and November 23. The written assignments are due no later than the end of the class on the due date. Any assignment handed in after 4:00 p.m. on the due date will be marked as one day late. Your mark on any late assignment will be reduced by 2% each day that it is late, and no written assignment will be accepted if it is more than 10 calendar days late. The first late day thus begins at 4:00 p.m. on the due date, the second date begins exactly 24 hours after that, and so on. Please try to make sure your assignments are typed rather than handwritten.

Makeup exams will be scheduled only if necessary. In general, it is better to write the exam when it is scheduled rather than to write a makeup exam. Makeup exams tend to be harder than the original exam.

## SCHEDULE OF LECTURES

<u>Week of</u>		<u>Reading</u>
September 12 -	Overview and introduction to course material and grading History, theory, and current applications	Ch. 1
September 19 -	History, theory, and current applications, cont. Research Strategies	Ch. 2
September 26 -	Biological Foundations Biological Growth	Ch. 3
October 3 -	Infancy - Guest Lecture: Dr. P. J. Szkiba-Day, Psychologist Physical Development	Ch. 4 Ch. 5
October 10 -	Cognitive Development: Theoretical Bases Cognitive Development: Information-processing Models	Ch. 6 Ch. 7
-----	<b>TERM EXAM #1: Thursday, October 12, 5-7 pm</b>	-----
October 17 -	Intelligence Language Development	Ch. 8 Ch. 9
October 24 -	Emotional Development	Ch. 10
October 31 -	Social Development and the Sense of Self	Ch. 11
November 7 -	Moral Development Altruism and Aggression	Ch. 12
November 14 -	Development of Gender-roles	Ch. 13
-----	<b>TERM EXAM #2: Thursday, November 16, 5-7 pm</b>	-----
November 21 -	The Family	Ch. 14
November 28 -	Social Influences on Development	Ch. 15
December 5 -	Overview of course material	

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### Description of Written Assignment

Much of what we know about the development of children and adolescents is based on research conducted by psychologists and members of other disciplines including sociology, anthropology, psychiatry, epidemiology, criminology, and social work. This research is often based on particular theories or models of development. This epistemological approach allows us to extend our conceptual knowledge of child development as well as to contribute empirical information or data to the field.

Some of the research that is conducted in the area of child development is published in one of the many journals in the field. The textbook, Child Developmental, by Laura Berk, for example, contains references to over 2,500 published research studies.

In order to acquaint you with some of the research literature, you will be required to submit two written assignments, that is, critiques of two published research articles, as part of this course. The assignments will involve reading two articles that will be made available to you and (a) describing, in your own words, the content of the articles, methodology, findings, etc., and (b) writing a critical analysis of the article. The description of the article should be about two pages and the critical analysis should be about two to three pages. The assignment should not be more than five (5) typed pages.

To assist you in writing the critiques, I have prepared this guideline for you. There are some things that I will want you to include in your critique and some specific questions that I would like you to address. However, in general, your critiques should (a) be thorough and well-written, (b) demonstrate that you understood the article, and (c) show that you have thought about the study that is described in the article and can comment on its contribution (or lack of) to the field.

In order to get you started, I have prepared a number of questions that should be addressed in your critique. However, these points are meant only as a beginning, to get you started. Your critique should be a thoughtful analysis of the article, its strengths and weaknesses, as well as a thorough description.

- (1) What is the underlying developmental theory that is guiding the authors' study? Is this theory or model stated explicitly or is it implicit in the article?
- (2) What are the hypotheses of the study?
- (3) How many subjects were used in the study? How and from where were they recruited? Describe the procedures used in the study?

- (4) What statistical tests were conducted? Were the assumptions of the statistical tests stated by the authors? What were they?
- (5) Briefly describe in your own words the findings of the study. Were the hypotheses supported or not supported? What did the authors find out about the area under investigation and what were their conclusions? Were the limitations of the study described by the authors? What are some additional limitations of the study that were not mentioned in the article?
- (6) Based on the concepts discussed in the first chapter of the Berk text and throughout, (e.g., organismic versus mechanistic, continuity versus discontinuity, relative emphasis on nature versus nurture), what are the authors' working assumptions about human development?
- (7) Did the title of the article seem appropriate for the article? Suggest another title for this study.
- (8) What changes would you make to the study in order to further our understanding of the concepts or theory tested in the article? What extensions to the study would you suggest?

If you have any questions about the assignments, please do not hesitate to contact me, Janelle LeBoutillier, or Jeff Drugge.