

## Advanced Developmental Psychology: Social Cognitive Development

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**Location/Course Meeting:** Room BV264/Tuesday's 12PM-2PM

### Course Description

Questions about the nature of the human mind and its relationship to other minds have been debated by philosophers for centuries. Over the past century, this debate has spurred much theoretical and empirical work in psychology—particularly, and more recently, in the fields of developmental psychology, attachment, evolutionary psychology, social psychology, and cognitive neuroscience. A recent question in this debate is whether or not feeling emotionally connected to others (a basic component of any relationship) plays an important role in how we develop the capacity to perceive, understand, and represent the feelings, intentions, and thoughts of others (i.e., “theory of mind”). This course will review and evaluate some of the psychological theories and models that address this question, highlight and compare their theoretical contributions, implications, and limits, and review evidence that supports and/or fails to support them. The course will be divided into four parts: (1) an in-depth review of attachment theory across the lifespan, (2) a review of early communication and reciprocity in the parent-infant relationship, (3) a survey of recent studies on the social-cognitive capacities of the neonate and developing infant (e.g., imitation, joint attention, pointing, and the emergence of empathy) involving humans, primarily, but also animals, and (4) a review of brain imaging studies of emotional and cognitive empathy in adults and clinical populations and the recent discovery of mirror neurons. The course will also include material on the major ideas in modern philosophy and psychology that have addressed the nature of the mind and its relationship to others. Taken together, these will provide an overview of the theories and research that advance our understanding of the relational and mental foundations of social cognitive development.

<u>Evaluation</u>	<u>Date(s)</u>	<u>Weight</u>
Quizzes	pop	10%
Reviews (2)	Assigned	10% (5% each)
Midterm	Oct. 23	25%
Research Topic	Oct. 30	5%
Research Proposal	Nov. 27	10%
Final Exam (cumulative)	Exam week	40%

**Quizzes:** To evaluate your understanding of the weekly readings, short quizzes will occasionally be given. The timing and frequency of the quizzes will depend in part on a democratic process, in which students will have the opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge of the weekly readings by posing and responding to questions raised during class discussions. If students appear unfamiliar with the reading during a class discussion, then a quiz may be given. If students seem familiar with the readings during class discussion, it is less likely that a quiz will be given.

**Attendance:** Attendance will be taken twice during the course rather than each week. Each time a student is noted to be absent without a written excuse from a doctor 10% will be subtracted from his or her exam grade.

**Reviews:** The goal of the written reviews is to provide an interesting summary of and critical reflection on the target readings. You will be assigned two, which will be due on the day of the assigned reading. Each review should consist of 3 double-spaced pages. The first page should provide the summary component (weighted one third), and the second and third pages should consist of the critical reflection component (weighted two thirds). The summary component should be relatively straightforward, although figuring out how to summarize the most interesting and essential points in a single page requires some talent and time. The critical reflection component is more challenging and will require much more thought and time than the summary. One way to begin to reflect critically on a reading is to consider the following questions: 1) What is the reading trying to show (main ideas, assumptions, models, methods)? 2) How convincing is it (evidence, arguments used, consistency)? and 3) What significance does it have to society (what are its applications, usefulness, and ethical implications)? *Reviews are due at the end of class.* Reviews will not be accepted late or outside of class unless you can provide me with a medical note.

**Research Proposal Topic:** You will be required to submit a half-page, single-spaced (maximum 250 words) summary and rationale for your research proposal topic that will be worth 5% of your grade on the research proposal—i.e., 5% for the proposal topic and 10% for the proposal. You should address the following questions: What is the purpose of the study? How does your study add to what is known in the literature? How will you conduct the study? What do you expect to find?

**Research Proposal:** The research proposal will be 5–7 double-spaced pages, in APA format, and will be based on library research on any topic related to social cognitive development. You will need to provide a review of the literature relevant to your topic and a rationale for the hypotheses. You will also need to describe the research methods for conducting the proposed study. It will be important to establish the significance of the proposed research to the field. How does the proposed research add to our knowledge or enhance our understanding? Is there a gap in the literature that your proposal addresses? This is just a proposal; no data need be collected. It must be received no later than 4:00 PM on Wednesday, November 28. Papers submitted after this time will be marked down 5% for each weekday that the paper is late.

**Extra Credit (2%).** 5 exam questions with ¼ page answers (before Nov 21)

<b>Meetings</b>	<b>Topics</b>	<b>Readings</b>
Sept 11	Introduction and Overview	-----
Sept 18	Attachment Theory	Jude Cassidy (1999)
Sept 25	Early and Later Attachment	Ross Thompson (1999)
Oct 2	Romantic Attachment	Feeney (1999)
Oct 9	Development of Early Relationships	Trevarthan & Aitken (2001)
Oct 16	Mental Representations of Self and Other	Decety & Chaminade (2003)
Oct 23	<b>Midterm</b>	-----
Oct 30	Social Cognition: Imitation	Meltzoff (2007)
Nov 6	Social Cognition: Pointing	Tomassello, Carpenter, & Liszkowski (2007)
Nov 13	Social Cognition: Social Learning	Csibra & Gergeley (2005)
Nov 20	Social Cognitive Neuroscience: Empathy	Lieberman (2007)
Nov 27	<b>Turn in Research Proposal</b>	-----

## Readings

- Cassidy, J. (1999). The nature of the child's ties. In *Handbook of attachment*, chapter 1, pages 3-20. New York: Guilford.
- Thompson, R. (1999) Early attachment and later development. In *Handbook of attachment*, chapter 13, pages 265-286. New York: Guilford.
- Feeney, J. (1999) Adult romantic attachment and couple relationships. In *Handbook of attachment*, chapter 17, pages 355-377. New York: Guilford.
- Trevarthan, C., & Aitken, K. J. (2001). Infant intersubjectivity: Research, theory, and clinical applications. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry*, 42, 3-48.
- Decety, J., & Chaminade, T. (2003). When the self represents the other: A new cognitive neuroscience view on psychological identification. *Consciousness and Cognition*, 12, 577-596.
- Meltzoff, A. N. (2007)'Like me': A foundation for social cognition. *Developmental Science*, 10, 126-134.
- Tomassello, M., Carpenter, M., & Liszkowski, U. (2007). A new look at infant pointing. *Child Development*, 78, 705-722.
- Csibra, C., & Gergeley, G. (2005). Social learning and social cognition: The case for pedagogy. In M. H. Johnson & Y. Munakata (Eds.), *Processes of Change in Brain and Cognitive Development. Attention and Performance XXI*. Oxford: Oxford University.
- Lieberman, M. D. (2007) Social cognitive neuroscience: A review of core processes. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 58, 259-289.