

PSYD22
Social Processes:
Social-Emotional Development

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Office Hours: Wednesdays 2-3 PM

Course Meetings

Tuesdays, 5:00 PM–7:00 PM; Course Location: Room AA 205

Course Description

The aim of this course is to better understand the role of relationships in forming and maintaining personal identity and in regulating emotions. The readings for this course are on social and emotional development. Students will have the opportunity to integrate the course material and develop their own model of how relationships affect their lives. First we will consider the interplay of social and biological influences that affect how experience is organized, represented, and regulated by the child and by others within the context of early relationships. We will then examine the phenomenon of gender differences in emotion as a special case study of identity development, and we will critique and synthesize social and biological explanations for it. Throughout, we will discuss implications of the course material for parenting, education, and society.

The course will start with a review of theories about socialization drawn from the literatures of early psychoanalysis, attachment, and mainstream developmental psychology, as well as from more recent and sophisticated social-biological paradigms, that underscore the reciprocal nature of human relationships and gene–environment interactions. Second, we will develop an in-depth theoretical perspective on why gender differences in emotion may exist. The readings assigned draw on theories and research findings from developmental, psychoanalytic, postmodernist, critical feminist, neurobiological, and evolutionary literatures.

Schedule and Readings

Part I: Socialization

Jan 8 / Week 1: Introduction. In the first seminar meeting, we will discuss the course goals and content and review the schedule and readings.

Jan 15 / Week 2: *The Talking Cure.* How do our biological drives and instincts become socialized? What is the mind, and how does it develop? What are the mental structures and psychological mechanisms of the self? What causes mental illness? Sigmund Freud was one of the first to attempt to address these fundamental questions in a scientific manner.



Accordingly, we will start our course on social-emotional development by reading Freud. What experiences, observations, data, and analyses led Freud to formulate his initial theories about hysteria, trauma, and repression? How did he diagnose and treat his patients? In 1910, after he had reached some prominence, Freud was invited to deliver a lecture telling the intriguing story of how he embarked on the development and scientific investigation of a new and radical cure called Psychoanalysis, which was a method he used for understanding and treating patients afflicted with what he described as neurotic and hysterical symptoms. We will read the text of his presentation, “The Origin and Development of Psychoanalysis.”

Freud, S. (1910). The Origin and Development of Psychoanalysis. *The American Journal of Psychology*, 21, 181-218.

Jan 22 / Week 3: *Socialization.* Eleanor Maccoby’s review article, titled “The Role of Parents in the Socialization of Children: A Historical Overview,” surveys the major theories from the last century that explain how children become socialized. This article is comprehensive; it provides an important knowledge base for students of social development and a rich theoretical context for appreciating the strengths and weaknesses of older and newer theories in the field.

Maccoby, E. E. (1992). The Role of Parents in the Socialization of Children: An Historical Overview. *Developmental Psychology*, 28, 1006-1017.

Jan 29 / Week 4: Attachment Theory. Relatively soon after Freud embarked on his initial studies of hysteria and formulated theories linking trauma to mental illness, he and other psychoanalytic theorists began to focus on how the mind constructs fantasy and reality, moving away from questions about how real-world events and people influence the individual. The question of how real-world events (e.g., emotional neglect and early relationships) influence the mental health of children began to resurface shortly after WWII, in the 1940s, in the work of several psychologists and psychiatrists. In particular, John Bowlby introduced the notion of attachment bonds between infant and caregiver. One of the more specific mechanisms proposed by attachment and psychoanalytic theorists is the reflective function, which is discussed by Peter Fonagy in “*Attachment and Reflective Function: Their Role in Self-Organization.*”

Several theoretical advances to attachment theory have occurred since Bowlby’s initial presentation of attachment theory in his three-volume work *Attachment and Loss* (1969). First, the notion that individuals are not simply a blank slate but have innate dispositions that influence their ability to bond to others led Jay Belsky to argue that children are differentially susceptible to the effects of good and bad environments depending on genetic disposition. In “For better and for worse: Differential susceptibility to environmental influences,” Belsky discuss support for his hypothesis in the context of attachment theory and other social aspects of human development.

A second advance to attachment theory comes in part from developmental systems theories, in which the parent-child relationship can be viewed as being reciprocal and forming a dynamic system rather than as consisting of two distinct members of a dyad. Further, attachment behavior reflects the product of emerging and self-organizing properties of the organism. Using recent epigenetic studies as a springboard, Robert Lickliter reviews some of the basic assumptions and history of attachment theory and argues for a developmental systems perspective in “Theories of Attachment: The Long and Winding Road to an Integrative Developmental Science,” his comments on a special issue of *Integrative Psychology and Behavior* devoted to Henry Harlow and Bowlby.

Fonagy, P., Target, M. (1997). Attachment and Reflective Function: Their Role in Self-Organization. *Development and Psychopathology*, 9, 679–700

Lickliter, R. (2008). Theories of Attachment: The Long and Winding Road to an Integrative Developmental Science. *Integrative Psychology and Behavior*, 45, 397–405.

Media: Watch the film *Elling* in class (89 minutes)

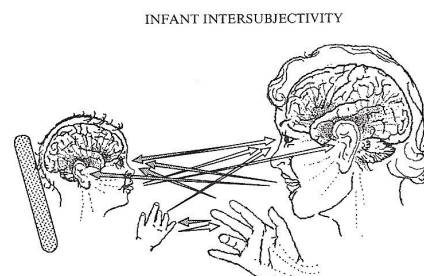
Feb 5 / Week 5: Hidden Regulators and Synchrony. A further advance to our understanding of attachment theory stems from Myron Hofer’s notion of the hidden regulator. In a brief theoretical review paper, “The Psychobiological Roots of Early Attachment,” Hofer presents an animal model of attachment, which emphasizes the co-regulation of specific physiological systems in the parent-infant dyad that he claims constitutes attachment.

The developmental and biological processes that contribute to attachment behavior in humans are presented by Ruth Feldman in her paper “Parent-infant Synchrony: Biological Foundations and Developmental Outcomes,” which emphasizes the reciprocal interactions between parents and offspring. Feldman highlights the developmental progression and fine-tuning of the infant’s physiological oscillators (e.g., the timekeepers of physiological rhythms) in the prenatal period and the co-emergence of more complex physiological regulation and behavioral synchrony with the parent during the first year of life that predict social outcomes.

Hofer, M. A. (2006). The Psychobiological Roots of Early Attachment. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 15, 84-88.

Feldman, R. (2007). Parent-infant Synchrony: Biological Foundations and Developmental Outcomes. *Current Directions In Psychological Science*, 16, 340-345.

Feb 12/ Week 6: Mutual Regulation and Gender Differences in Emotion. The concepts of self-regulation and mutual regulation are elucidated in Ed Tronick’s classic article “Emotions and Emotional Communication in Infants,” which introduces the Mutual Regulation Model



(MRM). This model sheds significant light on the interactive nature and function of the parent–infant relationship. According to the MRM, self-regulation (e.g., the infant regulates him- or herself) and other-regulation (e.g., the parent or caregiver serves as an external source of regulation for the infant) form the building blocks of mutual regulation. Further, the MRM has been used to explain gender difference in infant emotion and will thus serve as a springboard to part two of our seminar.

In "Gender differences in emotional expressivity and self-regulation during early infancy," Weinberg, Tronick, and Cohn (1999), for example, report interesting sex differences in the infant’s responses to their mothers drawing upon MRM.

In the story about two estranged individuals, one who may be suffering from autism, we learn about friendship in adults and some of the major transitions and processes that contribute to relationship formation.

Tronick, E. Z. (1989). Emotions and Emotional Communication in Infants. *American Psychologist* 44: 112–119.

Weinberg, M. K., Tronick, E. Z., and Cohn, J. F. (1999). Gender differences in emotional expressivity and self-regulation during early infancy. *Developmental Psychology* 35: 175–188.

In-Class Midterm Exam (60 minutes)

Feb 19/ Week 7: Reading Week

Part II: Gender Differences in Emotion

Feb 26/ Week 8: *Gender and Emotion*. In the first part of our study of gender differences in emotion, we will read two chapters of Alan Petersen’s *Engendering Emotions*, a postmodernist account that raises a number of interesting questions. These two chapters, “Conceptualizing Gender and Emotion” (pages 1–27) and “Psychology, Gender, and Emotion”



(pages 28–55) critically assess some of the theoretical blind spots in current social and biological perspectives on gender and emotion.

Petersen, A. (2004). “Conceptualizing Gender and Emotion” and “Psychology, Gender, and Emotion.” In *Engendering Emotions*, pp. 1–55. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

March 5/ Week 9: *Biological and Evolutionary Views of Gender, Sex, and Emotion*. In her chapter “The State of the Art: Biological Differences?” Leslie Brody (1998) provides an extensive critical review of biological differences in gender and emotion that focuses on sex hormones and brain asymmetry. How biological differences may develop and how brain development interacts with social conditions are considered in this chapter.



The perspective advanced in Charles Darwin’s *Descent of Man* appears throughout David Geary’s *Male, Female: The Evolution of Human Sex Differences*. In the chapter assigned, “Developmental Sex Differences,” Geary presents a review of sex/gender differences and a neo-Darwinian framework for interpreting these findings based on the theories of natural and sexual selection. The chapter includes a review of sex differences in emotional, social, and physical development in infants and young children. Some of the findings are not consistent with other studies reported in our previous readings. It will be important to try to understand why this might be the case. Is it because of how the studies were conducted or the interpretations and assumptions on which they were based?

Brody, L. (1998). “The State of the Art: Biological Differences?” In *Gender, Emotion, and the Family*. Pp. 101-127. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press.

Geary, D. C. (1998). “Developmental Sex Differences.” In *Male, Female: The Evolution of Human Sex Differences*. Pp. 209–238. Washington, D.C.: American Psychological Association.

March 12/ Week 10: *Socialization of Gender and Emotion*. After presenting the biological mechanisms contributing to gender differences in emotion, Leslie Brody addresses the family

context in her chapter “Transactional Relationships within Families,” which extensively reviews developmental studies of the role of parenting in the socialization of infants and children. In the subsequent chapter, “Gender Identification and De-identification in the Family,” Brody introduces Nancy Chodorow’s theory of gender development and offers a review of the evidence that supports and/or fails to support the predictions of this theory.

Brody, L. (1998). “Transactional Relationships within Families” and “Gender Identification and De-identification in the Family.” In *Gender, Emotion, and the Family*. Pp. 147–175. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press.

March 19 / Week 11: *Interpersonal and Critical Feminist Theory of Gender*. In her essay “Recognition and Destruction: An Outline of Intersubjectivity,” Jessica Benjamin recasts the boundaries between self and other as overlapping rather than distinct, and views the self and other as co-constructed (i.e., an outcome or process fueled by momentary acts of mutual recognition). This perspective addresses unanswered psychoanalytic and philosophical questions such as how one person can understand the subjective contents of another person.

Benjamin, J. (1995). *Like Subjects, Love Objects: Essays on Recognition and Sexual Differences*. Pp. 27-48. Yale University Press: New Haven and London.

March 26 / Week 12: *Social Context of Gender Differences and the Parent–Child Relationship*. As one of the senior psychologists in the field, Eleanor Maccoby has made significant contributions to our understanding of socialization and gender differences. In her paper “Gender and Relationships: A Developmental Account,” Maccoby makes the argument that there is relatively little behavioral evidence for gender differences when studies examine individuals in isolation but that behavioral gender differences emerge when individuals are examined in groups. This view differs from David Geary’s evolutionary perspective.

Starting with prior research indicating that girls show greater concern for others, Ruth Butler and Rachel Shalit-Naggar’s research article highlights the contribution of the child to parent representations of the parent–child relationship and discusses some of the latest research findings on socialization of gender differences.

Maccoby, E. E. (1990). Gender and Relationships: A Developmental Account. *American Psychologist*, 45, 513-520.

Butler, R., & Shalit-Naggar, R. (2008). "Gender and Patterns of Concerned Responsiveness in Representations of the Mother–Daughter and Mother–Son Relationship." *Child Development*, 79, 836–851.

April 2 / Week 13: *Battle of the Sexes*: A major controversy arose after the Harvard’s president, Lawrence Summers, suggested that one of the reasons fewer women obtain faculty positions in the math and sciences is that they possess less natural aptitude in those areas. Shortly after this controversy arose, two leading psychologists at Harvard, Steven Pinker and Elizabeth Spelke, staged a fascinating debate on the topic of sex differences.

The Science of Gender and Science: Pinker vs. Spelke—A Debate (2005). Audio recordings and written transcripts of the presentations by Pinker and Spelke in the debate are located on the Web at http://www.edge.org/3rd_culture/debate05/debate05_index.html along with short video excerpts. Please read the written transcripts; you may wish to listen to the audio recordings as well.

<u>Evaluation</u>	<u>Date(s)</u>	<u>Weight</u>
Class participation and written notes	Weekly	10%
Group presentation	Assigned	20%
In-class midterm exam	Feb 12	20%
Take-home exam	Finals week	50%

Class participation: This is an advanced undergraduate seminar in which enthusiastic class participation is important. Participation includes attendance, punctuality, facilitating discussion, paying careful attention to classmates’ presentations, showing respect for others’ contributions, and offering constructive feedback, questions, and comments. To help create a stimulating, safe, equitable discussion environment, each of you should try to strike a balance between listening and speaking.

Written notes. In order to stimulate critical thinking about the reading material and to help you prepare for the seminar discussion, each of you should bring to class a written question or comment for each week's reading or readings assigned. The commentary should consist of a question or several key points about the reading(s) or about how the reading(s) relates to other readings and/or topics discussed in this class.

Group Presentations: You will form small groups so that each person presents once or twice, depending on the size of the class. Group presentations will be based on the weekly readings and will consist of two primary components. Your group will be required to go beyond summarizing the reading, also providing the class with an expanded perspective on and critical analysis of the assigned reading. To this end, you may wish to present readings supplemental to those assigned for the week (such as relevant journal articles, book chapters, etc.). Your presentations will be evaluated in terms of each student's 1) clarity of presentation, 2) comprehension and organization, 3) effective use of supplementary readings, if used, and 4) capacity to answer questions from the class. It will be important to coordinate the different speakers in the group so that there is no redundancy and the presentation is coherent as a whole. You will be expected to use slides (e.g., PowerPoint) as part of the presentation. The second component of the presentation involves stimulating and leading an active class discussion of the assigned readings. You can achieve this by asking questions, demonstrating relevant methodologies, etc. Please consult with me in advance of your presentation.

In-Class Midterm: During the semester we will have a written exam in class. For this exam, you will be asked to choose one question to answer out of several choices.

Take-Home Exam: During finals week you will be given a take-home exam (posted to Blackboard). For this exam, you will be asked to choose one question to answer out of several choices. Your answer should be 7 to 10 double-spaced, typewritten pages in length. You will have 5 days to complete the exam. Your finished, printed-out exam will be due in my office 5 days after the questions are posted to Blackboard.

Extra Readings

In Maccoby's research article "Children's Dispositions and Mother-Child Interactions at 12 and 18 Months: A Short-Term Longitudinal Study," the child's temperament and parent's style of interaction are found to interact. This article presents some of the complexity involved

in the study of how parent-child relationships can change and how this relationship may function differently in boys and girls.

Maccoby, E. E., Snow, E. S., and Jacklin, C. N. (1984). "Children's Dispositions and Mother-Child Interactions at 12 and 18 Months: A Short-Term Longitudinal Study." *Developmental Psychology*, 20, 459-472.