

PSY 2403

Developmental Psychology

Course Description (from the Catalog): A theoretical and research-based course that covers social, emotional, physical and cognitive aspects of human development throughout the life-span.

Course Rationale: As human beings, understanding human development, our own as well as that of other persons, is generally a lifelong endeavor. We learn a great deal from informal observation and experience. However, without formal training in scientific observation and analysis, we often remain at the mercy of our own prejudices and limited experiences. For example, we rarely are able to closely observe more than a few individuals over long periods of time. This type of study, however, when executed systematically, can provide us with rich insights into the course of individual human development.

Developmental Psychology is that area of psychology that concerns itself with human development across the entire life span. It involves both research and application. As a field, Developmental Psychology is continually undergoing expansion and refinement of research topics and methodology as well as theory. In fact, Developmental Psychology is probably the most exciting and innovative area within the entire field of psychology today, and well it should be. Developmental psychologists are fundamentally concerned with change and growth and the determinants of change and growth across the entire human life span. Thus, whatever aspect of behavior you are concerned with, whatever the area in which you are dealing with people, and whatever the age of the people with whom you are engaged, Developmental Psychology provides you with two kinds of tools:

DATA – research findings from the most recent and significant studies in the field.

THEORY – theoretical constructs and models which enable you to better understand behavior and behavior change.

Course Requirements

1. Attend class.
2. Be prepared for and actively involved in class discussions and activities.
3. Read assigned material for each class session.
4. Write class preparation papers.
5. Pass the examinations.
6. Write autobiography.
7. Write two observation papers.
8. Participate in a base group and make sure that all group members pass the tests, write acceptable papers, and generally make satisfactory progress in achieving the academic goals of the course.

Course Objectives

Student will be able to: Recognize the importance of the terms interdisciplinary and applied as they help to define the field of human development.

- Identify historical concepts and influences on modern theories of human development, from medieval times through the early twentieth century.
- Recognize recent theoretical perspectives on human development and identify the contributions of major theorists, such as Freud, Erikson, Piaget, Bowlby, Vygotsky, Marcia, Kohlberg.
- Recognize commonly used methods in research on human development, identifying strengths and limitations of each.
- Recognize the difference between correlational and experimental research designs, and identify the strengths and limitations of each.
- Identify age graded influences, history-graded influences, nonnormative influences and cohort groups and recognize their application.
- Recognize the impact of socioeconomic status and poverty on family functioning.
- Recognize the similarities and differences between collectivist and individualistic cultures.
- Recognize teratogens and other maternal factors that affect the fetus, and identify evidence supporting the harmful impact of each.

- Recognize the sequence of motor development during the first two years, particularly the proximodistal and cephalocaudal trends of body growth.
- Identify the mental testing approach, the meaning of intelligence test scores, and the normal curve.
- Recognize the meaning of temperament, the ways in which it is measured, and the major temperamental styles.
- Recognize individual and sex differences in gross and fine motor development in early childhood, and identify the biological and social reasons for those differences.
- Recognize the development of vocabulary, grammar, and conversational skills, and identify examples of overregularization, underregularization, overextension, and underextension.
- Recognize the similarities and differences among permissive, authoritative, authoritarian and uninvolved child rearing styles.
- Recognize the similarities and differences between convergent thinking and divergent thinking.
- Recognize child rearing practices that enhance and deplete self-esteem.
- Recognize factors that contribute to aging and to declines in physical and emotional functioning.
- Identify the benefits of stress management, exercise, and an optimistic outlook in dealing effectively with the physical challenges of midlife.
- Recognize causes and contributing factors in common health problems in late adulthood.
- Recognize common mental disabilities in late adulthood, including Alzheimer's disease, cerebrovascular dementia, and misdiagnosed and reversible dementia.
- Recognize ethnic differences in beliefs about death and dying.

Basic Class Requirements:

The basic assumption of this course is that learning results from a continuing process of rational discourse. Within the course there are both opportunities and responsibilities. Your opportunity is to learn. Your responsibilities are to maximize your learning from the course (i.e., improve your intellectual understanding), maximize the learning of your classmates, and to apply what you learn to your work and personal life. To take advantage of the opportunity and to meet your responsibilities you are to:

1. Master the basic concepts, theories, research studies, and researchers. You are expected to know more after you have finished the course than you did before.
2. Think critically about the course content and topics to achieve understanding and insights.
3. Explain precisely to several classmates your learning, insights, and conclusions. Your learning is not complete until you teach what you know to someone else and can describe precisely what you have learned.
4. Ask others to share their knowledge, conclusions, and insights with you. When they do so, listen carefully, elaborate by explaining how what you have just learned from them fits in with previous knowledge learned, and thank them.
5. Engage in intellectual controversy by taking positions counter to those of your classmates, developing clear rationales from the material in the texts, challenging their reasoning and conclusions, and arguing the issues until you are logically persuaded. Review the rules for constructive controversy before doing so.
6. Get your work done on time. You cannot deprive classmates of their opportunity and obligations to help you improve your understanding, conclusions, and insights.
7. Plan how to apply what you have learned to improve the quality of your work and personal life. You should be able to describe precisely how you can use what you have learned in this class.

Note: This sample syllabus is being provided in order to give general knowledge of the subject and should not be considered the sole outline of the course. Class format, assignments, and due dates may vary by professor.

