

CHILD DEVELOPMENT

PSY 234 Spring 2018

Time: MWF 8:00-8:50 (Section 001)
Location: Beck Hall 221

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Course Overview

This course provides an overview of the theories, methods, and phenomena of developmental psychology. Multiple aspects of development, including physical, cognitive, and social development from conception to school age are considered.

Objectives

1. To examine age-related changes in children's physical characteristics, social behaviors, and cognitive processes
2. To hone skills in reading, evaluating, and conducting research in developmental science
3. To apply knowledge regarding developmental psychology to interactions with children and their parents and share this knowledge with others

Readings

1. Siegler, R.S., Saffran, J.R., Eisenberg, N., DeLoache, J.S., Gershoff, E., & Leaper, C. (2017). How Children Develop. 5th Edition. New York: Worth Publishers. Note: I've placed a copy of the textbook on reserve in the library.
2. I will post pdf copies of supplementary readings on our course schedule.

Evidence-based Teaching

As a scientist, I like to make decisions and choices based on the best evidence currently available—not only in my research but also in my teaching, so when I design my courses, I do my best to incorporate assignments, activities, and methods that help students learn and benefit the most from a class. In case you are interested in knowing more about why we are doing certain activities, throughout the syllabus I have added footnotes that include references to journal articles that helped shape this course.

Schedule

In [our course schedule](#), I provide an overview of the main topics that will be covered during the semester, information about the reading assignment for each class period, and the presentation slides from previous semesters¹. Please note the page numbers for each of the assigned readings. In some cases, we will not be covering the entire chapter. [This schedule](#) also gives you the major due dates for the class quizzes and assignments with links to where you can take them or submit them online. If you are ever wondering what’s going on, that’s the place to go. Pro tip: Bookmark it. You can also get to it by using the “schedule” link on my personal webpage (gustavus.edu/go/kyle).

Course Components

Throughout the course, you will be involved in a number of different assignments each designed to emphasize various skills (e.g., creative design, critical analysis, oral communication, and implementation and application of ideas). You will receive more details about each assignment at the appropriate point during the semester, but below is an overview. If you are ever unsure about what is expected, please don’t hesitate to ask me.

Individual Assignments

(300 points; 6 assignments each worth 50 points)²

I hope that you draw connections between class content and other topics that are relevant to your interests, your career aspirations, and your life. To encourage this endeavor, throughout the semester, I will give you short assignments that will allow you to delve deeper into a class discussion, activity, or guest speaker. These assignments will be submitted using an online form. See the class schedule for the due dates and the submission url.

¹ Marsh, E. J., & Sink, H. E. (2010). Access to handouts of presentation slides during lecture: Consequences for learning. *Applied Cognitive Psychology, 24*(5), 691–706. doi:10.1002/acp.1579

² Rider, E. A. (1992). Understanding and applying psychology through use of news clippings. *Teaching of Psychology, 19*(3), 161–163. doi:10.1207/s15328023top1903_8

Reading Quizzes

(100 points = 10 quizzes each worth 10 points)³

The textbook provides a nice overview of the topics that we will be discussing in class. During lectures and our class activities, I want everyone to be on the same page. To this end, you should complete online quizzes before coming to class. The questions are intended to assess your basic understanding of the general concepts from the reading and help everyone stay caught up from week to week. Quizzes will be taken on Moodle. **You will have an opportunity to take the quiz twice and will receive the higher of the two scores.** In order to learn the most, the best strategy is to first do the reading and then take the quiz without using your textbook or notes. This allows you an opportunity to recall the information unaided and will highlight areas that you might want to go back and review before taking the quiz a 2nd time.

Cumulative Exams

(300 points = 4 exams: 1st 50 points, 2nd 50 points, 3rd 50 points, 4th 150 points)⁴

In order to assess your mastery of basic developmental concepts and their application, we will have four exams that consist of multiple-choice questions. During lectures, I will cover material discussed in your textbook as well as material that your textbook doesn't mention or only mentions in passing. You should use my lectures as a guide for studying. The exams will evaluate your mastery of both factual and evaluative information regarding the text, the articles, guest speakers, and supplementary material considered in class. Every exam is a cumulative exam that will include material from previous exams. The exams will be taken on Moodle by yourself without consulting other class members; however, you can refer to your textbook or notes as needed. In addition, during the class period prior to each regular exam, we will have a practice exam quiz show.⁵

Children's Museum Partnership

(300 points total, see breakdown below)^{6,7}

We are in our 9th year of an exciting partnership with the Children's Museum of Southern Minnesota (CMSM; <http://www.cmsouthernmn.org>). This year, our partnership will include implementing a Research Toy on the exhibit floor of the Children's Museum, demonstrating how the toy can be used to the museum staff during a play session with children, and then giving a public presentation at the end of the semester summarizing your experiences. I will provide you with a more details about the project later in the semester, but below is an overview of the main parts. Each group will have a project budget (~\$100) to defray the cost of supplies.

³ Johnson, B. C., & Kiviniemi, M. T. (2009). The effect of online chapter quizzes on exam performance in an undergraduate social psychology course. *Teaching of Psychology*, 36(1), 33–37. doi:10.1080/00986280802528972

⁴ Roediger, H. L. I., & Butler, A. C. (2011). The critical role of retrieval practice in long-term retention. *Trends in Cognitive Sciences*, 15(1), 20–27. doi:10.1016/j.tics.2010.09.003

⁵ Gibson, B. (1991). Research methods jeopardy: A tool for involving students and organizing the study session. *Teaching of Psychology*, 18(3), 176–177. doi:10.1207/s15328023top1803_13

⁶ Conway, J. M., Amel, E. L., & Gerwien, D. P. (2009). Teaching and learning in the social context: A meta-analysis of service learning's effects on academic, personal, social, and citizenship outcomes. *Teaching of Psychology*, 36(4), 233–245. doi:10.1080/00986280903172969

⁷ Sharon, T. (2012). Learning Times Two. *Teaching of Psychology*, 39(1), 24–28. doi:10.1177/0098628311430644

Research Toy Scripts (Group, 50 points)

A “Research Toy” is an activity that can be conducted at a Children’s Museum that effectively demonstrates a developmental science finding. Scripts are written descriptions of the activity that are appropriate for different audiences—e.g., what you would say to the child during the activity & what you would say to a parent to describe to them the motivation, design, findings, and implications of the original experiment and their child’s behavior. The Scripts are in essence a instruction manual mashed up with a science blog post summarizing a cool finding from an article.

Research Toy Public Demonstration (Individual, 50 points)

After you choose and construct your Research Toy and prepare & practice your scripts, your group will take them to the Children’s Museum and use them with the children in attendance. This will provide you with an opportunity to see how children of different ages behave and to collect new data from the children that participate in your activity. Pairs from your group can travel together to the Museum at times that are convenient for you. I’ll post an online schedule so that you can sign up for time slots later in the semester. Each group member will need to visit the Museum at least 2 times for a total of 4 hours.

Pamphlet for Parents (Group, 25 points)

When you are running children in your activity, parents and other adults will be watching, and part of your responsibility is to interact with those grown-ups, telling them about your project using your Script (described above). However, talking to someone is always easier if you both have something to look at and refer to, and sometimes, parents like to take additional information home with them. Therefore, your group will also prepare a single-page handout written for adults that describes key takeaways from your experiment in a creative and visually appealing way.

Developmental Science Research Project

As mentioned above, when the children at the museum use your Research Toy, they will be having fun & playing, but you will be *collecting data*! You will be able to analyze the children’s behavior to discern whether your group replicated the findings from the research article that you chose for your project. Therefore, you will need to record the children’s behavior using an appropriate tool (e.g., video cameras from the AV department in the library) so that you have a record of the children’s behavior and can analyze the data after you are back on campus.

Conference-Style Presentation (Group, 75 points)

At the end of the semester, your group will give a presentation that summarizes your Research Toy, the research you conducted, and your findings as well as their implications. In addition, you should propose any changes to the current design of the Research Toy based on your experiences using the toy and a possible modification to the toy that might demonstrate more recent research that was based on the original article. Staff from the Children’s Museum of Southern Minnesota and other community members will be invited to attend and will evaluate your presentation.

Participation (Evaluated by peers; 100 points)

You are expected to be a responsible and active member of your group. At the end of the semester, your group members will be asked to evaluate your performance, and I will use these evaluations to determine your participation grade for the project. Therefore, you should remain in constant communication with your group members, making sure that everyone feels that each member is carrying their weight. For example, you may not be able to attend a meeting because of a sports competition, but if that's the case, volunteer to do some tasks before the meeting and submit an update to your group before you leave town.

Why I think this project is cool?

I think that you will really enjoy working on this project because it gives you an unique opportunity to help the Children's Museum of Southern Minnesota while at the same time participating in a research project. The project will allow you to see very concretely the developmental differences between children, give you practice conducting basic developmental research and an opportunity to communicate your findings in a way that is common in psychology and other fields. It also gives you practice interacting with different audiences—children, parents, and community members. Finally, this project provides you with a very interesting experience to discuss in interviews and on job and graduate school applications.

Reminders

You've got a lot of classes and other activities going on each day. It's easy to forget about an assignment or quiz. To help out, I use a service that will provide you with due date reminders (e.g., push notifications, text messages, or emails--you choose) for exams, quizzes, and assignments. The service is free and easy to use on your phone. [Please signup during the first week of class.](#)

Grading

To determine your final letter grades, I will calculate the percentage of total points you acquired from the assignments and use that percentage to look up your letter grade in the chart below. You can always check on your current point total by visiting our Moodle Gradebook.

Assignment	Points
Individual Assignments	300
Quizzes	100
Exams	300
Museum Exhibit Project	-
Research Toy Scripts	50
Research Toy Public Demonstration	50
Pamphlet for Parents	25
Conference-style Presentation	75
Project Participation	100
Total	1000

Letter grade chart

A 100-93%	A- 92-90%	B+ 89-87%	B 86-83%	B- 82-80%	
C+ 79-77%	C 76-73%	C- 72-70%	D+ 69-67%	D 66-60%	F <60%

At the end of the semester, if you have earned 890 points out of a possible 1000 points, this would be 89% and a B+. Throughout the semester, you should be able to calculate your current grade by adding up the points you received on assignments and dividing by the number of possible points (at that point during the semester). If you have any questions about your grades, I would be happy to meet with you and discuss them.

Classroom Expectations & Resources

Late assignments

Given that you know about all the assignments and their due dates well in advance, you should hand them in on time. In fairness to all students, it is important that you complete these assignments by the deadlines contained on the course schedule (gustavus.edu/go/kyle). If you feel that you have a circumstance warranting an extension, please come talk to me as soon as possible.

Classroom atmosphere & support

I want everyone to enjoy this course and to learn a lot. In order to accomplish this, we need to foster an inclusive and supportive classroom with integrity. There are many policies and services on campus that will help us work toward this end and those can be viewed at bit.ly/gustavusclassroom. I'd be happy to talk with you in more detail about any of these.

More Information

Guest Speakers

Our class readings and discussions focus on developmental science research—how we design and conduct experiments to answer basic research questions. However, it is also important and helpful to think about how a background in Child Development can prepare you for a variety of occupations; therefore, I have arranged visits by speakers whose jobs are related to or supported by a background in developmental science. Many of the speakers have visited my course during previous semesters and have been receptive to students who may be interested in job shadowing or internship opportunities.

- Children's Museum Educator
- Midwife
- Pediatric Physical Therapist
- Pediatric Speech Pathologist

Online Exams

As mentioned above, exams will be online. This will allow you to take an exam in the comfort of your room and wearing your favorite pajamas. It will save a *ton* of paper, and you will get feedback on your performance immediately after the exam has been completed by all of your classmates and I have reviewed the item

statistics. **If you would rather not take the exam online (for any reason), I would be happy to provide you with a paper exam. Please let me know a week before the exam that you want to take a paper version, and I will make the arrangements.**

The exam will be available from the beginning of our class period on the day of the exam to the end of the day (midnight). You may begin the exam anytime during that period (though you must allow yourself time to finish before midnight). Once you start the exam, you will have 50 minutes to complete it (120 minutes for the final exam), and you will not be able to pause the clock, so please be comfortable and prepared before choosing to begin.

The exam is divided into separate web pages with 10 questions per page. Once you get to the bottom of a page, please click "next" to proceed to the next set of questions. You can go back and change your answers to previous questions up until the point when you click "submit all and finish" on the very last page. I will post a short practice exam, so that none of this will be unfamiliar when you take your first real exam.