

Psychology 313: Child Psychology

Instructor: William E. Breen, MA
Office: David King Hall 1034B
Office Hours: Wednesday 6-7pm, Thursday 3-4pm
Email: wbreen@gmu.edu (PLEASE USE EMAIL)

Class Day: Wednesday
Class Time: 7:20-10:00 PM
Class Place: Robinson B105
Phone: 703-993-4195 x3

Course Description and Goals:

This course will consist of an overview of child development from conception to early adolescence. The course will emphasize a scientific approach to child psychology and will cover major topics including child cognitive, social, emotional, and physical development. Throughout the course, we will discuss recent developmental theory and research and its current application in the field. The goal of this course is to familiarize you with major topics in child development, provide exposure to recent empirical literature, and facilitate an understanding and appreciation of the complexity of human development.

Required Reading:

A. Text: Berk, L.E. (2006). *Child development (7th Edition)*. Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon.

B. Supplemental Materials: *Additional readings* will be used to augment the text and address other topics of interest. These readings will be available to download using a class listserv (YahooGroups) that will be created for the exclusive use of students in this course. I will discuss YahooGroups and the additional readings in greater detail in class.

Course Requirements and Grades:

- A. Exams.** There will be three in-class exams required with each exam covering approximately one third of the course material. Exams will not be cumulative although some ability to integrate material may be beneficial. The exam format will consist of mostly multiple choice questions with two to three additional short essays. You will be allowed to drop the lowest of the three exams. Thus, each one of your two highest exam scores will constitute 25% of your final grade (for a total of 50%).
- B. Term Paper.** You will be required to conduct a literature review and write a paper on a topic that is of interest to you and that is related to child psychology. Ideally, the paper will cover a topic about which you would like to learn more. In order to aid in the process, I require that you submit a brief description of your paper topic (two or three sentences) to me by September 27, 2006. The topic must be approved by me prior to turning in the term paper. The term paper will be approximately 6-7 double spaced pages in length and will adhere to all APA publication guidelines. We will discuss this more in class and I am also available to talk about questions related to the paper during office hours. The term paper will constitute 30% of your final grade.
- C. Reaction Papers.** You will be required to complete TWO reaction papers over the course of the semester discussing readings not included in the text. The reaction papers will relate to the **Additional Readings** (journal articles) provided to augment the text and expand on relevant topics. Reaction papers will be 1-2 pages in length and will consist of a summary of the specific reading as well as your thoughts and

feelings related to the topic. Reaction papers are each worth 5% and constitute a total of 10% of your final grade.

D. Class Participation. Students are expected to attend class each week and to arrive on time. Please make every effort to be punctual as late arrivals tend to disrupt the flow of classroom lectures and discussions. Students are also expected to arrive to class prepared and to have completed all required readings prior to the beginning of class. Students are encouraged to engage in discussions and ask questions as part of their grade. Class participation will constitute 10% of your final grade.

E. Research Credit. In addition, there is the opportunity to receive additional credit by participating in research in the GMU Department of Psychology. Students are encouraged to participate in research and will receive ONE point towards their final grade for every ONE hour of research credit (up to THREE total points/credits).

Important Dates:

Last day to ADD class – September 9th
Last day to DROP class – September 29th

Students with Special Concerns

If you are a student with a disability and you need academic accommodations please see me and contact the Disability Resource Center (DRC) at 703-993-2474. All academic accommodations must be arranged through that office.

Statement of Academic Integrity

In accordance with University guidelines, I am required to take action against students who engage in cheating, misrepresentation, or other dishonest practices. All exams are to be completed independently and any form of consulting, sharing, talking/discussing with other students during testing will be considered a breach of the GMU Code of Conduct. Penalties for students found guilty of academic dishonesty will be determined on a case by case basis in accordance with university guidelines. Please contact me if additional clarification is required.

Schedule of Class Topics and Readings

August 30th	Introduction and Syllabus
September 6th	History and Theory of Child Development Research and Empirical Issues Read Berk Chapters 1 & 2
September 13th	Biological Foundations and Prenatal Development Read Berk Chapter 3
September 20th	Infancy: Learning, Motor Development, and Perception Physical Development

PSYC 313 Syllabus
William E. Breen
Fall 2006

Read Berk Chapters 4 & 5
Paper Topic Due

September 27th ***Exam One (Chapter 1-5)***

October 4th **Cognitive Development I**
Read Berk Chapter 6

October 11th **Cognitive Development II**
Read Berk Chapter 7

October 18th **Cognitive Development III- Intelligence and Language**
Read Berk Chapters 8 & 9
Reaction Paper One Due

October 25th **Emotional and Moral Development**
Read Berk Chapters 10 & 12

November 1st **Self, Identity, and Gender Differences**
Read Berk Chapter 11 & 13

November 8th ***Exam Two*** (Chapters 6-10, 12)

November 15th **Class Cancelled: ABCT Conference, Chicago**
(Work on research papers...)

November 22nd **No Class-Thanksgiving Break**
(Work on research papers...Due 11/29!)

November 29th **Family & Social Influences: Peers, Relations, and School**
Read Berk Chapter 14 & 15
Research Paper Due

December 6th **Child Maltreatment & Child Psychopathology**
Read Cicchetti (2004) and Kaplan, Pelecovitz, & Labrana (1999).
Reaction Paper Two Due

December 13th ***Exam Three (Chapters 11, 13-15, and Maltreatment articles)***

NOTE: *This is a tentative schedule of topics and readings and is subject to change during the semester. I reserve the right to alter the schedule as needed with changes announced in class.*

Additional Readings:

Cicchetti, D. (2004). An odyssey of discovery: Lessons learned through three decades of research on child maltreatment. *American Psychologist*, 59, 4-14.

Cicchetti, D., & Toth, S.L. (1998). The development of depression in children and adolescents.

- American Psychologist*, 53, 221-241.
- Dawson, G., Ashman, S.B., & Carver, L.J. (2000). The role of early experience in shaping behavioral and brain development and its implications for social policy. *Development and Psychopathology*, 12, 695-712.
- Evans, G.W. (2004). The environment of childhood poverty. *American Psychologist*, 77-92.
- Grusec, J.E., & Goodnow, J.J. (1994). Impact of parental discipline methods on the child's internalization of values: A reconceptualization of current points of view. *Developmental Psychology*, 30, 4-19.
- Hartup, W.W. (1996). The company they keep: Friendships and their developmental significance. *Child Development*, 67, 1-13.
- Hetherington, E. M., Bridges, M., & Insabella, G. M. (1998). What matters? what does not?: Five perspectives on the association between marital transitions and children's adjustment. *American Psychologist*, 53, 167-184.
- Hoven, C.W., Duarte, C.S., Lucas, C.P., Wu, P., Mandell, D.J., Goodwin, R.D., Cohen, M., Balaban, V., Woodruff, B.A., Bin, F., Musa, G.J., Mei, L., Cantor, P., Aber, J.L., Cohen, P., Susser, E. (2005). Psychopathology among New York City public school children 6 months after September 11. *Archives of General Psychiatry*, 62, 545-552.
- Kaplan, S.J., Pelecovitz, D., & Labrana, V. (1999). Child and adolescent abuse and neglect research: A review of the last 10 years. *Journal of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry*, 38, 1214-1222.
- Kazdin, A.E., & Benjet, C. (2003). Spanking children: Evidence and issues. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 12, 99-103.
- Maccoby, E.E., & Lewis, C.C. (2003). Less day care or different day care? *Child Development*, 74, 1069-1075.
- Masten, A.S., & Coatsworth, J.D. (1998). The development of competence in favorable and unfavorable environments: Lessons from research on successful children. *American Psychologist*, 53, 205-220.