Purpose of Course:
This graduate-level course is designed to give you a thorough understanding of cognitive development in infants and children. Theoretical and methodological issues will be covered in addition to empirical research. The goal is to provide a foundation for your later coursework and research.

Readings:

All required primary source readings are available via Blackboard Campus Edition 6 (CE6) at http://courses.gmu.edu.

Course Format:
This course is a discussion-based seminar, and thus reliant on the energies of all participants in the group. Given this format, it is imperative that everyone come prepared to participate in each class in order for us to function as a true seminar of thinkers. In sum, course readings need to be read and thought about in advance for effective participation in a graduate seminar. To facilitate this course format, a small group of students will act as discussion facilitators for each class meeting by co-leading the discussion of the week’s topic, in conjunction with the instructor. Depending upon class participation, each discussion facilitator may be asked to lead a smaller group of students in discussion on an article and then reporting back to the group. The instructor may cover new concepts at the beginning of each new topic in a lecture format.

For each reading (excluding the chapters in the Bjorkland book), all students are required to post one thought question and a summary of the major points in the article to the online Blackboard system. Please note:
- There is a helpful document for paper submissions in the Blackboard system under the “Websites” tab on the Blackboard system.
- A thought question consists of a question asked for the purpose of facilitating class discussion. Questions of clarification can also be sent at this time, in addition to the student’s thought question.
- Class members’ thought questions and summaries of the articles are due no later than 12:00 noon on the Monday of each week.

In turn, no later than 5:00pm on the Tuesday of each week the discussion facilitators will be responsible for:
- Collating the discussion questions posted from the class in a topical format, with author’s name indicated in parentheses, including adding (some of) their own additional discussion questions into the formatted collection
- Disseminating these topically organized questions to the instructor and all class members
- Sending a short list of the important concepts from the articles and readings that she/he/they will use to guide the discussion to the instructor
Requirements:
The course requirements are designed to emphasize the skills that you will need as a professional in the social and behavioral sciences. These skills are important in academic, intervention, industry, social service, and clinical settings, and include: (1) writing; (2) critical evaluation; (3) application of research to practical problems; and (4) articulating informed opinions in a professional context.

Exams:
There will be two take home examinations during the semester. These exam questions will focus on your ability to integrate the themes and research that we have covered throughout the semester.

Evaluation:
- Class participation and homework 15%
- Discussion leader 15%
- Take home exam #1 35%
- Take home exam #2 35%

Honor Code:
As your instructor, I will maintain the integrity of the learning and testing process in my courses. Do not cheat, plagiarize, lie, or steal in matters relating to academic work. Exams in this course must be your own work, and students are not to discuss their answers with others.

Accommodations:
If you are a student with a disability and you require accommodations in the classroom, please contact the Disability Resource Center (DRC) at 703.993.2474. All academic accommodations must be arranged through that office. Please also inform the instructor at the beginning of the semester, so we can facilitate equal access to all students.

General Course Policies:
- This class requires active participation by you. You are expected to think, and write, and share, and ask questions, and in general be engaged while you are here!
- Please turn off electronic devices when you come to class. If your device rings, beeps or disrupts the class more than once during the semester, you may be asked to leave. You will still be responsible for the material covered.
- Be respectful of yourself and others in the course. Don’t talk during class about other things; when working in groups, keep voices to a low level so all can keep working; don’t denigrate others’ work or ideas. Give everyone in your group a chance to speak and contribute.
- This class requires use of your GMU email account for breaking news and access to Blackboard without complications. There will be no exceptions.
- The reading list supplied may be amended during class meetings. It is your responsibility to be present each week in order to get this information. I do not provide this information via email.

Important Dates:
See http://registrar.gmu.edu/calendars/Fall08calendar.pdf

Last Day to Add (Full-Semester Course) September 9, 2008
Last Day to Drop (Full-Semester Course) September 26, 2008
Readings:

WEEK ONE
Issues in cognitive development; Issues in assessment of cognitive development

class meeting: 08/27/08

Bjorkland, Chapter 1

WEEK TWO
Biological bases of cognitive development

class meeting: 09/03/08

Bjorkland, Chapter 2


WEEK THREE
Development of perception and attention

class meeting: 09/10/08

Bjorkland, Chapter 7, Chapter 6 pages 160-163-168


WEEK FOUR
Development of spatial cognition; Piaget’s theory and the neo-Piagetians

class meeting: 09/17/08

Bjorkland Chapter 4, Chapter 8


WEEK FIVE
Memory development

class meeting: 09/24/08

Bjorklund, Chapters 5, 10 and Chapter 6 (pp. 151-170)


**WEEK SIX**

Conceptual development

class meeting: 10/01/08

Bjorklund, Chapter 9 (pp. 257-262)


**WEEK SEVEN**

Conceptual development: Reading and number concepts

class meeting: 10/08/08

Bjorklund, Chap. 14 (pp. 391-421) and Chap. 6 (pp.171-180)


**WEEK EIGHT**

Conceptual development: Naïve theories of psychology, biology and physics

class meeting: 10/15/08

Bjorklund, Chap. 9 (pp. 233-256)

WEEK NINE
Development of reasoning and problem solving
Class meeting: 10/22/08

Bjorklund, Chap. 12

WEEK TEN
Origins, modification and stability of intellectual differences
Class meeting: 10/29/08

Bjorklund, Chaps. 15 and 16

WEEK ELEVEN
Language and thought
Class meeting: 11/5/08

Bjorklund, Chap. 11

WEEK TWELVE
Culture, schooling and cognition; Vygotsky’s theory
Class meeting: 11/12/08

Bjorklund, Chap. 3 and Chap. 14 (pp. 421-426)
Brooks-Gunn, J. (2003). Do you believe in magic?: What we can expect from


WEEK THIRTEEN
Conclusions about cognitive development

Class meeting: 11/19/08

Bjorklund, Epilogue.


WEEK FOURTEEN
Thanksgiving Recess

Class meeting: no class

WEEK FIFTEEN
Wrap up & Final exam

Class meeting: 12/3/2008