

Child Psychology (Psyc 313) Syllabus—Spring 2006

Class Days: T & R 1:30-2:45 am

Class Location: Lecture Hall 2

Instructor: Selma Caal

E-mail: scaal@gmu.edu

Office Hours: Tuesday 12:00-1:00 p.m. or by Appointment

Office Location: David King Hall 1034 A

Phone: (703) 993-1378

Course Description

This course will survey the major topics in the field of child psychology from the perspective of scientific theory and research. The course will focus on the process of development from conception through adolescence in domains such as physical, cognitive, emotional and social development. Additionally, the class will examine factors that influence child development such as culture, family, school, physical environment, and peers. Finally, the aim of this course is to help you to think about information from theory, research and their implications to appreciate and understand child psychology.

Required Text

Berk, L. E. (2006). *Child development*. (7th Ed). Boston, MA: Allyn and Bacon.

Additional Required Readings

The set of required readings is on Electronic Reserve *(see below for directions on how to obtain them).

Course Requirements

Exams: There will be a total of four (4), in-class exams, one of which will be taken on the final exam time/day. The exams are noncumulative and will consist of multiple choice and short answers. The exam will be based on the book, required readings, films and class lectures. The lowest grade of the first three exams will be dropped. Students must take the exams on the scheduled dates as **there will be no make-up exams for any reason!!** The final exam grade cannot be dropped. All students must take the final exam on the scheduled date and time. Each exam is worth 16.6% of your grade (50% total).

Assignments: Grades will also be determined based on the following assignments.

- **4 Reflection Papers**

- A total of 4 reflection papers will count as 15% of your grade. Choose a reading from the “required reading list” to **briefly** summarize and talk about your reactions to the reading (e.g. what do you think about it; what ideas does the reading generate; can you apply it to real situations). You can link the reading to the textbook as well. Use a different reading for each reflection paper. Two double-spaced pages should be a good length for these papers. *(See below for reflection papers deadlines)

- **Research Paper**

- **Choose a topic—Due March 2nd.** Your paper topic needs to be approved by this date. Choosing a topic early in the semester will help you get a head start in your library research. Turn in a short paragraph describing your paper topic. **This is worth 3 points toward your overall research paper grade.**
- **Research paper—April 27th.** This paper will be graded on the basis of how well you do the following: (1) survey and synthesize the literature, (2) process and critique information to discuss its implications for practice. You must have a minimum of 5 references. You can include scholarly journal articles, book chapters, and books, but do not include websites as references. You can include your textbook as a 6th reference. The paper should be written in a word processor in 12-point font, double spaced and 1 inch

margins. This paper should be between 6 and 7 pages excluding cover and reference pages. The paper should follow the APA guidelines. This assignment counts as 20% of your grade.

Class Participation: Class participation is crucial in this course. It counts as 15% of your grade. Your class participation grade will be determined on the basis of your active participation in class/group discussions. To earn maximum credit in class participation, it is encouraged for students to **ATTEND** lectures ready to discuss material covered in class.

Evaluation Criteria and Grading Scale

Evaluation Criteria	Percentage
Exam I	16.6%
Exam II	16.6%
Final Exam	16.6%
Research Paper	20%
Reflection Papers	15%
Participation	15%
Total	≈100%

Grading Scale			
93%-100%	A	73%-76%	C
90%-92%	A ⁻	70%-72%	C ⁻
87%-89%	B ⁺	67%-69%	D ⁺
83%-86%	B	63%-66%	D
80%-82%	B ⁻	60%-62%	D ⁻
77%-79%	C ⁺	0%-59%	F

Late Assignment Policy: Late assignments will not be accepted unless there is a valid excuse. Being sick does not count unless you have a note from your doctor. If you know you will be absent on a day an assignment is due, e-mail me the assignment prior to the start of the class on the due date. The purpose of this policy is not to be punitive, but to ensure that no student receives an unfair advantage over other students.

Honor Policy: Students in this course are expected to comply with the GMU Honor Code. Students should refer to the information listed on the University Home Page (<http://www.gmu.edu/departments/unilife/honorcode.html>) for definitions of behaviors such as lying, stealing, cheating and plagiarism that are considered honor code violations.

Accommodation for Students with Disabilities: It is University policy to make reasonable accommodations for students with special needs because of a physical or learning disability. 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. Students who anticipate a need for such accommodation should initiate a request for accommodation to me at the beginning of the semester. I will make every reasonable effort to accommodate these needs. Students with special needs are encouraged to contact the Disability Resource Center (222 Student Union I; <http://www.gmu.edu/student/drc/index.html>) for more information about services available through GMU.

Materials Available on Reserve:

- **Johnson Center Library:** Examples of good research papers
- **Electronic Reserve:** Required readings. To access the required readings go to <http://oscr.gmu.edu/> and click on "search electronic reserves." In the "select a course" drop down menu go to: PSYC 313 section 003. In the "select an instructor" drop down menu go to: Caal, Selma. The password is "kids"

Technology

- **GMU E-mail:** Students will be expected to have activated their GMU email account by the first week of class, and should check this account frequently or have your mail forwarded to an account that you use regularly. Most of my correspondence with you outside of class will be via e-mail.

- **Course website:** WebCT will be used for you to access various course materials such as the syllabus, class power point slides, guidelines/grading criteria for assignments, and for you to exchange information with classmates. You must first establish a [Mason email account](#) before you can access WebCT. To access the class website go to <http://webct41.gmu.edu>. Your Mason email user name is also your WebCT ID. Your Mason email password is also your WebCT password.

Last day to add – February 7th

Last day to drop – February 24th

Required Readings

Reading # 1	Nash, J. M. (2005). Inside the womb. <i>Child Growth and Development (05/06 ed.)</i> , 6-10. McGraw Hill
Reading # 2	Wisner, K. L., Galenberg, A. J., Leonard, H., Zarin, D., & Frank, E. (1999). Pharmacologic treatment of depression during pregnancy. <i>The Journal of the American Medical Association</i> , 282 (13), 1264-1269.
Reading # 3	Lipsitt, L. P. (2005). Crib death: A biobehavioral phenomenon? <i>Child Growth and Development (05/06 ed.)</i> , 21-26. McGraw Hill
Reading # 4	Bulik, C. M. (2002). Eating disorders in adolescents and young adults. <i>Child & Adolescent Psychiatric Clinics of North America</i> , 11(2), 201-218.
Reading # 5	Keen, R. (2005). Representation of objects and events: Why do infants look so smart and toddlers look so dumb? <i>Child Growth and Development (05/06 ed.)</i> , 34-37. McGraw Hill
Reading # 6	Cobb, C. D. & Mayer, J. D. (2005). Emotional intelligence: What the research says, <i>Child Growth and Development (05/06 ed.)</i> , 53-57. McGraw Hill
Reading # 7	Ainsworth, M. S. (1989). Attachment beyond infancy. <i>American Psychologist</i> , 4, 709-716.
Reading # 8	Masten, A. S., & Coatsworth, J. D. (1998). The development of competence in favorable and unfavorable environments: Lessons from research and successful children. <i>American Psychologist</i> , 53, 205-220.
Reading # 9	Berndt, T. (2002). Friendship Quality and Social Development. <i>Child Growth and Development (05/06 ed.)</i> , 59-61. McGraw Hill
Reading # 10	Olweus, D. (2003). A profile of bullying at school. <i>Child Growth and Development (05/06 ed.)</i> , 80-85. McGraw Hill

Tentative Course Schedule

*The schedule is subject to change.

Date	Topic/Chapter
Week 1 1/24—1/26	Chapter 1 Theory and applied directions (skip pp. 10-14)
Week 2 1/31—2/2	1/31 Chapter 2 Research strategies
	2/2 Chapter 3 Biological foundations, prenatal development and birth
Week 3 2/7—2/9	2/7 Chapter 3 Cont.; Readings # 1 and 2
	2/9 Chapter 4 Early learning, motor skills, and perceptual capacities
	2/9 Reflection paper #1 Due (Choose 1 reading from readings 1-3)
Week 4 2/14—2/16	2/14 Chapter 4; Reading # 3
	2/16-- Exam I (Chapters 1—4)
Week 5 2/21—2/23	Chapter 5 Physical growth; Reading # 4
Week 6 2/25—3/2	Chapter 6 Piagetian, core knowledge, and Vygotskian perspectives; Reading # 5
	3/2 Research topic Due
Week 7 3/7—3/9	Chapter 7 An information processing perspective
	3/9 Reflection paper #2 Due (Choose 1 reading from readings 4-5)
Week 8 3/14—3/16	Spring Break ☺ (no classes)
Week 9 3/21—3/23	3/21 Exam II (Chapters 5—7)
	3/22 Chapter 8 Intelligence
Week 10 3/28—3/30	Chapter 9 Language development
Week 11 4/4—4/6	Chapter 10 Emotional Development; Readings # 6 & 7
Week 12 4/11—4/13	Chapter 11 Self and social understanding
	4/13 Reflection paper #3 Due (Choose 1 reading from readings 6-7)
Week 13 4/18—4/20	4/18 Exam III (Chapters 8—11)
	4/20 Chapter 12 Moral development
Week 14 4/25—4/27	Chapter 14 The family; Reading # 8
	4/27 Research paper Due
Week 15 5/2—5/4	5/2 Reflection paper #4 Due (Choose 1 reading from readings 8-10)
	Chapter 15 Peers, media and schooling; Readings # 9 and 10
Week 16 5/11	Final Exam (Chapters 12—15) 1:30—4:15 p.m.