COGNITIVE & PERCEPTUAL DEVELOPMENT COURSE SYLLABUS

Goals of Course
Students will acquire knowledge about the development of cognition and perception in infants and children, learn skills for assessing that development in individual children, and gain an understanding of how this knowledge base can be used to help children reach their academic and social potential.

Readings

A set of required readings is on reserve in the Johnson Center Library. Some of them are on Electronic Reserve. Many of the readings are also available in the stacks of Fenwick Library.

Assignments

Week 1 (1/25) Issues in Cognitive Development
Issues in the Assessment of Cognitive Development
Bjorklund, Chap. 1.

Week 2 (2/1) Biological Bases of Cognitive Development
Bjorklund, Chap. 2.

Week 3 (2/8) Development of Perception and Attention
Bjorklund, Chap. 7, Chap. 6 (pp. 160-163, 168).

Project: Is television viewing by young children harmful to the development of attention?

Week 4 (2/15) Development of Spatial Cognition
Piaget’s Theory and the Neo-Piagetians
Bjorklund, Chaps. 4 & 8.

Project: How can teachers use two-dimensional maps to help children extend their ability
to reason about space?

Week 5 (2/22) Memory Development
Information Processing Theory and Newer Approaches

Bjorklund, Chaps. 5, 10, and Chap. 6 (pp. 151-170).

Project: How can the testimony of children be made more reliable?

Week 6 (3/1) Conceptual Development
Traditional Views: Classes, Categories, and Scales
Alternative Views: Semantic and Ontological Knowledge

Bjorklund, Chap. 9 (pp. 257-262).

Project: How does cognitive development influence children’s humor?

Week 7 (3/8) Conceptual Development: Reading and Number Concepts
Academic Skills

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

Project: Does parental reading to young children influence literacy?

(3/15) Spring Break (no class)

Week 8 (3/22) Conceptual Development: Naïve Theories of Psychology, Biology, and Physics

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

Project: Do young children understand the distinction between fantasy and reality?

Week 9 (3/29) Development of Reasoning and Problem Solving
Beliefs About Intelligence and Knowledge

Bjorklund, Chap.12.


Project: Scientific reasoning biases: How do emotional and cognitive factors motivate people to preserve their personal theories?

Week 10 (4/5) Origins, Modification, and Stability of Intellectual Differences

Bjorklund, Chaps. 15 and 16.


Project: How can creativity be fostered in children?

Week 11 (4/12) Language and Thought

Bjorklund, Chap. 11.


Project: What are the cognitive advantages and disadvantages to growing up bilingual?

Week 12 (4/19) Culture, Schooling, and Cognition

Vygotsky’s Theory

Bjorklund, Chap. 3 and Chap. 14 (pp. 421-426).


Project: How does schooling in different cultures influence math and science achievement?

Week 13 (4/26) Conclusions About Cognitive Development

Issues Revisited

Bjorklund, Epilogue.


**Week 14 (5/4) Make-up**

**Determination of Final Grade**
Your final grade will be based on four scores:
- Take-home exam #1 30% due 3/22 (by 4:30pm)
- Take-home exam #2 30% due 5/10 (by 5:00pm)
- Classwork and discussion 20%
- Project presentation 20%

Each class will consist of lecture and discussion. Students are expected to have read the material assigned for a designated week before coming to class. Additionally, each week all students are required to send three questions based on the week’s topic and readings to the instructor and the student designated to collate the questions for class distribution. Student questions should be sent no later than noon on Monday of each week. The collator will be responsible for distributing a list of questions to class members no later than 8:00pm on Tuesday of each week.

To facilitate discussion of the material, each reading (excluding chapters from Bjorklund’s text) will be assigned to a student who will have the responsibility of summarizing the main points of the article in class (a 5- to 10-minute presentation) and in a 1- to 2-page class handout.

Students will also be assigned to one of the projects. The project will involve reviewing relevant literature, presenting the findings to the class on the designated day, and preparing an annotated bibliography and a brief summary (no more than 5 pages) of conclusions for class distribution at the last class meeting of the semester.

**Important Dates**
- Last day to drop with no tuition liability (February 7, 2006)
- Last day to add classes (February 7, 2006)
- Last day to drop (February 24, 2006)

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

**Honor Code**: You are expected to follow all aspects of the University Honor Code. Exams in this course must be your own work. Students are not to discuss their answers with other students.