

On-Line Developmental Psychology

PSY 6347; spring, 2010

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On-Line Course Issues

This course will be taught entirely on-line. We will not meet in person, unless you choose to visit me in my campus office. Consequently, much responsibility for learning about Developmental Psychology and its applications rests with you. I will give you a schedule of events (viz., chapter reading, exam & research proposal due dates, discussion topics, assignments); you will have to ensure that you keep pace with the schedule. If you manage your time effectively and focus your interests and energy on the course objectives, you will fare well in this on-line course.

Your challenge is to make Developmental Psychology and its applications more immediate and relevant to your professional goals. Your informed imagination, your curiosity about the world, and your conscientious effort will allow you to derive a meaningful experience.

Please ensure that you have a current angelo.edu email address and that you check it periodically. My email address is james.forbes@angelo.edu. If you do email me, it would be helpful if you would use a signature element, which helps me understand your comment or question in context. Your signature element should have your full name and the course name.

There will be course information forums on the discussion board regarding assignments, tests, the paper, and other course administration topics. If you have questions about any of these topics, you should post them under the appropriate discussion thread. I typically reply to discussion board posts within a day or two, which is about how often I check the course web site and my email browser. Questions and answers will serve as a FAQ for the course.

Course Description and Objectives

One purpose of this course is to survey major areas of life-span developmental psychology, including theoretical and methodological approaches to the study of development. I have selected a text that reviews current thinking about social, emotional, and cognitive developments throughout the life span as well as hereditary and environmental influences on development. This text also includes some applied developmental research and how such research can inform public policy issues.

Another course objective is for you to learn how to propose empirical applied research. To help you with your proposal, we will discuss applications of psychology, as well as the myriad details of designing and drafting an empirical research proposal.

Ideally, this course will add to your understanding of life-span development, give you experience in proposing empirical research, help you become an educated consumer of empirical research, and further your professional development.

Required Text

Sigelman, C.K., & Rider, E.A. (2009). *Life-Span Human Development, 6th edition*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth/Cengage Learning; ISBN 13: 978-0-495-55340-3.

This book is available at the bookstore. But of course you may purchase or rent the textbook elsewhere (viz., online). Plan on having the textbook by the first week of classes. You will be unable to complete any of the chapter quizzes or exams without the textbook.

Course Requirements

1. Exams. There will be four exams, which you will be taking on-line using Respondus LockDown Browser software. Exams will be posted on our course Bb site under "Assignments." More information about testing procedures is posed on our course Bb site under "Respondus LockDown Browser." Each exam will count as 10% of your final grade. Examination format will be mostly multiple choice questions with a few short answer questions. The exams will be non-cumulative; each one will cover the material immediately preceding it. No make-up exams will be given.

Respondus Lock down Browser (Obligatory for Exams)

All exams must be accessed with software called Respondus Lockdown Browser (RLB). This software is already loaded in computer labs on campus, but if you want to take tests from other locations, you will need to download the software onto the computer where you take the test.

The Respondus LockDown Browser is located on Blackboard. Go now to your Bb "Support" tab. Scroll down to the bottom of the page and click the "Download LockDown Browser" link. Follow the download instructions.

To take a test, click on the RLB icon and it will take you to Blackboard. Then, click on this course, click on the "Assignments" tab, then click on the test you are to take. If you have entered Blackboard properly by accessing it through the RLB icon, the password for the test will be automatically entered on your behalf and you can start the test. If, after you click on the exam, a text box asks you whether the instructor provided a password for accessing the exam, click "NO," then click the submit button. The exam will immediately deploy. Once you begin a test, you will have the posted amount of time to complete it. If you try to take a test without going through the RLB, you will be asked to provide a test password that you don't have, so you cannot take the test.

2. Empirical Applied Research Proposal. You will write a proposal to conduct research on an applied developmental topic of your choice. Your research proposal should be organized according to the format posted under "Empirical Applied Research Proposal Format." The proposal will be written in APA style and should not exceed 10 pages in length. The research proposal will count as 40% of your course grade.

3. Assignments. Periodically, I will ask you to complete an assignment, which I will post under

“Assignments.” Ideally, these assignments will help you relate developmental topics to your own experiences and give you an opportunity to construct or reveal your own beliefs about life-span development and its applications. Assignments will be graded “satisfactory,” (85% or more) or “unsatisfactory” (<60%). At the end of the semester I will assign a overall percentage score based on the quality of your assignment work throughout the semester. No late assignments will be accepted. Your assignments grade will count as 10% of your course grade.

4. Discussion Boards. Discussion forums are posted on the discussion board. I will add forums as we progress through the semester. You will regularly contribute as a participant in these discussion forums throughout the semester. The discussion board will help you relate topics from developmental psychology to your own experiences. Your discussion board contributions will be graded satisfactory (85% or more), unsatisfactory (< 60%) at the end of the semester, and count as 10% of your course grade. The highest scores will be awarded to those who make insightful comments and engage others in conversation at regular intervals throughout the semester. Echoing others' opinions and comments made only at the very end of the semester will be awarded the lowest scores.

5. Academic Integrity. “Angelo State University expects its students to maintain complete honesty and integrity in their academic pursuits. Students are responsible for understanding the Academic Honor Code, which is...” available on the web at <http://www.angelo.edu/forms/pdf/honorcode5.pdf>

6. Disabilities. “Persons with disabilities which warrant academic accommodations must contact the Student Life Office, Room 112 University Center, in order to request such accommodations prior to their being implemented. You are encouraged to make this request early in the semester so that appropriate arrangements can be made.”

Grades

Each exam score, your research proposal score, and your class presentation and participation score will be converted to a percentage score (0-100%).The grading scale for the course will be as follows:

Letter Grade	Percentage Grade
A	90-100%
B	80-89%
C	70-79%
D	60-69%
F	Below 60%

Class Schedule, Assigned Readings, & Due Dates

Date	Topic	Chapter
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Major Perspectives &

		Research Methods	1
		Evolutionary Psychology, Genetics, Environment, & Development; Searching Electronic Data Bases Using PsycInfo; Research Proposal: Getting Started; Organizing & Evaluating the Relevant Literature for Your Research Proposal	3
		Prenatal Development	4
		Cognitive Development: Piagetian & Sociocultural Perspectives; Theory of Mind; Ways Parents can Best Help their Children's Language Development?	7
February	15-19	Exam 1	
		Cognitive Development: Information Processing Approach; Manuscript Review: JEP: Applied	8
		Cognitive Development: The Intelligence Test Approach; Creativity; Draft Research Proposal Topic Due	9
		Social Cognition & Moral Development; Dan Ariely, Predictably Irrational	13
		Attachment & Social Relationships	14
March	8-12	Exam 2	
		Family Influences on Development	15
	24	Gender Role Development & Sex Differences Final Research Proposal Topic Due	12
		Developmental Psychopathology	16
April	5-9	Exam 3	
		Personality Development	11
		<i>Physical Development</i>	5
May	5		

Empirical Research Proposal is Due

Physical Development

5

May 5-10

Exam 4

The course outline and schedule may vary at my discretion.

Format for the Applied Empirical Research Proposal

1. Title page. Proposal title, your name, and course.
2. Summary (p. 2). A concise statement of less than 150 words summarizing the project's motivation, objectives, and methods.
3. Empirical Literature Review (p. 3-8). This section answers the questions: What do you want to accomplish? Why is this research important? What relevant research has been conducted on your topic? You should thoroughly analyze the relevant research and explicitly identify how your proposal will extend, modify, or apply previous research. You should also identify the specific hypotheses or research question you will address. If you have multiple hypotheses, be sure to explicitly state them.
4. Experimental design, materials, and methods (p. 9-10). Begin this section with a description of participants and how they will be recruited. The remainder of this section answers the question: How exactly do you propose to conduct the research? Here you should specify the experimental design, thoroughly describe materials used, as well as the procedures you will use to accomplish the specific aims of your proposed research. Possible subsections include: materials, design, procedures. Your paper will also include appendices of any materials used in your study (e.g., photos, prose passages, questionnaires,...). You may (not necessary) briefly outline how the data will be analyzed.
4. References. List all of the work you cite in your proposal.
5. Use APA style in writing your proposal.