



**Department of Psychology**  
**Psychology 629.02 (L01) –Early Cognitive Development**  
**Winter 2010 – Course Outline**

---

<b>Instructor:</b>	Dr S Hala	<b>Lecture Location:</b>	TBA
<b>Phone:</b>	403-220-6476	<b>Lecture Days/Time:</b>	TBA
<b>Email:</b>	hala@ucalgary.ca		
<b>Office:</b>	A226		
<b>Office Hours:</b>	TBA		

---

### **Course Description and Goals**

The overall aim of this course is to familiarize students with theoretical and empirical advances in cognitive and language development. We will cover the age span from infancy to middle childhood.

### **Course Readings**

There is no specific text for this course. For the first class, the readings will be selected by the instructor (available from the main office). For subsequent classes, readings will be selected by students presenting research seminars. These readings will be made available to students in the class (by the presenting student) at least one week before the seminar. For those classes where there is no student presentation, reading topics will be decided as a group and students (as well as the instructor) will be required to find appropriate readings to share with the class.

### **Evaluation**

Seminar Presentation:	35%
Term Paper:	40%
Participation:	25%

### **Grading Scale**

A+	96-100%	B+	80-84%	C+	67-71%	D+	54-58%
A	90-95%	B	76-79%	C	63-66%	D	50-53%
A-	85-89%	B-	72-75%	C-	59-62%	F	0-49%

As stated in the University Calendar, it is at the instructor's discretion to round off either upward or downward to determine a final grade when the average of term work and final examinations is between two letter grades. To determine final letter grades, final percentage grades will be rounded up or down to the nearest whole percentage (e.g., 89.5% will be rounded up to 90% = A but 89.4% will be rounded down to 89% = A-).

### **Seminar Presentation:**

You will be responsible for leading one full seminar during the course. This involves preparing a one hour presentation on your chosen topic, selecting class readings, and guiding the discussion

during the class. Your topic may be from the list below, or you may devise a different topic. Students must choose a topic outside of their own thesis research. **Your topic must be approved by the instructor.** At least one week before the seminar date, you must provide students in the class (and the instructor) with a copy of two readings that you have chosen on your topic. On the day you present, you should distribute a 2-3 page summary and outline of your presentation and a list of recommended readings.

Evaluation of your presentation is based on an appraisal of the background reading you have done, your identification of relevant reference material, your critical and careful consideration of the topic, your outline, and your stewardship of the class discussion. Additionally, seminar style should reflect careful organization, clear explanation, appropriate responses to questions, appropriate use of overheads or Powerpoint etc.

**Possible Seminar Topics (this list is not mandatory or exhaustive – other topics will be considered as driven by student interest)**

- Infant perception (e.g. face perception, intermodal perception, development of 'gestalt' perception, depth perception...)
- Infant cognition (e.g. numerical knowledge, physical world, object concept, categorical knowledge, representation, causal reasoning)
- Concept formation
- Development of memory (early memory development, development of strategies/metamemory, source monitoring/suggestibility)
- Reasoning and problem solving, executive function development
- Social cognitive development (theory of mind, pretense, understanding emotion, joint attention...)
- Symbolic development (pretense, understanding scale models)
- Language acquisition (speech and auditory processing in infancy, early word learning, critical period for language acquisition).

To ensure that there is a wide range of coverage, students must have their topic approved by the instructor well in advance of their presentations. Two students may choose different aspects of the same topic if approved by the instructor. If a student must reschedule their presentation for reasons that fall under the university guidelines outlined in the calendar, (e.g., illness) the student must contact the instructor as far as possible in advance. If there is a legitimate reason to postpone a new presentation date will be scheduled at a time that fits the remaining class schedule of presentations.

For those classes where there is no presenter scheduled, students will be responsible to bring in one research article on a topic mutually agreed upon and give a short informal report about it to the class.

**Term Paper**

This paper can take the form of either a conceptual critique of a topic or a written outline for a research proposal. I recommend that you write your paper on the same topic as your seminar presentation. If you do a research proposal it should be an original contribution to the literature. The proposed research should be outlined in as much detail as possible (including

proposed participants, procedure and analyses). The papers should be typed, double-spaced, and conform to APA guidelines. Maximum length is 15 pages. Papers are to be handed in to the main Psychology office by **4 p.m. April 26<sup>th</sup>**. Late papers will be accepted only by prior consent of the instructor in accordance with the university guidelines outlined in the calendar.

### **Participation**

The grade for participation will be decided on the following criteria: (a) mastery of the assigned readings (e.g., reading assigned papers and coming to class prepared to discuss them); (b) contributions to class discussions (e.g., asking questions of presenters, raising issues related to lecture topics, etc); (c) your regular written submission of discussion issues ('thought papers' based on the assigned readings) to the instructor at the beginning of each class; and (d) your regular contribution of feedback to presenters (emailed to the instructor within 48 hours). Students should make 2 copies of their thought papers – one to submit to the instructor at the beginning of class and one to have with them in the seminar.

### **Tentative Lecture Schedule**

As this is a seminar in which the exact topics to be covered will be determined by student interest I provide only a skeletal outline of the class schedule at this time. As presentation dates are arrived at, and other topics confirmed, this schedule will be revised and posted on Blackboard.

Also – as the date and time have yet to be determined I provide only a list of the weeks to be covered. Classes will be held in one weekly slot to be determined by student and instructor schedules.

Preliminary Class Schedule (subject to revision)

Week	Topic	Presenter	Readings
Jan 11	Organizational meeting Current issues in development	S. Hala	none
Jan 18	Theories of Development	S. Hala	TBA
Jan 25			
Feb 1			
Feb 8			
Feb 15	<b>READING BREAK</b>		
Feb 22			
Mar 1			
Mar 8			
Mar 15			
Mar 22			
Mar 29			
Apr 4			
Apr 12			
<b>Apr 26</b>	<b>Papers due by 4:00</b>		

### **Reappraisal of Grades**

A student who feels that a piece of graded term work (e.g., term paper, essay, test) has been unfairly graded, may have the work re-graded as follows. The student shall discuss the work with the instructor within 15 days of being notified about the mark or of the item's return to the class. If not satisfied, the student shall immediately take the matter to the Head of the department offering the course, who will arrange for a reassessment of the work within the next 15 days. The reappraisal of term work may cause the grade to be raised, lowered, or to remain the same. If the student is not satisfied with the decision and wishes to appeal, the student shall address a letter of appeal to the Dean of the faculty offering the course within 15 days of the unfavourable decision. In the letter, the student must clearly and fully state the decision being appealed, the grounds for appeal, and the remedies being sought, along with any special circumstances that warrant an appeal of the reappraisal. The student should include as much written documentation as possible.

### **Plagiarism and Other Academic Misconduct**

Intellectual honesty is the cornerstone of the development and acquisition of knowledge and requires that the contribution of others be acknowledged. Consequently, plagiarism or cheating on any assignment is regarded as an extremely serious academic offense. Plagiarism involves submitting or presenting work in a course as if it were the student's own work done expressly for that particular course when, in fact, it is not. Students should examine sections of the

University Calendar that present a Statement of Intellectual honesty and definitions and penalties associated with Plagiarism/Cheating/Other Academic Misconduct.

### **Academic Accommodation**

It is the student's responsibility to request academic accommodations. If you are a student with a documented disability who may require academic accommodation and have not registered with the Disability Resource Centre, please contact their office at 403-220-8237. Students who have not registered with the Disability Resource Centre are not eligible for formal academic accommodation. You are also required to discuss your needs with your instructor no later than 14 days after the start of this course.

### **Evacuation Assembly Point**

In case of an emergency evacuation during class, students must gather at the designated assembly point nearest to the classroom. The list of assembly points is found at

<http://www.ucalgary.ca/emergencyplan/assemblypoints>

Please check this website and note the nearest assembly point for this course.

### **Important Dates:**

The last day for registration/change of registration is **Jan 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2010**. The last day to withdraw from this course is **Apr 16<sup>th</sup>, 2010**.