

Psychology 503.20

Early Cognitive Development

Winter 2013

<b>Instructor:</b>	Juanita Whalen	<b>Lecture Location:</b>	A253
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**Course Description and Goals**

The overall aim of this course is to familiarize students with theoretical and empirical advances in early cognitive development. In this course we will study development from infancy to middle childhood, focusing on basic developmental processes including perceptual, cognitive and language development. Students will acquire experience with selecting course readings, leading a seminar discussion, giving a seminar presentation and engaging in discussions of current research relevant to cognitive development.

**Prerequisites**

Psychology 312 – Experimental and Quantitative Methods for Psychology, and consent of the Department.

**Required Text**

There is no required text for this course. The instructor and students will assign articles and readings based on selected topics. See section below regarding course readings.

**Course Readings**

No readings will be assigned for the first class, and readings for the second class will be selected by the instructor. All subsequent readings will be selected by students as part of the article discussion requirement or part of the seminar presentation requirement. All assigned readings must be made available (by the presenter) at least one week before the class, either by posting to Blackboard or by distributing the readings during class time. If there are weeks when no students are scheduled to lead discussion or deliver a presentation, or if there are weeks when large portions of the class time have no scheduled presentations, we will choose a topic as a group and each bring a brief article to class to discuss.

**Evaluation**

Seminar presentation	35%	Dates to be chosen on first day of class
Article discussion	15%	Dates to be chosen on first day of class
Participation	20%	Weekly
Research paper	30%	Due April 18 <sup>th</sup> , by 4:30 pm, via email

### **Seminar presentation** (35%):

Students will be responsible for delivering a seminar presentation on a selected topic. Ideally, the presentation will be done singly, but depending on course enrolment it may be necessary for students to present in pairs. The presentation requires students to research a chosen topic, prepare a Power Point (or similar) presentation, select 1-2 class readings that form the foundation of the presentation, and guide the discussion following the presentation. Students are expected to give comprehensive treatment of the selected topic, which involves the use of several empirical articles or other sources, in addition to those assigned to the class. When presenting singly, the presentation should be between 30-35 minutes long, with an additional 10 minutes for discussion; when presenting in pairs, the presentation should be between 40-45 minutes long. The topic may be from the list below, or may be a different topic from an area within early cognitive development. **ALL topics must be approved by the instructor** to ensure there is not unnecessary overlap across presentations. At least one week before the seminar date, the presenting student must provide the class (and the instructor) with a copy of 1-2 readings (10-20 pages in total). On the day of the presentation, each presenter should distribute a 3-4 page summary (single-spaced) of their presentation to all class members. This summary should include an outline, brief summary of the presentation highlights (key findings, important contributions, etc.), a list of recommended readings, and discussion questions.

Evaluation of the presentation is based on the student's identification of relevant reference material, an appraisal of the background reading the student has done, their critical and careful consideration of the topic, their written summary, and their stewardship of the class discussion. Additionally, seminar style should reflect careful organization, clear explanation, appropriate responses to questions, appropriate use of Power Point (or overheads, etc.), and effective delivery of the content to the target audience. Failure to present on the selected date will result in the student receiving a grade of 0% for the presentation.

### **Article discussion** (15%):

Students will be responsible for leading the class discussion of a selected article. The article discussion involves selecting a reading (or 2 briefer complementary readings if desired) to assign to the class, preparing discussion questions, posting discussion questions to Blackboard in advance of class, retrieving the questions posted by other students in advance of class, and managing the discussion of the article during class time. The discussion leader should begin with a brief outline of the selected article and then use their classmates' posted Blackboard questions to steer discussion during class. Approximately 30 minutes will be devoted to each article discussion. **ALL topics must be approved by the instructor** to ensure there is not unnecessary overlap across presentations and discussions. At least one week before the seminar date, the presenting student must provide the class (and the instructor) with a copy of the assigned article (maximum 20 pages). On the day of the article discussion, the presenting student should provide the instructor with a brief thought paper on the assigned article. This paper should include a summary of the article's aims, methodology and findings, as well as a thoughtful critique of the article's contributions and limitations. The thought paper should be approximately 2 pages long (single-spaced).

Evaluation of the article discussion is based on the appropriateness of the selected article, the student's level of preparation, their thought paper, their ability to stimulate and manage discussion, and their management of the time allotted. Failure to present on the selected date will result in the student receiving a grade of 0% for the article discussion.

**Participation (20%):**

The grade for participation will be decided on the following criteria:

- a) Attendance at each lecture. This includes providing the class with undivided attention.
- b) Submission of discussion questions each week. For each seminar presentation and each article discussion students are required to submit 2-3 discussion questions based on the readings the presenters have assigned. Each week students are required to submit your discussion questions to Blackboard no later than 7:00 pm on the evening before class.
- c) Well-informed and meaningful contributions to the class discussions (e.g., asking questions of presenters, raising discussion questions during article discussions, etc.)
- d) Regular contribution of feedback to seminar presenters, emailed to the instructor within 72 hours (i.e., by Sunday evening). Each student should provide feedback that addresses the presenter's ability to teach the class about the topic, including their use of relevant reference material, scope and organization of the content, presentation style, and ability to answer questions and lead discussion. Feedback can be provided in point form, and should not exceed 1 page (½ page would be fine in most cases).

**Research paper (30%):**

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 students write the paper on the topic from their seminar presentation (or from the article discussion). If a student chooses to 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). If a student chooses to do a conceptual critique, they should still focus the analysis on current empirical research. The papers should be typed, using a 12-point font, have 1-inch margins, be double-spaced, and conform to current APA guidelines. Maximum length of the paper body is 12 pages (not including cover page, abstract, references, figures/tables, and appendices). Papers should be emailed to the instructor and are due on **Thursday, April 18, by 4:30 pm**. Late papers will be penalized 10% per day, including weekends.

**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. In this course there will be no rounding up of final grades, especially in light of the opportunities students have to increase their final grade via research participation.

### Tentative Lecture Schedule

This schedule is subject to change based on actual course enrolment and selected presentation topics.

Date	Topic	Presenters	Type
T Jan 8	Winter Term Lecture Begins.		
R Jan 10	Course overview and planning Current issues in development	J. Whalen	
R Jan 17	Theories of development	J. Whalen	
F Jan 18	Last day to drop Winter Term courses.		
M Jan 21	Last day to add or swap Winter Term courses.		
R Jan 24	Infant perception		
R Jan 31	Infant cognition		
R Feb 7	Concept formation		
R Feb 14	Memory development		
R Feb 21	Reading Week. No Lecture.		
R Feb 28	Thinking & reasoning		
R Mar 7	Social cognition- earlier		
R Mar 14	Social cognition- later		
R Mar 21	Language development- earlier		
R Mar 28	Language development-later		
R Apr 4	Atypical development- earlier		
R Apr 11	Atypical development- later		
T Apr 16	Winter Lectures End. Last day to withdraw. Last day to participate in research and allocate research credits.		
R Apr 18	Research paper due, by email, at 4:30 pm.		
F Apr 19-30	Winter Term Final Exams.		

### Suggested topics for seminar presentations and article discussions

This list below is not exhaustive, but provides a starting point for topic selection. Moreover, students may wish to narrow their focus further within the suggested topics, as the listed options are quite broad. Students must have their topic approved by the instructor well in advance of their presentations and article discussions. Two students may choose different aspects of the same topic if approved by the instructor.

Theme	Potential topics
Infant perception*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Face perception</li> <li>• Intermodal perception</li> <li>• Development of 'gestalt' perception</li> <li>• Depth perception</li> </ul>
Infant cognition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Numerical knowledge</li> <li>• Understanding of the physical world</li> <li>• Object understanding</li> <li>• Categorical knowledge</li> <li>• Representation</li> <li>• Causal reasoning</li> </ul>
Concept formation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development of categories</li> <li>• Non-obvious concepts</li> <li>• Trustworthiness in concept/category formation</li> </ul>
Memory development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Early memory development</li> <li>• Development of memory strategies</li> <li>• Metamemory</li> <li>• Source monitoring</li> <li>• Suggestibility</li> </ul>
Thinking & reasoning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Executive Function development</li> <li>• Reasoning with scale models</li> <li>• Problem solving</li> <li>• Children as theorists</li> </ul>
Social Cognition-earlier	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attachment</li> <li>• Joint attention</li> <li>• Pretense</li> </ul>
Social Cognition-later	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Theory of mind</li> <li>• Pretense &amp; play</li> <li>• Emotional understanding &amp; development</li> </ul>
Language Development-earlier	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Auditory processing</li> <li>• Early preferences for speech</li> <li>• Critical periods for language</li> <li>• Early word learning</li> </ul>
Language Development-later	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bilingualism</li> <li>• Early reading</li> <li>• Pragmatics</li> </ul>
Atypical cognitive development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cultural differences in development</li> <li>• Individual differences in typical development</li> <li>• Children with Autism</li> </ul>

**\*Note:** An additional topic option is methodological approaches to studying development. If anyone would like to cover this topic, I suggest it be covered at the very start of the seminar presentations so that it sets the stage for later articles that might use those methodologies.

### **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.

### **Absence From A Test/Exam**

Makeup tests/exams are NOT an option without an official University medical excuse (see the University Calendar). A completed Physician/Counselor Statement will be required to confirm absence from a test/exam for health reasons; the student will be required to pay any cost associated with this Statement. Students who miss a test/exam have 48 hours to contact the instructor and to schedule a makeup test/exam. Students who do not schedule a makeup test/exam with the instructor within this 48-hour period forfeit the right to a makeup test/exam. At the instructor's discretion, a makeup test/exam may differ significantly (in form and/or content) from a regularly scheduled test/exam. Except in extenuating circumstances (documented by an official University medical excuse), a makeup test/exam must be written within 2 weeks of the missed test/exam.

### **Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIP) Act**

The FOIP legislation disallows the practice of having student's retrieve tests and assignments from a public place. Therefore, tests and assignments may be returned to students during class/lab, or during office hours, or via the Department Office (Admin 275), or will be made available only for viewing during exam review sessions scheduled by the Department. Tests and assignments will be shredded after one year. Instructors should take care to not link students' names with their grades, UCIDs, or other FOIP-sensitive information.

### **Course Credits for Research Participation (Max 2% of final grade)**

Students in most psychology courses are eligible to participate in Departmentally approved research and earn credits toward their final grades. **A maximum of two credits (2%) per course, including this course, may be applied to the student's final grade. Students earn 0.5% (0.5 credits) for each full 30 minutes of participation.** The demand for timeslots may exceed the supply in a given term. Thus, students are not guaranteed that there will be enough studies available to them to meet their credit requirements. Students should seek studies early in the term and should frequently check for open timeslots. Students can create an account and participate in Departmentally approved research studies at <http://ucalgary.sona-systems.com>. The last day to participate in studies and to assign or reassign earned credits to courses is **Apr 16<sup>th</sup>, 2012**

### **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.

### **Student Organizations**

Psychology students may wish to join the Psychology Undergraduate Students' Association (PSYCHS). They are located in Administration 170 and may be contacted at 403-220-5567.

**Student Union VP Academic:** Phone: 403-220-3911

[suvpaca@ucalgary.ca](mailto:suvpaca@ucalgary.ca)

**Student Union Faculty Rep.:** Phone: 403-220-3913

[socialscirep@su.ucalgary.ca](mailto:socialscirep@su.ucalgary.ca)

### **Important Dates**

The last day to drop this course with no "W" notation and **still receive a tuition fee refund** is **January 18, 2013**. Last day for registration/change of registration is **January 21, 2013**. The last day to withdraw from this course is **Apr 16<sup>th</sup>, 2013**.