Course Description

In the words of Paul Bloom, “The science of child development explains what makes us human.” In this course we will examine the cognitive psychology of children, from a developmental perspective. In other words, we will examine children’s thinking, and how and why that thinking changes over time, with maturation and with experience. This course is not designed as an exhaustive survey of the field of cognitive development. Rather, we will make detailed examinations of several areas of research, including children’s physical knowledge, memory, language and conceptual development, and social cognition. We will also examine theoretical frameworks proposed to explain how cognitive development unfolds. This is an advanced elective; some background in either cognitive psychology (PSYC-3466) or developmental psychology (PSYC-3404) is essential for success in the course.

Course Objectives

My goals are that, by the end of the term, you will

- Become familiar with major issues and recent findings in cognitive development.
- Learn how research questions are asked and answered in cognitive development.
- Be able to think critically about questions/issues in cognitive development and use psychological evidence to coherently argue a position on such issues.

Required Readings

- Additional readings will be required for each unit. These will be available online.

Course Work and Responsibilities

The course is divided into five units. For each unit, there will be a quiz and a short paper. For quizzes I will count your four highest grades. That means you can do four and take one off, or do five and drop your lowest score. Of the five short papers, you are required to write three. There will also be a take-home final exam. Finally, I will keep track of class participation throughout the semester. Therefore, you will be evaluated on the basis of four quizzes, three short papers, a final exam, and class participation.
Readings. For each unit you will read one or two chapters of the textbook as background material. We will also have an additional reading to discuss for some class periods. These will consist of short empirical articles relevant to the unit. Reading assignments are listed on the course schedule next to the date when we will discuss them. I expect you to carefully do the readings prior to the first class for which the reading is listed. You are responsible for understanding what you read, asking questions about what you don’t understand, and being prepared to discuss the readings in class. **For each reading, you should prepare 2 comments/questions/examples from real life, etc. for discussion. Submit those to Turnitin by 10AM on the day the reading is discussed in class.**

Quizzes. There will be a quiz at the end of each unit—a total of five over the course of the semester—on the date indicated on the course schedule. Each quiz will be worth 20 points and will test your knowledge and understanding of material covered in the unit. The format will be short answer. Quizzes will be taken in-class, during the second half of the class period. Your quiz grade will be the sum of your four highest quizzes.

Short Papers. There will be a paper assignment for each unit—You must write any 3 of the 5 papers. Papers will be submitted via Turnitin on Blackboard, and will be due at midnight on the date indicated on the course schedule. For each unit I will distribute 2 questions; you must choose one question from the set and write a response. Papers should be about 2 pages long, and absolutely no longer than 3 pages. Each paper will be worth 20 points; these papers are meant to be essays (not research papers). You won’t need to consult outside sources, but rather to think, present a coherent argument, and marshal evidence (from lectures, readings, or your own experience) to support your position. Please double-space your papers and use 12 point font. Please get papers in by the due date – 1 point will be deducted for every day it’s late.

Final Exam. The final will be a take-home essay exam and will be worth 30 points. It will be distributed on the last day of class and will be due during finals week. Questions on the exam will require you to integrate material from throughout the semester.

Participation. This class is an active experience, and requires your full engagement. Class participation includes active involvement in class discussions and activities. I don’t expect everyone to talk all the time, but I do expect everyone to make quality contributions on a regular basis. Attendance is expected, but attendance alone does not constitute participation.

Blackboard. Lecture slides will be posted on Blackboard. Please be aware that lecture slides are an outline, and will not serve as notes.

Academic Integrity. All of the work you turn in must be entirely your own. It’s acceptable to talk with classmates about ideas for papers or approaches to exam questions; it is absolutely not acceptable to collaborate on actual written work, or to turn in a paper that is substantially similar to another students’ paper. If you borrow any material from external sources, you must follow American Psychological Association guidelines for giving credit to the appropriate authors and publishers.
Grading Scheme

Exams, short papers, and participation will factor into your final grade as follows:

Quizzes (4 x 20 pts each) 80 possible points
Papers (3 x 20 pts each) 60 possible points
Final Exam 30 possible points
Class Participation 10 possible points
Total 180 possible points

Letter grades will be assigned using the following guidelines:


Due Dates for Short Papers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Paper Due</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Oct 7</td>
<td>Fri</td>
<td>Short Paper 1: Basic Processes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct 21</td>
<td>Fri</td>
<td>Short Paper 2: Naïve Physics</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nov 4</td>
<td>Fri</td>
<td>Short Paper 3: Naïve Psychology</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nov 22</td>
<td>Tues</td>
<td>Short Paper 4: Naïve Biology and Conceptual Development</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dec 6</td>
<td>Fri</td>
<td>Short Paper 5: Language Acquisition</td>
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