UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY

DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY
Faculty of Arts

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Psychology 501.24	Early Cognitive Development

Instructor:	Juanita Whalen	**Lecture Location:**	A051/053
Phone:	403-220-5220	**Lecture Days/Time:**	Wed. 13:00-15:45
Email:	jwhalen@ucalgary.ca		
Office:	A063		
Office Hours:	Wed. 12:00-13:00, or by appt.		

Course Description and Goals

The overall aim of this course is to familiarize students with theoretical and empirical advances in early cognitive development. We will cover the age span from infancy to middle childhood. In this course we will study infant and child development, including both theoretical accounts as well as current research findings. The prime focus will be basic developmental processes including perceptual, cognitive and language development.

Course objectives

- to introduce students to the theories, methodologies, issues, and current experimental findings in the field of cognitive development during infancy and childhood
- to encourage students to think critically about conceptual and empirical issues
- to provide students with direct experience reading empirical articles
- to provide students with experience in giving oral presentations, leading seminar discussions, and writing a term paper

Prerequisites

Psychology 312 – Experimental and Quantitative Methods for Psychology, and consent of the Department. Note: Normally restricted to Psychology Honours students.

Required Texts

None

Course Readings

Readings for the first two seminars will be selected by the instructor. These readings will be provided one week before each class, and will be posted on Blackboard. If an electronic copy is not available, the readings will be made available at the main Psychology office for students to photocopy. For subsequent classes, readings will be selected by students presenting research seminars. These readings will be made available to the class (by the presenting student) at least one week before the seminar, either by posting to Blackboard or by distributing the readings during class time. On weeks when no student seminars are scheduled, we will choose a topic as a group and each bring an article to discuss.

Evaluation

Seminar Presentation	30%	Dates to be chosen on first day of class
Thought papers	15%	3 times during semester- dates TBD
Participation	15%	Weekly
Research Paper	40%	Due April 16th, at 4:30 pm

<u>**Seminar Presentation**</u> (30%):
You will be responsible for leading one half of a lecture during the course (approx. 75-80 minutes). This involves preparing a presentation on your chosen topic, selecting 1-2 class readings, and guiding the discussion during your half of the class. Your topic may be from the list below, or you may choose a different topic from an area within early cognitive development. **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 1-2 readings that you have chosen on your topic. On the day you present, you should distribute a 3-4 page summary (single-spaced) of your presentation to all class members, including an outline, a list of recommended readings, and discussion questions. The summary should provide more detail than just the bare-bones Power Point outline.

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 Power Point, etc.

<u>**Thought papers**</u> (5% each on 3 occasions; Total 15%):
On the weeks when no seminar presentations are being delivered, the class will agree upon a topic for that week's discussion. Each student will choose an article based on that topic to share with the class, and will provide a thought paper and discussion questions to the instructor at the start of the lecture. The thought paper should include a summary of the article's aims, methodology and findings, as well as a thoughtful critique of the article and discussion questions. Each thought paper should be 2-3 pages long (single-spaced) and should contain 3-4 discussion questions at the end. 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.

<u>**Participation**</u> (15%):
The grade for participation will be decided on the following criteria:
   a) Attendance at each lecture
   b) Submission of discussion questions. For each seminar presentation (2 per week), you are required to submit 2-4 discussion questions based on the readings the presenter has assigned. Each week, you should make 2 copies of your discussion questions – one to submit to the instructor at the beginning of class and one to have with them in the seminar.
   c) Well-informed and meaningful contributions to the class discussions (e.g., asking questions of presenters, raising issues related to lecture topics, etc.)
   d) Regular contribution of feedback to presenters (emailed to the instructor within 48 hours). Your feedback should address the presenter's ability to teach you 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 (40%):
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 topic from 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). If you do a conceptual critique, you should still focus your 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 15 pages (not including cover page, abstract, references, figures/tables, and appendices). Papers will be accepted in print form only (no email papers) and are due on **Monday, April 16, by 4:30** in the Department of Psychology main office. Late papers will not be accepted except in extenuating circumstances, and with proper documentation. Any extensions must be approved by the instructor ahead of the deadline.

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

Date	Theme	Presenter & topic	Readings
W Jan 11	Introduction	J. Whalen • Organizational mtg. • Current issues in dev.	TBD
W Jan 18	Theories	J. Whalen • Theories of cognitive development	TBD
W Jan 25	Infant perception		
W Feb 1	Infant cognition		
W Feb 8	Concept formation		
W Feb 15	Memory development		
W Feb 22	Reading days. No lecture.		
W Feb 29	Thinking & reasoning		
W Mar 7	Social cognition-earlier		
W Mar 14	Social cognition-later		
W Mar 21	Language develop.-earlier		
W Mar 28	Language develop.-later		
W Apr 4	Atypical development		
W Apr 11	No lecture—time to work on research paper		
M Apr 16	Research paper due 4:30 pm		

Possible Seminar Topics
This list is not exhaustive, but should give you a starting point for topic selection. 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. Students should choose a new topic for their second presentation.

Theme	Potential topics
Infant perception*	• Face perception • Intermodal perception • Development of 'gestalt' perception • Depth perception
Infant cognition	• Numerical knowledge • Understanding of the physical world • Object understanding • Categorical knowledge • Representation • Causal reasoning
Concept formation	• Development of categories • Non-obvious concepts • Trustworthiness in concept/category formation
Memory development	• Early memory development • Development of memory strategies • Metamemory • Source monitoring • Suggestibility
Thinking & reasoning	• Executive Function development • Reasoning with scale models • Problem solving • Children as theorists
Social Cognition-earlier	• Attachment • Joint attention • Pretense
Social Cognition-later	• Theory of mind • Pretense & play • Emotional understanding & development
Language Development- earlier	• Auditory processing • Early preferences for speech • Critical periods for language • Early word learning
Language Development- later	• Bilingualism • Early reading • Pragmatics
Atypical cognitive development	• Cultural differences in development • Individual differences in typical development • Children with Autism

*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 13th, 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
Student Union Faculty Rep.:   Phone: 403-220-3913   socialscirep@su.ucalgary.ca

Important Dates http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/academic-schedule.html
The last day to drop this course with no "W" notation and **still receive a tuition fee refund** is **January 20,**
2012. Last day for registration/change of registration is **January 23, 2012**. The last day to withdraw from
this course is **Apr 13, 2012**.