

SYLLABUS
PSYCHOLOGY 2AA3: SURVEY OF CHILD DEVELOPMENT
Department of Psychology, Neuroscience, and Behaviour
McMaster University
Fall Term 2009

Course time: MR 3:30, T 4:30

Course location: TSH 120

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Professor:

Dr. Jennifer M Ostovich

Email: jmostovich@mcmaster.ca

Phone: *Please do not phone me*

Office: PC 415A

Office hours: Announced weekly on course website

Teaching Assistants:

Jenna Cheal: chealj@mcmaster.ca; office PC 219 (dial 26033 at security doors)

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Mark Vida: vidamd@mcmaster.ca; office PC 138 (dial 24761 at security doors)

Course Description: This course is designed to introduce you to research and theory in developmental psychology, covering the years from birth to the beginnings of adolescence. We will discuss the major topics of interest to developmentalists, including perceptual, cognitive, personality, social, emotional, and moral development. After having taken this course, you may want to take Dr. Day's course, *Adolescence*, or my course, *Aging*. Having completed these three courses, you will have covered the development of humans across the lifespan.

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Textbook: Kail, R. V. & Barnfield, A. (2008). *Children and their development, 1st Canadian Ed.* Available at the bookstore.

I put together a *custom edition* of this textbook in order to save you money. This custom textbook deletes chapters and sections I won't be touching on this term, and therefore saves both money and trees. If you prefer to own the chapters and sections I've deleted, then you can buy the full edition on the web (e.g., amazon.ca).

Please note: I cannot vouch for the previous edition of this textbook, Kail (2007), and I cannot provide a separate syllabus to support its use.

E-mail Policy: E-mail *must* originate from your *designated McMaster e-mail account*. If we (your professor or TA) need to contact you, we will send the e-mail to your mcmaster.ca account. You should *monitor this account regularly*. E-mails sent from third-party providers (yahoo, hotmail, cogeco, sympatico, etc.) will be *ignored*. We have this policy for *three reasons*: (1) to reduce the amount of incoming spam to our accounts; (2) to ensure that we know with whom we are communicating; and (3) to teach the professional use of e-mail. *Remember:* E-mails to your professors are *professional communications*. They should include correct spelling and punctuation, and should be polite and to the point.

Website Policy: This course has a Blackboard website. You are expected to check this

website with regularity for announcements, updates, discussion board postings, and other valuable information. It is *your responsibility* to keep up with the information provided on this site.

Use of the *discussion boards* is strongly encouraged, and, in the case of non-private inquiries (e.g., questions about course content and the running of this course, but *not* emails reporting illness or other private matters) is *preferred to email communications*. I have about 850 students this term and cannot possibly answer all emails. Questions asked on the discussion board allow other students with the same questions the chance to see the answer (and therefore not have to ask the question themselves). Discussion board questions also provide a learning experience for students who attempt to answer these questions themselves (also strongly encouraged).

Please see the *first post* on each discussion board for *directions on how to use the board*. Inappropriate posts will be deleted from the board. The professor reserves the right to *ban* students from the course website if they use the board inappropriately (e.g., posting mean or other inappropriate comments). This will involve lost access to slides and other important course information.

Finally, students should be aware that, when they access the electronic components of this course, private information such as first and last names, user names for the McMaster e-mail accounts, and program affiliation may become apparent to all other students in the same course. The available information is dependent on the technology used. Continuation in this course will be deemed consent to this disclosure. If you have any questions or concerns about such disclosure please discuss this with the course instructor.

How To Do Well in this Course:

First: Read the syllabus *very* carefully!

Second: Read the website carefully as well! Follow the discussions, and read any announcements and files posted there. Check the website *several times per week*.

Third: Know the *missed tests policy*. This is available below. Do exactly as this policy asks if you miss a test, or you may be in for a nasty surprise.

Fourth: Attend lectures. You cannot do well in this course if you do not attend lectures. Although the textbook does support the lecture material, lectures often go beyond, or have a different focus than, the textbook. Therefore, if you miss lectures, you will miss important information.

Fifth: Read your textbook and any other assigned readings. You cannot do well in this course if you do not supplement lectures with *independent learning from the textbook*. I do not cover all of the materials in the textbook; there is no time for that in a one-term course. Therefore, I expect you to spend some of your study-time identifying important concepts from the text, and learning them. Independent learning is an important skill. You will be expected to do this in your upper level courses, and – more importantly – in what academics call “the real world”.

Sixth: Learn how to take effective notes. Slides are posted *after* their contents have been lectured on. I post the slides after lectures for several reasons. The most important of these is that no one in the real world is going to give you slides! In order to do well in the real world, you will have to know how to cope with large amounts of incoming information. If you have trouble taking effective notes, then please visit CSD, or see me or one of your TA's, for advice.

Please note that my slides contain only basic information – bullet points, figures, and pictures. You cannot recreate lectures, and therefore cannot succeed in this course, by depending on them instead of attending lecture.

Finally: Think carefully about the information I'm presenting you in lecture. Two things are usually happening: first, I'm telling you the story of some theory or idea; and second, I'm giving you details on research that helped tell the story. I expect you to be able to discuss both theory *and* research on tests, so try to figure out

- (1) what's the story? (i.e., the theory), and
- (2) what does the research we learned about tell us about that story?

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If you study with these questions in mind, then you should do well on the midterm and final. If you find that you're not sure what the story is or how the research fits in with or supports the story, then please make use of the discussion board and any office hours offered by me or by your TA's!

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Participation: In-class and discussion board participation are *strongly encouraged*. If you have a question, your colleagues probably have a similar one, and will appreciate it if you speak up. Don't be shy about asking questions!

Assessment: Your final mark will be based on your performance on two tests: a midterm and a non-cumulative final exam. The value of each test will depend on your performance on that test, such that your better performance will be worth 60% of your final mark, and your worse performance will be worth 40% of your final mark

The midterm and final will cover lecture material *and* assigned readings, *even* readings not discussed in class. They will consist of some combination of multiple choice, definitions, and short essays. The midterm is currently scheduled for **19 October (Short Answer section) and 20 October (Multiple Choice section)**. I have divided this across two days so that you will have ample time to think out your answers. The final exam will be held during the **examination period**, and will combine both sections in the same testing session.

Please note that the instructor reserves the right to alter the evaluation scheme if circumstances warrant (e.g., TA loss).

Missed Tests: It is your responsibility to submit all excuses for missed tests to the office of the Associate Dean of your faculty *within one week* of the original test date. It is *also* your responsibility to *speak with your professor as soon as possible*. Senate regulations for petitions for special consideration have always required that: "40. The student shall make a prompt and timely request for special consideration." No requests for special consideration will be accepted after one month.

If you miss the midterm, a makeup test will be likely be provided during class time a week to the day after the original test (yes, this means that you will miss a lecture – or even two – if you miss the midterm). That is, the make-up for the Short Answer section will be on 26 Oct, and the make-up for the Multiple Choice section will be on 27 Oct.

If you miss your make-up, then you must once again supply an excuse to your Associate Dean; otherwise, you will receive a mark of zero (0) on the midterm. If you can provide an acceptable excuse to your Associate Dean for having missed the make-up, then an alternate make-up assignment will be designed for you. This make-up assignment could take the form of a research paper, an essay examination, or an oral examination. Therefore, please consider the consequences of missing a test carefully!

Final Mark Calculations: Your final mark will be converted to a letter, according to the following scheme:

Percentage (Grade)	Percentage (Grade)	Percentage (Grade)	Percentage (Grade)
90-100 (A+)	77-79 (B+)	67-69 (C+)	57-59 (D+)
85-89 (A)	73-76 (B)	63-66 (C)	53-56 (D)
80-84 (A-)	70-72 (B-)	60-62 (C-)	50-52 (D-)
			0-49 (F)

Please Note: The instructor reserves the right to adjust final marks up *or down*, on a individual basis, in the light of special circumstances.

Please Note as Well: I do *not* do special favours for one student that I have not offered (or would not offer) to the class as a whole. For example, I will not, under normal circumstances, bump up your final mark (e.g., 69.2% is a C+ for *all* students; it is *not* a B- for you, but a C+ for the rest of the class). Your final mark is your final mark, unless a marking or mathematical error has been made. I live by this rule because special favours to one student are *unfair* to the multitude of students who neither ask for nor receive those same favours. If you are concerned about your final mark, therefore, it is your responsibility to visit with me or with one of your TA's for guidance.

Academic Integrity: You are expected to exhibit honesty and use ethical behavior in all aspects of the learning process. Academic credentials you earn are rooted in principles of honesty and integrity. Academic dishonesty is to knowingly act or fail to act in a way that results or could result in unearned academic credit or advantage. This behavior can result in serious consequences, e.g., a grade of zero (0) on an assignment or test, loss of course credit with a notation on the transcript (“grade F assigned for academic dishonesty”), and/or suspension or expulsion from the university.

It is *your responsibility* to understand what constitutes academic dishonestly. For information about academic dishonesty, please refer to the Academic Integrity Policy, at <http://www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity>.

SCHEDULE AND READINGS

This schedule is subject to change.
Changes will be announced on Blackboard.

The most likely change is the timing of the section on *Personality Development*.
This topic may move to before the midterm if time permits.

Below is a list of topics (with associated readings listed in [blue](#)) that I expect to cover this term, divided into two halves: pre-midterm and post-midterm. Even though I will not cover the entire contents of any given chapter in lecture, you are expected to read and learn its contents.

Midterm:

- Part A: Short Answers: 19 October (check website for test locations)
- Part B: Multiple Choice: 20 October (to be written in our usual classroom)

Final Exam:

To be scheduled by the Registrar

A note on dates and deadlines: The instructor and university reserve the right to modify elements of the course during the term. The university may change the dates and deadlines for any or all courses in extreme circumstances. If either type of modification becomes necessary, reasonable notice and communication with the students will be given with an explanation and the opportunity to comment on changes. It is the responsibility of the student to check their McMaster email and course websites weekly during the term and to note any changes.

A note on the readings: I will not be deleting any of the readings listed below. Plan carefully so that you do not find yourself “cramming” the readings at the last minute. Please do not email me asking whether I plan to delete any of your readings! This is rather high up on my “top ten most annoying emails” list!

Extra readings *may* be assigned as we go. These will be announced in class and on Blackboard; links to extra readings will be posted on Blackboard; it is your responsibility to keep track of extra materials.

SECTION 1: 10 SEPT TO 19 OCT

Introduction: Themes in Developmental Psychology

[Read Ch 1](#)

Research Methods in Developmental Psychology

[Read Ch 2](#)

Behavioural Genetics

[Read Module 3.2 \(see Ch 3\)](#)

Neural Development

[Module 5.3 \(see Ch 5\) and Module 4.2 \(see Ch 4\)](#)

Perceptual Development

[Read Ch 6](#)

Cognitive Development

[Read Ch's 7, 8, and 9 \(to be covered in class in the same order\)](#)

SECTION 2: 19 OCT TO 3 DEC

Personality Development

[Read pp. 10-12 \(on Freud and Erikson\) and Module 11.2 \(on Temperament; see Ch 11\).](#)

Social Development

[Read Module 11.1 \(on Emotion Development; see Ch 11\) and Ch 12](#)

Moral Development

[Read Ch 13](#)

Ecology of Development 1: Family Influences on Development

[Read Module 11.3 \(on Attachment; see Ch 11\) and Ch 15](#)

Ecology of Development 2: Peer, School, and Media Influences on Development

[Read Ch 16](#)