SYLLABUS
PSYCHOLOGY 2AA3: SURVEY OF CHILD DEVELOPMENT
Department of Psychology, Neuroscience, and Behaviour
McMaster University
Fall Term 2010

Time: MWR 10:30am CNH 104
Location: CNH 104

Professor:
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Office: PC 415A
Office hours: M 1-2:30; monitor news section of website for cancellations, changes, and extra hours.

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Please note: This syllabus – including scheduling, topic order, topics themselves, and assessment strategy – is subject to change if circumstances warrant (e.g., TA loss).

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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, social, emotional, and moral development. We will also discuss the influence of parenting style and media on child 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.

Textbook: Kail, R. V. & Barnfield, A. (2008). Children and their development, Canadian Ed. This is a custom edition that I’ve put together 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 other editions of this textbook, and I cannot provide a separate syllabus to support their use. Use other editions at your own risk!
**E-mail Policy**: E-mail **must** originate from your *designated McMaster e-mail account*. Should we need to communicate with you about individual matters, the e-mail will be sent to your mcmaster.ca account. You should *monitor this account regularly*. E-mail 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, should have an *informative subject line*, and should be polite and to the point.

**Website Policy**: This course has an Avenue to Learn website. You are expected to check this website with regularity. I post announcements (under “news”) about administrative aspects of the course (e.g., office hours, tests) with regularity. It is *your responsibility* to keep up with the information provided on this site.

Use of the website’s **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), these are **preferred to email communication**. I have hundreds of students each 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 wish to answer these questions themselves.

Please see the top of each discussion board for **directions on how to use the board**. Posts that ignore these directions will be deleted. The professor reserves the right to *ban* students from the course website if they use the board inappropriately (e.g., posting 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.

**Policy re. the Recording of Lectures**: No student is permitted to record lectures in this class, unless they have CSD documentation that they require this service due to disability (e.g., dyslexia). Those with permission to record lectures **may not share** their recording with others. Any infraction of this policy will be harshly dealt with.

Why do I have this policy? In the real world, you will not have the luxury of recording the things your boss tells you! You must learn to listen effectively to the right things, or you will have difficulties. Note-taking gives you practice in this very important real-world skill.

**Participation**: In-class and discussion board participation are strongly encouraged. Remember, if you have a question, your colleagues probably have one, too, 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. Each test will consist of a combination of multiple choice and written-answer questions. The value of each test depends on your performance on it: the better test is worth 60%; the worse test is worth 40%. In order to make the midterm and final comparable in length and difficulty, I will split the midterm across two days. The SA section and MC section will occur separately – one on 21 October, and the other on 25 October. I will allow the class to **vote on which section happens when** (the majority rules; I break a tie, if one occurs).
Please note that the instructor reserves the right to alter the evaluation scheme if circumstances warrant (e.g., TA loss).

**Test-Taking Policy:** Tests will be run in the same way as your final examinations are run. You can bring only writing instruments, an eraser (or similar), and essentials like kleenex and bottled water to your desk. All other materials, especially electronics, must stay in your bag, at the front or side of the room in which you write your test.

Moreover, you must bring your student ID to all tests. Once seated, you must put your student card on your desk; your ID will be compared with a our most recent class list; anyone not on the class list will have their ID card confiscated, and will be asked to leave the room immediately.

**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 a midterm, a makeup test will be provided during class time about one week after the original test (this means that you will miss a lecture if you miss the midterm; this timing is necessary in order to guarantee your availability, as well as TA availability).

*If you miss this 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 alternate assignment may differ in form from the original test. *Therefore, please consider the consequences of missing a test or its makeup carefully!*

**Final Grade Calculations:** Your final grade will be converted to a letter grade, according to the following scheme:

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

*Please Note:* The instructor reserves the right to adjust final marks up or down, on a individual basis, in the light of special circumstances. Students who do not pass the final, or whose final exam mark is their lowest mark in the course, will not have their final marks adjusted up under any circumstances – poor performance on a cumulative final demonstrates a lack of familiarity with course content.

*Please Note as Well:* I do not do special favours for one student that I would not also do the whole class. For example, I will not, under normal circumstances, bump up a final mark for any one student (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 get those same favours. Therefore, if you are concerned about your final mark, 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 academic 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, 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 dishonesty. For information on the various types of academic dishonesty, please refer to the Academic Integrity Policy, at http://www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity.

**How To Do Well in this Course**

First: Read this syllabus very carefully!

Second: Read the website carefully as well! Check the website several times per week.

Third: Know the missed tests policy. Do exactly as this policy asks if you miss a test, or you may be in for a nasty surprise. Makeup tests for this class will combine both sections of the midterm if both sections are missed; otherwise, you will write only the section you missed.

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 and/or taking effective notes.

Finally: Think carefully about the information I’m presenting you in lecture. Three things are usually happening: first, I’m telling you the story of some theory or idea; second, I’m giving you details on research that helped tell the story; third, I’m often tying the theory and research to some organizing theme. Therefore, 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?  
(3) is there an overarching theme related to the theory and research? what is it?

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!
SCHEDULE AND READINGS

This schedule is subject to change. Any change will be announced on our course website. The most likely changes are dropping a topic due to lack of time, or changing the timing of topics scheduled before and after the midterm.

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.

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.

Midterm: 21 and 25 October
Final Exam: To be scheduled by the Registrar

SECTION 1: 9 SEPT TO 25 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: Piaget ➔ Read Ch 7

SECTION 2: 27 OCT TO 6 DEC
Cognitive Development: Information Processing ➔ Read Ch 8
Socio-Emotional Development ➔ Read Module 11.1 (on Emotion Development) and Ch 12
Moral Development ➔ Read Ch 13
Ecology of Development 1: Family Influences on Development ➔ Read Module 11.2 (on Temperament), Module 11.3 (on Attachment) and Ch 15
Ecology of Development 2: Peer, School, and Media Influences on Development ➔ Read Ch 16