

**SYLLABUS**  
**PSYCHOLOGY 2AA3: SURVEY OF CHILD DEVELOPMENT**  
 Department of Psychology, Neuroscience, and Behaviour  
 McMaster University  
 Fall Term 2013

**Time and Location:** MR 3:30; T 4:30 in TSH 120

**Professor:**

Dr. J. M. Ostovich

Email: [psy2aa3@mcmaster.ca](mailto:psy2aa3@mcmaster.ca) with an informative subject line for all course-related email; do **not** use the *Avenue* system.

Phone: *Do not phone me; you're unlikely to reach me and I don't review my voice messages.*

Office: PC-415A

Office hours: Monitor news section of website for days and times; also by appointment.

**Teaching Assistants:**

Contact Lorraine Chuen, Stefan Nazar, and Chris Slugocki by emailing [psy2aa3@mcmaster.ca](mailto:psy2aa3@mcmaster.ca) and using an informative subject line so that the email gets to the right person.

**Instructional Assistant**

Karen Cogliati: email [psy2aa3@mcmaster.ca](mailto:psy2aa3@mcmaster.ca) for all course-related questions. Administrative questions, including MSASF/absence notices and SAS inquiries will be dealt with by Karen.

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

**Table of Contents:**

Course Description

Textbook

E-mail and Website Policies

Lecture Recording Policy

Evaluation scheme (p. 2)

Test-Taking Policy

Missed Tests Policy (p. 3)

A Note on Final Marks Calculations

A Note on Academic Integrity

Tips on How to Do Well in This Course (p. 4)

Dates, Topics, and Readings ( p. 5)

**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 *Adolescence*, or *Aging*. Having completed these three courses, you will have covered the development of humans across their lifespan.

**Required Textbook:** Kail, R. V. & Barnfield, A. (2010). *Children and their development, 2<sup>nd</sup> Canadian Ed.* Use other editions at your own risk: content may differ between editions, leading to unfamiliar items on tests; page and chapter numbers may differ between editions, leading to a bunch of extra work for you.

**E-mail Policy:** Email must originate from your **mcmaster.ca** account. Should we need to communicate with you, we will send an email to that account. You should therefore monitor that account regularly. Email sent from any other account (e.g., gmail, hotmail) will be ignored. We have this policy for *two reasons*: (1) to ensure that we

know with whom we are communicating, and (2) to teach the professional use of email. Note that emails to your professors and teaching assistants are professional communications: they should include correct spelling and punctuation, and use an *informative subject line* so that they do not get lost or ignored.

**NB:** Do not use the *Avenue* email system to contact us: The system is antiquated and irritating, and often results in miscommunication. We therefore do not check email on that system.

**Website Policy:** This course has an *Avenue to Learn* website. You are expected to check this website with regularity. I regularly post announcements (on the homepage, under “news”) about administrative aspects of the course (e.g., office hours, tests) and about course materials. 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*. Questions asked on the discussion boards (1) allow other students with the same questions the chance to see the answer, and (2) 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:** If you feel that recording lectures will help you perform optimally in the course, then feel free to do so. **HOWEVER:** Consider the lectures **copyrighted material**: you **may not share** your recordings with others. That means that **you cannot post recordings anywhere online**, including on our *Avenue* website.

**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!

**Evaluation:** Your final mark will be based on your performance on two multiple choice (MC) midterms (@30% each) and one MC final exam (@40%). The midterms will be non-cumulative (*exception*: research methods, basic concepts such as nature/nurture, continuous/discontinuous development, and the like), and will cover lecture material *and* assigned readings, *especially* readings on topics not discussed in class. The final exam will be cumulative, but otherwise exactly the same as the midterms.

See below, under “How to do well...” for more detail on test content.

**Test-Taking Policy:** Midterms will be run like final examinations. You can bring writing instruments, an eraser (or similar), and essentials like kleenex and bottled water to your desk. You must also bring your student ID card. All other materials, especially electronics, must stay in your bag, at the front or side of the room in which you write your test. Note that **if your cell phone rings or vibrates during a midterm, then you will be docked 5%** on that midterm. TURN IT OFF!

**Missed Tests:** Report your absence to McMaster and to [psy2aa3@mcmaster.ca](mailto:psy2aa3@mcmaster.ca) **right away!!** That is, **within 2 days of the missed test**. Otherwise, accommodations may not be granted. Make-up tests are held one week after the original test, during class time; hence the need for speedy communication re. absences. No requests for special consideration will be accepted **after one week** has elapsed (i.e., you will receive a mark of zero on the missed midterm).

**How to report an absence:** The McMaster Student Absence Form (MSAF) can be used to report some (but not all) absences. Please familiarize yourself with MSAF regulations by visiting <http://www.mcmaster.ca/msaf/>. In short: The MSAF can be used, once per term, if you are absent from the university for a **medical reason** lasting fewer than 5 days. Longer absences or absences due to non-medical reasons must be reported to your Faculty or Program office, with **documentation**. Note that relief from term work may not necessarily be granted, regardless of how your absence is reported.

**What if you miss the make-up test?** If you miss the make-up test due to a prolonged illness or prolonged family crisis (or similar), then you must report your absence for both the test and its make-up to your Faculty or Program office **within 2 days of the makeup test**; otherwise, you will receive a mark of zero on the missed work. If you can provide an acceptable excuse for having missed the make-up, then the value of the midterm will be added to the value of the final exam. If you miss both midterms and their makeups, then you will fail this course (you cannot have a 100% final). You are advised to seek academic counseling if this happens to you.

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

<u>Percentage (Grade)</u>	<u>Percentage (Grade)</u>	<u>Percentage (Grade)</u>	<u>Percentage (Grade)</u>
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)

**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.

**Note as Well:** I do *not* do special favours for one student that I do not also do the whole class. Your final mark is your final mark, unless a marking or mathematical error has been made. 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 dishonestly. 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

This course tests your knowledge using multiple choice (MC) items. The MC items have been designed to test your knowledge in the following domains: **facts** (e.g., “what was the finding?” or “what is the definition of X?”); **concepts** (e.g., “what does the finding mean?” or “why is this particular finding important?”); and **application** (e.g., “given what you know about topic A, how would a child behave in situation B?”). Below are several **tips** that will help you perform optimally in PSYCH 2AA3. You can find more tips in our course **FAQ** (see website).

First: Use your resources. Read this **syllabus** very carefully! And read our *Avenue to Learn* **website** carefully as well, including your course **FAQ**. Check the website *several times per week*.

Second: 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 (i.e., a zero!). Makeup tests occur during class time, about one week after the original test.

Third: 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.

Fourth: 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. Note that your textbook comes packaged with an **online learning tool**. This may help you to more easily learn the textbook materials. 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”.

Fifth: Learn how to take effective notes. Slides are posted *after* their contents have been lectured on. In order to do well in the real world, you will have to know how to cope with large amounts of incoming information, without slides to guide you. If you have trouble taking effective notes, then please visit CSD, or see me or one of your TA’s for advice.

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.

Sixth: Visit with a TA or with Dr. Ostovich if you’re having trouble in the course. **Do not wait** until you’ve done poorly on both midterms to set up a meeting: at that point, **it’s too late**. You should monitor your performance and visit with someone at the first sign that something is amiss!

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)
- (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 changes will be announced on our course website.  
The most likely changes involve timing and testing of topics right before and after the midterms.

Below is a list of topics (with associated readings listed in [blue](#)) that I expect to cover this term, divided into three sections: pre-midterm 1, post-midterm 1/pre-midterm 2, and post-midterm 2. Even though I will not cover the entire contents of any given chapter in lecture, you are expected to read and learn all assigned modules and chapters.

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 1:** Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> October during class time (rooms TBA)

**Midterm 2:** Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> November during class time (rooms TBA)

**Final Exam:** To be scheduled by the Registrar

### Section 1: 5 September to 3 October

Introduction: Themes in Developmental Psychology → [Modules 1.1, 1.2, and 1.3 \(in Ch 1\)](#)

Research Methods in Developmental Psychology → [Module 1.4 \(in Ch 1\)](#)

Behavioural Genetics → [Ch 2 \(whole chapter\)](#)

Neural Development → [Module 4.3 \(in Ch 4\)](#)

Perceptual Development → [Modules 5.1 and 5.2 \(in Ch 5\)](#)

### Section 2: 7 October to 7 November

Cognitive Development 1: Piaget → [Ch 6 \(whole chapter\)](#)

Cognitive Development 2: Information Processing → [Modules 7.1 and 7.2 \(in Ch 7\)](#)

Cognitive Development 3: Intelligence → [Modules 8.1 and 8.2 \(in Ch 8\)](#)

### Section 3: 11 November to 4 December

Socio-Emotional Development: Understanding of Self and Others → [Module 10.1 \(in Ch 10\) and Ch 11 \(whole chapter\)](#)

Moral Development → [Ch 12 \(whole chapter\)](#)

Family Influences on Development → [Modules 10.2 and 10.3 \(in Ch 10\) and Ch 14 \(whole chapter\)](#)

Peer, School, and Media Influences on Development → [Ch 15 \(whole chapter\)](#)