

SYLLABUS
PSYCHOLOGY 2AA3: SURVEY OF CHILD DEVELOPMENT
 Department of Psychology, Neuroscience, and Behaviour
 McMaster University
 Fall Term 2017

Time and Location: R7-10pm; LRW B1007

Professor:

Dr. J. Ostovich

Contact: Do **not** contact me directly. All email goes to psy2aa3@mcmaster.ca; otherwise, it is deleted.

Office: PC-415A

Office hours: M 1-2pm; but **email the course address by noon on Sunday** to say you're attending; otherwise, I'll be at Starbucks. If you'd like to see me but can't make this day and time, then email psy2aa3@ and tell us which days and times you're free for the next entire week.

Teaching Assistants:

Jenna Boyd, Ainsley Smith, & Sharmila Sreetharan

Contact: psy2aa3@mcmaster.ca; one of your TAs will be monitoring this address daily from M to F, and will respond to your email within 24 hours

Office hours: Monitor A2L for days, times, and locations; also by appointment.

Please note: This syllabus – including scheduling, topic order, topics themselves, assessment times and dates, and assessment strategy – is subject to change if circumstances warrant (e.g., TA loss, blizzard, lack of testing rooms). Changes will be announced on the course website.

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. (2015). *Children and their development, 3rd Canadian Ed.* **Use other editions at your own risk.** The textbook's content may differ between editions, which could cause you problems on tests. Moreover, page, chapter, and module numbers may differ between editions, thereby making doing your readings confusing (a problem that you must find a solution to *on your own*).

Other Required Readings: All materials posted on *Avenue to Learn* (A2L) are testable. This includes the syllabus, the course FAQ (section headers "Assessment" and "Miscellaneous", though there's plenty of other helpful information in there) and all materials posted under "Learning Support" (in *Content*). These are testable on all three tests. Read them and learn them!

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.

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: There are **no makeup tests** in this course. You must report your absence to McMaster and to psy2aa3@mcmaster.ca **within 48 hours of the missed test**. Failure to comply with this **48-hour-rule** could result in a mark of zero on the missed test.

In order to receive an accommodation (i.e., value of midterm placed on final exam), we must receive an official university email indicating that you've complied with university regulations (see below), as well as your personal email requesting accommodation.

How to report an absence to McMaster: In the event of an absence for medical or other reasons, students should *carefully* review and follow the regulations outlined [here](#). Any deviation from these regulations will result in a mark of "0" for the missed work.

Note that you may only use a *documentation-free* MSAF for work valued at *less than* 25%. This means that, in this course, you **must follow the regulations described in part 2** of the *Requests for Relief* section. Please have documentation from your faculty sent to psy2aa3@mcmaster.ca, **not** to Dr. Ostovich's personal email address.

How to report an absence to teaching staff: Your email to psy2aa3@mcmaster.ca should do the following: (a) *briefly* explain that you've been forced to miss the test (vomit and diarrhea detail is *not* necessary!); (b) request relief for the missed work, and (c) indicate whether you have submitted documentation to the university, and if not, when that will be happening. The content of your email will be kept confidential.

What if you miss both midterms? If you **miss both midterms**, then **you will almost certainly fail** this course (a 100% final is a death sentence). You are advised to seek (1) a meeting with Dr. O., and (2) academic counseling if this happens to you.

A Note About How Tests Are Marked: We scan your scan-sheets into a program that provides us with psychometric analysis of the quality of each item. I go through this analysis and make the following determinations:

- (1) whether an item was doable (i.e., whether an acceptable proportion of students could get the item correct)
- (2) which incorrect alternatives were most likely to be chosen for a given item
- (3) if an incorrect alternative was chosen often, was there something about the item that caused that to happen? (note that MC items are *meant* to fool you into choosing what we call "distractors"; if I wrote a good distractor, then that's not a problem; however, if I decide that the distractor only worked because the item was poorly worded, then that's a problem)
- (4) did the item predict performance on the test (that is, did students who got an A on the test get it right more often than students who got a C or F on the test?)

Items that do not satisfy me, psychometrically, are removed from consideration. That is, if the test has 24 items, and I find that one of them is not psychometrically sound, either because of wording issues or because it failed to predict performance, then I will remove it from the test, which will now be out of 23. If you got that item right, then that's too bad for you; usually, items I remove are so psychometrically unacceptable that either no one got them right, or the pattern of scoring suggest that anyone who got the item right guessed. **Do not complain** about the removal of questions that I've deemed unusable! The decision to remove is based on science, not the roll of a dice or my evil desire to screw you over (in fact, the opposite is at play!).

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.

E-mail Policy: E-mails must originate from a valid McMaster account (please use *MacMail* rather than the *Avenue* system for all e-mail communication). As per McMaster policy, e-mail sent from third-party providers (e.g., hotmail, cogeco, google) will be deleted. Please also keep in mind that e-mails to your professors and TAs are professional communications. They should (1) include correct spelling and punctuation, (2) have an *informative subject line*, and (3) be brief.

Website Policy: You are expected to check our course website on *Avenue to Learn* regularly 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 website's **discussion boards** is strongly encouraged, and, in the case of non-private inquiries, is *preferred to email communication*. By asking questions on the discussion boards (rather than over e-mail), you are (1) giving other students the chance to benefit from your question, and (2) provide an encoding (learning) experience for students who wish to answer your question (this is *strongly* encouraged!).

The discussion boards are meant to be a "safe place" for asking and answering questions. Students who are rude or inconsiderate (e.g., "trolls") may be banned from using them.

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 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.

A Note About Facebook Course Groups: These are not great for two reasons.

(1) They can create mass hysteria. As a student of psychology, you should find this idea obvious. Very few people who disagree with your complaint (usually about a test) will speak up, but most of the people who share your complaint will chime in. This will lead you, through a process social psychologists call “pluralistic ignorance”) to the incorrect conclusion that “everyone” is upset about X or Y, and you will therefore get all emotional (this is counterproductive when you’re trying to *learn* from a mistake) and make a fool of yourself when you come to me about it (this class has about 375 students ... there is no way that “everyone” or even “most people” share your complaint, especially when at least half of them are have earned As and Bs on the test you’re upset about). If you have a problem with any aspect of the running of this course, email psy2aa3@ instead ... that’s where problems are addressed; Facebook is where problems are created.

(2) They can, through a sort of “broken telephone” process, convince you that incorrect answers are correct. This lowers performance on tests (surprise!). What a shame that you used Facebook to ask your question, instead of the TA- and instructor- monitored A2L website!

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

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.

TESTING	VALUE & OTHER INFORMATION	DATE/LOCATION
MIDTERM 1	30%; Part I materials	5 Oct during class time, rooms TBA
MIDTERM 2	30%; Part II materials; non-cumulative <i>except</i> for lecture material on research methods and other concepts continued through from Part I (e.g., nature/nurture)	9 Nov during class time, rooms TBA
FINAL EXAM	40%; cumulative for lecture; non-cumulative for textbook; focus is on Part III, but Parts I and II are also well represented!	TBD by the Registrar's Office

Lectures/Readings

Part I: Introduction, Foundational Concepts, Perception, and a bit of Cognition

DATE	TOPIC	REQUIRED READINGS
7 SEPTEMBER	Introductory Stuff	Modules 1.1, 1.2, <i>and</i> 1.3 (in Ch 1)
	Research Methods	Module 1.4 (in Ch 1)
14 SEPTEMBER	Behavioural Genetics	Ch 2 (<i>whole chapter</i>)
	Neural Development	Module 4.3 (in Ch 4)
21 SEPTEMBER	Perceptual Development	Modules 5.1 <i>and</i> 5.2 (in Ch 5) BUT MAYBE EXPAND TO OTHER STUFF IN CH 5?
28 SEPTEMBER	Cognitive Development 1: Intelligence	Modules 8.1 <i>and</i> 8.2 (in Ch 8)

Part II: Cognition, Cognition, Cognition (aka Piaget Overload)

DATE	TOPIC	REQUIRED READINGS
19 OCTOBER	Cognitive Development 2: Piaget	Ch 6 (<i>whole chapter</i>)
26 OCTOBER	Cognitive Development 2: Piaget	<i>Ditto</i>
2 NOVEMBER	Cognitive Development 3: Information Processing	Modules 7.1 and 7.2 (in Ch 7)

Part III: Socio-Emotional Development

DATE	TOPIC	REQUIRED READINGS
16 NOVEMBER	Understanding of Self and Others	Module 10.1 (in Ch 10) and Ch 11 (<i>whole chapter</i>)
	Start Moral Development	Ch 12 (<i>whole chapter</i>)
23 NOVEMBER	Finish Moral Development	<i>Ditto</i>
	Family Influences on Development	Modules 10.2 and 10.3 (in Ch 10) and 14.1 (in Ch 14)
30 NOVEMBER	Finish Family Influences on Development	<i>Ditto</i>
	Media Influences on Development (if time)	

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.