

**SYLLABUS**  
**PSYCHOLOGY 2AA3: SURVEY OF CHILD DEVELOPMENT**  
 Department of Psychology, Neuroscience, and Behaviour  
 McMaster University  
 Fall Term 2012

Time: MWR 5:30pm

Location: TSH 120

**Professor:**

Dr. J. M. Ostovich

Email: Either [jmostovich@mcmaster.ca](mailto:jmostovich@mcmaster.ca) or through the *Avenue* email system (emails must originate from your mac account if the former, and your *Avenue* account if the latter). Do NOT email me twice – choose one or the other!

Phone: *Do not phone me.*

Office: PC-415A

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

**Teaching Assistants:**

Stefan Nazar: [nazarsa@mcmaster.ca](mailto:nazarsa@mcmaster.ca)

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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).

**Table of Contents:**

Course Description

Textbook

E-mail and Website Policies

Lecture Recordings Policy

A Note on Participation

Evaluation

Test-Taking Policy

Missed Tests Policy (pg. 3)

A Note on Final Marks Calculations

A Note on Academic Integrity

Tips on How to Do Well in This Course (pgs. 4-5)

Dates, Topics, and Readings (Schedule; pg. 6)

**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 the lifespan.

**Textbook:** Kail, R. V. & Barnfield, A. (2010). *Children and their development, 2<sup>nd</sup> Canadian Ed.* This textbook comes with a digital learning system called “my.development.lab” ([www.mydevelopmentlab.com](http://www.mydevelopmentlab.com)). If you do not buy a new copy of this textbook, then you may not have access to this learning system, which may put you at a disadvantage when it comes to independent learning of textbook materials. You may also find that you have incorrect pagination and chapter numbers if you use an alternate version of the text. I will not provide alternate pagination etc. to students who do not buy the recommend edition of the textbook – you will have to figure that out for yourself. Summary: Use other editions at your own risk!

**E-mail Policy:** E-mail *must* originate from your **designated McMaster e-mail account** (either an @mcmaster account or your Avenue account). Should we need to communicate with you about individual matters, the e-mail will be sent to one of these accounts. You should therefore monitor these accounts regularly. E-mail sent from third-party providers (yahoo, hotmail, cogeco, sympatico, etc.) **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 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.

Note that *Avenue* and *mcmaster.ca* **cannot understand one another**. If writing me or your TA's from your *Avenue* account, the email **MUST** be sent to our *Avenue* accounts; if writing from your *mcmaster.ca* account, the email **MUST** be sent to our *mcmaster.ca* accounts.

**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:** 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 recording 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 about asking questions!

**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.

**NB:** The instructor reserves the right to alter the evaluation scheme if circumstances warrant (e.g., TA loss).

**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 **right away!! Email me** right away, too. “Right away” means **within 2 days of your absence**. Otherwise, accommodations may not be granted. (Note: 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 two weeks’ time 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 make yourself familiar with the ins and outs of using this form by going to <http://www.mcmaster.ca/health/> and <http://www.mcmaster.ca/msaf/>.

The MSAF **cannot be used** in the following situations:

- (1) when the request for relief of missed work is for non-medical reasons (e.g. religious holidays, personal reasons, athletic events as a student athlete, etc)
- (2) for a medical situation that lasts for more than 5 days, or
- (3) for a second or subsequent time in a term, or
- (4) for a major piece of work (worth more than 30%)
- (5) for the final exam.

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 it 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; 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 either (a) an alternate make-up assignment will be designed for you or (b) the 30% value of the midterm will be added to the 40% value of the final exam, resulting in a 70% final. 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 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**

You will be assessed based on some combination of multiple choice (MC), true-false (T/F), fill-in-the-blanks, and very brief written questions (definitions and explanations). Please note that it's likely that tests will consist *only* of MC items, but that the other types of items (listed above) are possible (you will be told the exact format of tests about a week before they happen).

Test items will be a mixture of fact-based questions (e.g., “what was the finding?” or “what is the definition of X?”), conceptual questions (e.g., “what does the finding mean?” or “why is this particular finding important?”), and applied (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.

**First:** Read this syllabus *very* carefully!

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

**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. 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.

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 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 1**: Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> October during class time (rooms TBA)

**Midterm 2**: Monday 5<sup>th</sup> November during class time (rooms TBA)

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

### SECTION 1: 6 September to 4 October

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

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

Behavioural Genetics → [Ch 2](#)

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

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

### SECTION 2: 10 October to 5 November

Cognitive Development 1: Piaget → [Ch 6 \(whole chapter, even though we're doing only Piaget in lecture\)](#)

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

### SECTION 2: 7 November to 3 December

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

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

Moral Development → [Ch 12](#)

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

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