Lifespan Development

PSY 210
Chapter 1
Introduction to Lifespan Psychology

Lifespan developmental psychology
- Changes that occur in our lives from conception until death
- Womb to tomb
- What development is and is not...
- Case studies... Barack Obama – and others
- A personal example of development...

Outline/Overview
- Biological-Environmental Perspectives
- Carving up the lifespan (and the course)
- Culture
- Recurring themes
  - Continuity vs. discontinuity
  - Nature vs. nurture
  - Stability vs. change
  - Gender
- Research methods – discuss if necessary
Conceptualizing Lifespan Development

- Biology vs. Environment
  - Biology – considers genes as having a critical role
    - Renewed interest
  - Environment – Bronfenbrenner’s systems theory (Bioecological)
    - Systems constantly interacting with one another

Bronfenbrenner’s Four Ecological Settings for Development Change

- MACROSYSTEM
  - Attitudes and ideologies of the culture
- EXOSYSTEM
  - Extended family
- MESOSYSTEM
  - Friends of family
  - Neighbors
  - Family-School
- MICROSYSTEM
  - Peers
  - Church group
  - Neighborhood play area
  - Daycare center
  - Mass media
  - Legal services
  - Social welfare services

Reciprocal Interactions

- We impact on our environment and the environment, in turn having a changing influence on us
- Endless succession of influences.
- Biopsychosocial model
- Very complex - potential influences & combinations
Biopsychosocial

- interplay of biological, psychological, and social aspects of development
- reminds us of complicated causal forces that produce our individuality
- different factors will be of most importance at different stages of life

Carving up the lifespan

- Infancy (b-2)
- Early Childhood (2-6)
- Middle Childhood (7-11)
- Adolescence (12-18)
- Early Adulthood (19-34)
- Middle Adulthood (35-64)
- Late Adulthood (65+)

Culture

- lens through which we view the world and how we operate in our environment
- stereotypes
- culture must always be considered
- cultures merging/intermixing/changing
  - likely to increase
  - no majority racial group in LA county
Recurrent themes

- Stability vs. change
- Nature vs. Nurture
- Continuity vs. discontinuity
- Gender and development

Continuity vs. discontinuity

- Continuity = slow, constant progression
- Discontinuity = discrete stages
- Some polarization
- Both are necessary

Nature vs. nurture

- Biology vs. environment debate
- Both important and the effects of each are very difficult to separate
- Biology probably dictates boundaries and our experiences and environment where we will fall
Stability vs. Change

- Enduring effects of early experience vs. the ability to overcome
- Resiliency
  - ability to change
  - there are limits
  - individual variability
  - What factors might account for differences?

Gender and Development

- Sex vs. gender
  - What is the difference?

Gender

- psychosocial aspects of male or femaleness
- gender role
- stereotypes
- identity
End Chapter One

- Be sure you have carefully reviewed and understand the concepts in the research methods section of Ch. 1, bring any questions to class.