

BLOOMSBURG UNIVERSITY
Department of Psychology
Course Syllabus

Course: Lifespan Psychology (3 credit hrs.)

Catalog # 48.210.04 & 91

Spring 2008

Web: WWW.LEITZEL.COM

Office: McCormick 2123

Instructor: Jeffrey D. Leitzel, Ph.D.

Phone: (office) 389-4232 (mobile) 650-6286, (fax) 383-6847

Best way to contact is via e-mail: jdleitzel@comcast.net

Course Schedule: M W F 1 pm(Sec. 4) M 6:30-9:30 pm(Sec. 91)

Office hours: MWF 10:20 am-12 noon

Description: This course is an introduction to human development across the lifespan. This course will survey the empirical findings from the biological, psychological and sociological literature that articulate the major developmental tasks and issues that are germane to each major developmental phase. Every effort will be made to represent the complexity of the issues involved. The teaching methods employed will include readings, lecture, discussion, classroom exercises, audiovisual aids, and student presentations.

Course Objectives: After successfully completing this course, the student should be able to:

- Articulate the similarities and differences between the major theoretical models in developmental psychology.
- Express the major developmental phases, and their inherent issues, across the lifespan.
- Understand the differences between normative and pathological outcomes within each of the developmental phases.
- Critically review empirical studies within developmental psychology.
- Appreciate the complexity of variables that impact upon human development across the lifespan.

Required Materials:

1. Dacey, J. S., & Travers, J. F. (2006). Human Development Across the Lifespan (6th ed.). New York: McGraw Hill.

2. i-clicker classroom response system

Course Requirements:

1. Class Participation - Attendance is required, 10% of the final grade will be based on class attendance and participation. Active, thoughtful participation in class, demonstrating an understanding of the material, is expected in order to earn full credit. I do keep track of late arrivals and count each three as an absence. If you arrive late, it is your responsibility to see me at the end of class and ensure that I change you from being absent. Three absences are allowed without any penalty (one for a class that meets once a week). Missing more classes beyond those allowed results in a reduction of your participation/attendance grade of 1 pt. per three additional absences (or for each absence for a night class). This grade is based on both attendance **AND** participation in class. Thus, if you sit silently throughout most of the semester, you will not receive a high grade in this area.

2. Oral Presentation – Students, working in pairs, will choose a topic from the list provided by the instructor to research, prepare, and present in class. Each team will distribute to their classmates a brief outline or summary of their presentation and key references related to their topic at the time of their presentation. Each student team will submit to the instructor, **via e-mail three multiple-choice questions, with four response options**, based on their presentation (**failure to submit questions via e-mail in the appropriate format on or before the date of the presentation will adversely impact on the grade for this assignment**). A sampling of these questions will be included on the exams, so it will be to your advantage to be present and attentive. The presentations should be 10-15 minutes, with 10 minutes (not including any time spent reviewing your questions) being the absolute minimum (shorter duration will adversely affect grades). Time for discussion will be allowed following each presentation. Presentations will begin the third or fourth week of class. Because of the limited time to prepare, the expectations for the presentations will not be as high for those students who present during the first week of the presentations. At least one of the sources utilized in preparing the oral presentation must be from a psychology (or related field) professional journal. If you have any questions about whether the source you have found is appropriate, you should review it with the instructor. A checklist is available at the course page to help you ensure you have done everything correctly for this assignment, I encourage you to utilize it.

3. Examinations - There will be four examinations, three during the course of the semester and a final exam. The exams will cover all assigned readings, class discussion, lecture, videos or other media presented

in class and student presentations. Format will be primarily objective test items (multiple choice). Any student missing the exam will not benefit from any curve that may be applied to exam grades. That is, their raw score will determine their grade for the exam. Thus, there is a strong advantage to taking the exam as scheduled. Failure to make arrangements to take the exam prior to the next regular class meeting will result in a grade of zero for that exam. Examination grades will be curved if necessary.

4. Learning project - Each student will be responsible for the completion of one learning project. This assignment will comprise 15% of the final grade. Any of the following five options may be chosen for this assignment (choices, choices... ☺). It is expected that the written product will include both the fruit of the references one has read and the distillation of this information into a product of one's own synthesis. This is to say that papers that consist entirely of summaries of the work of others will receive minimal grades. For any of these assignments, if you are uncertain about the appropriateness of your plan, discuss it with me first. All learning projects should be 4-6 pages long (not including reference page), typed, double spaced with left and right margins no greater than 1.25", and font no larger than 12 point (Note: I hate to have to be this specific). Appropriate reference citations should be provided for all sources utilized.

Option 1: Behavioral observation and interview.

The student will choose a child, teenager, or senior citizen (i.e., age ≥ 65). The student is (1) to observe the person doing some activity for at least 30 minutes and (2) to interview the person for at least 30 minutes. Observations should be objective behavioral descriptions that are free from interpretation and subjective commentary. Interviews should be designed to garner information about the person's developmental functioning. Conclusions should tie together the collected data into a description of the person's developmental functioning. These conclusions should employ a developmental model from the course lectures and readings.

The headings for the paper should be as follows:

- Identifying and contextual information.
- Observations.
- Interview findings.
- Conclusions about the person's developmental functioning.

Papers graded with an "A" will contain the following elements:

- Complete and detailed descriptions in all sections of the report.
- Objective descriptions of observations and findings from the interview and/or planned activities.
- Effective integration of class readings, lectures and outside readings.
- A creative, engaging writing style.

Option 2: Literature review.

The student is to choose three journal articles. Articles should be from peer reviewed, scientific journals, and cover one topic in developmental psychology. Articles should be empirical (e.g., a review of the literature or purely theoretical article would not be appropriate). The topic needs to be approved. The student is to review each article. These reviews should include the following elements:

- A brief summary of the subjects, methods, results and discussion sections.
- Commentary on the strengths/weaknesses of the study.
- Comment on the study's contribution to the field of developmental psychology.

The student should then include an overall summary section that links the studies together (e.g., areas of agreement, areas of disagreement, relative merits and any overarching conclusions).

Students are required to submit copies of the three articles with their papers.

Papers graded with an "A" will contain the following elements:

- Effective, balanced reviews of the articles.
- Clear identification of limitations and strengths of each study.
- Effective synthesis and reasoning in the summary section.
- Clear writing.

Option 3: Autobiographical or biographical chapter.

The student is to choose an adult between the ages of 18 and 64 and write a chapter on that adult's life. Chapters may be organized chronologically (e.g., ages 21-23, etc.), or developmental themes (e.g., job changes, evolution of relationship to parents or children, evolution of a marriage, etc.)-the student should

make it clear which organizational method is being employed. The chapter should be both descriptive and interpretive. The descriptive aspect should incorporate a meaningful articulation of the events and developmental issues in question. The interpretive aspect should take the descriptive information and organize it via a developmental model presented in this course.

Papers graded with an "A" will contain the following elements:

- Complete and detailed descriptions.
- Effective integration of information from class readings, lectures and outside readings.
- A creative, engaging writing style.

Option 4: Scholarly paper.

This should be a paper that addresses a specific issue within contemporary developmental psychology. The topic should be narrow enough to allow adequate coverage within the suggested length. The paper should contain two major sections: a review of the literature and the student's interpretation of the literature relative to the *student's* theory of the topic. Some suggested topics posted at the course web page. At least two of the sources utilized in preparing the paper must be from a psychology (or related field) professional journal.

Papers graded with an "A" will contain the following elements:

- Effective, complete and balanced review of the literature.
- Logical and persuasive articulation of the student's theory on the topic.
- Effective synthetic reasoning in the summary section. Clear writing.

Option 5: Debate report.

The student is expected to select a "hot topic" in developmental psychology and illustrate both sides of the debate. This will require some review of literature and appropriate use of a range of information sources. After illustrating the pro and con sides of the debate, the student will provide their own opinion on the issue and the rationale behind that opinion. At least two of the sources utilized in preparing the debate report must be from a psychology (or related field) professional journal. Some suggested topics for debates are posted at the course web page.

Papers graded with an "A" will contain the following elements:

- Effective, complete and balanced presentation of both sides of the controversy.
- Logical and persuasive articulation of the student's stance on the issue.
- Integration and synthesis with information and theories addressed in the course.

Papers must be turned in on or before the due date listed on this syllabus. Papers turned in after the beginning of class on the due date will be penalized, that is, arriving late to class on the due date is the same as turning the paper in at the next class meeting, penalty is 10% per class late. Plan ahead, expect printer problems, empty ink jet and toner cartridges, computer viruses, pets destroying papers, etc. If you are sick or your car dies on the day the paper is due you may fax it to me or put it in the mail - and I will check the postmark date.

5. Quiz Questions - At the beginning of the coverage of most chapters, we will start things off with a three question quiz. There will be another two questions around the middle of our coverage of each chapter. These quiz questions will be answered using the i-clicker classroom response device. We will have a total of five questions for each chapter. I anticipate giving at least 10 of these, possibly more. Students can earn up to five points, by answering 80% or more of the total number of these questions correctly, students answering less than 80% of the questions correctly will receive a prorated portion of the 5 points. Absolutely no make ups of the reading checks will be given for any reason. If you arrive late for class and a quiz is in progress you will not have "extra time" to look at the questions, though you will be able to answer whatever questions time permits. Feedback will be given immediately.

Grading: Grades will be assigned for this course based on 100 possible points with each assignment weighted as follows:

Class participation/attendance	10 points	Quiz questions	5 points
Exam #1	10 points	Oral presentation	10 points
Exam #2	15 points	Learning project	15 points
Exam #3	15 points	Final examination	20 points

Grade Ranges:

A = 90-100 B = 80-89.9 C = 70-79.99 D = 60-69.9 E = <60

Tentative course schedule (subject to change, any changes will be discussed in class and substantial changes will be posted to the course web page):

<i>Week of</i>	<i>Topic(s)</i>	<i>Reading(s)</i>
1-14	Introduction, select partner/oral presentation topic, research	Chapter 1
1-21	No class 1-21 Martin Luther King Day Class meeting- library – 2 nd fl. Classroom-Computer Lab – rm. 243 Mr. David Magolis, Social Sciences Reference Librarian – date TBA Theories of development	Chapter 2
1-28	Theories of development (cont.)	
2-4	The beginning of life, biological processes Pregnancy and birth (Sec. 4 only)No class meeting on 2-8-07 – Audio Lecture will be posted at course page	Chapter 3 Chapter 4
2-11	Finish pregnancy & birth Exam #1 (Chapters 1-4)	
2-18	Infancy: physical and cognitive development Infancy: psychosocial development	Chapter 5 Chapter 6
2-25	Early childhood: physical & cognitive development Early childhood: psychosocial development	Chapter 7 Chapter 8
3-3	Middle Childhood: physical & cognitive development	Chapter 9
3-17	Middle Childhood: psychosocial development Exam #2 (Chapters 5-10)	Chapter 10
3-24	Adolescence: physical & cognitive development	Chapter 11
3-31	Adolescence: psychosocial development Early adulthood: physical & cognitive development	Chapter 12 Chapter 13
4-7	Early adulthood: psychosocial development	Chapter 14
4-14	Exam #3 (Chapters 11-14) Learning project due at beginning of class on 4-14	
4-21	Late adulthood: physical, cognitive development Late adulthood: psychosocial development	Chapter 17 Chapter 18
4-28	Death/Spirituality	Chapter 19

Final Exams: Sect. 4: Monday May 5, 1 pm/Sect. 91: Monday May 5, 6:30 pm

Extra credit opportunities

Extra credit opportunities may arise during the course of the semester. These generally entail participation in research of some sort. I will let you know if such opportunities become available. I do not provide “ad hoc” extra credit at the end of the semester because you realize that your grade is not what you wanted it to be.