



**Child Development
Psychology 215**

**Dr. Matlin/SUNY Geneseo
Fall, 2005**

Course Syllabus

Course Description

In this course, we will examine the lives of infants and children, exploring topics such as research methods in developmental psychology, prenatal development, sensation and perception, memory, thinking, language, emotions, gender, and social development. We will also emphasize how our nation's policies can have an important effect on infants and children.

As the course instructor, I have several goals for each of you to work toward during the semester:

- ***An appreciation of the research, concepts, and theory about infants and children, with an understanding that this information does not necessarily match what you hear about in the media;***
- ***The development of critical thinking skills in evaluating the professional research—and summaries found in the popular media—with respect to children;***
- ***An understanding of practical implications of research and theory, with respect to raising children, teaching them, and working with them in other situations; and***
- ***An appreciation for how societal and political factors can have an important impact on the lives of children, especially in an era in U.S. history when so many schools and programs for children are poorly funded.***

Social Science Core Guidelines

Because Psychology 215 is included in the Social Science Core, it must meet the following guidelines. (As you can see, the guidelines are consistent with the goals listed above.)

Social Science Core: This course fulfills one course in the social science general education requirements. The guidelines for social science core courses emphasize the development of the following characteristics of a responsible member of society:

- (1) an acquaintance with major empirical, analytical, or theoretical approaches to human behavior, institutions, or culture;
- (2) an acquaintance with social, economic, political, or moral alternatives;
- (3) an acquaintance with major problems, issues, institutions, practices, or trends in the social world;
- (4) a capacity to express ideas clearly, coherently, and grammatically in written form as one component of the evaluation process. This written work must total at least 1500 words, at least half of which must be prepared outside of class.

Students will demonstrate:

- Understanding of the methods social scientists use to explore social phenomena, including observation, hypothesis development, measurement, and data collection, experimentation, evaluation of evidence, and employment of mathematical and interpretative analysis; and
- Knowledge of major concepts, models, and issues of at least one discipline in the social sciences.

NOTICE ABOUT DISABILITY SERVICES: SUNY Geneseo will make reasonable accommodations for persons with documented physical, emotional, or learning disabilities. Students should contact Tabitha Buggie-Hunt, who is the Director of the Office of Disability Services (Erwin 105D) and also contact me to discuss needed accommodations. Please make these arrangements as soon as possible. Also, more information about services is available at <<http://disability.geneseo.edu>>.

Reading

The textbook for the course will be:

Kail, R. V. (2004). *Children and their development* (3rd ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.

{You must use this edition, which has the red back cover}

A study guide for this textbook is also available, if you feel that you would like some guidance and helpful review in reading the textbook; the study guide is recommended but not required. Both resources are available from the bookstore.

Teaching Intern

We are very fortunate to have an excellent Undergraduate Teaching Intern for this course, Jessica Mooney. Jessica is a wonderful student who has earned excellent grades in my class in Cognitive Psychology. She will give three short lectures during the course of the semester. She will also be available for office hours, and she will hold review sessions before the three midterms. Jessica will be a very helpful resource, and I hope you will consult with her when you need assistance, have questions, or want to discuss study strategies! If you missed class, please check with Jessica as soon as possible. She can provide you with a photocopy of her notes; however, you must ask her for this photocopy at least two days before you need it. Also, if you ask for a copy of her notes, be responsible about picking them up from her at the time you both specified.

Office Hours

My scheduled office hours are Monday, 3:00 - 3:50 p.m., Tuesday, 11:30-12:30 and Thursday, 11:30-12:30. I'll occasionally need to reschedule an office hour when other commitments arise. If these hours are not convenient, please check with me and we can schedule an alternate time!

You can leave a brief message on my voice mail (x5214). You can also send an e-mail message <matlin@geneseo.edu>. For e-mail, be sure to include the phrase "Child Development" in the subject section. (I might delete your message by mistake if I don't recognize that you are a student in this course.) Before writing an e-mail message, check to see if the answer appears in any of the course material handed out in class, such as this syllabus. Use a standard typeface and proofread your message before sending it. If it is a clearly written message, I will be able to respond more quickly and provide a better answer!

My office is in Sturges, Room 121c (main floor, right-hand side). I would really like to see you if you have any questions or concerns! For example, I want to meet with you if your performance on the first examination is lower than you had anticipated. Please don't wait to talk to me until you have a major problem about some aspect of this course!

Requirements

Exams. This course will have three 75-minute long exams (see schedule on pages 4 and 5), each worth about 50 to 55 points. You will also have a comprehensive final examination, worth about 75 points. The format for all four tests will be a combination of multiple-choice and essay questions.

Writing Assignments. In addition, you will be required to turn in two written assignments, based on an interview, an analysis of some component of your life or the life of a close friend, an observation of a child, or a summary of a research article. (These are described in a separate handout.) Each will be 2 to 3 typed pages and must be handed in at the beginning of class on the specified date. Each assignment will be worth 20 points.

Grading

To determine your grade in this course, I will add up the total number of points you have obtained on the exams and written assignments. The following percentages will be used to determine your grade:

- A = 88-100%
- B = 78-87%
- C = 68-77%
- D = 58-67%
- E = below 57%

Plus and minus grades will be assigned to students whose grades fall near the boundaries.

VERY IMPORTANT: Every semester, a student approaches me to request that I raise his or her grade (because she or he will be placed on probation, because she or he won't make it into a specialty program...or whatever). Please do not ask. I have taught for many years, and I have never raised a student's grade; changing your grade simply would not be fair to the other students in our class.

Attendance

I will not take attendance in class. However, about half of the questions on exams are based on information from class, so students with perfect attendance usually receive the highest grades.

If you miss a class, be sure to get the notes and assignments from someone in class or from Jessica Mooney. If you know you will be absent, arrange to have a friend pick up any material or tests handed out in class.

Make-up examinations will not be allowed unless you are seriously ill or have an extreme personal emergency. In those cases, please contact me before the exam, if possible, but no later than 2 days after the exam.

Class Schedule

<u>Date</u>	<u>Topic</u>	<u>Reading</u>
Tuesday, August 30 Thursday, September 1	Introduction	Chapter 1
Tuesday, September 6	Research in child development	Chapter 2
Thursday, September 8 Tuesday, September 13	Genetics and heredity	Chapter 3
Thursday, September 15 Chapter 4	Prenatal development, birth	
Tuesday, September 20	EXAM #1 (ON CHAPTERS 1, 2, 3 & 4)	
Thursday, September 22	Growth and health	Chapter 5
Tuesday, September 27 Thursday, September 29	Perceptual development	Chapter 6
Thursday, September 29	Paper #1 is due	
Tuesday, October 4 Thursday, October 6	Piaget's theory of cog. devel.	Chapter 7
Tuesday, October 11 is Fall Break--no classes		
Thursday, October 13 Tuesday, October 18	Info-processing/ cog. devel. (memory)	Chapter 8
Thursday, October 20	EXAM #2 (ON CHAPTERS 5, 6, 7, & 8)	
Tuesday, October 25	Intelligence & indiv. diff.	Chapter 9
Thursday, October 27 Chapter 10 Tuesday, November 1	Language & communication	

Thursday, November 3 Emotional development Chapter 11

Tuesday, November 8 Understanding self & others
Chapter 12

Thursday, November 10 EXAM #3 (ON CHAPTERS 9, 10, 11, & 12)

Tuesday, November 15 Moral development Chapter 13

Thursday, November 17 Development of gender Chapter 14
Tuesday, November 22

Tuesday, November 22 Paper #2 is due

Thursday, November 24 is Thanksgiving Vacation--no classes

Tuesday, November 29 Family relationships Chapter 15
Thursday, December 1

Tuesday, December 6 Influences beyond the family Chapter 16
Thursday, December 8

**Thursday, December 20, 8:30 AM (not 8:00) to 11:00 AM: FINAL EXAM
(COMPREHENSIVE, WITH AN EMPHASIS ON CHAPTERS 13, 14, 15 AND 16)**

Note: You do not need to memorize the material in the tables/figures in your textbook on the following pages. Obviously, you should read each table or figure carefully to capture its general message. However, I will not test you on the specific details.

Chapter 1, pages 13, 16, 19

Chapter 3, pages 56, 63, 65

Chapter 4, pages 76, 79, 81, 90, 99, 104, 105

Chapter 6, page 149

Chapter 7, page 191

Chapter 9, pages 245, 246

Chapter 12, page 353

Chapter 13, 373, 390

Chapter 14, pages 401, 402, 413

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Descriptions of Writing Assignments

To fulfill the course requirements, you must turn in two written assignments in hard-copy form during the semester. The first one will be due on _____ and the second one will be due on _____. However, feel free to turn in your paper early to me if you cannot be present in class on the due date. Always be sure to make a copy to keep for your files when you turn in your paper. (This is actually a good policy for all your courses!)

The paper can be (1) an interview, (2) an analysis of some component of your life or the life of a close friend, (3) an observation of a child, or (4) a summary of a research article. Each of your two papers must be from a different category (e.g., one interview and one article summary). Please label your paper with one of those four titles.

Here is the policy regarding on-time versus late papers:

- a. Any paper turned in by 8:40 a.m. on the due date will be counted as "on time";
- b. Any paper turned in between 8:41 and 9:50 a.m. on the due date will have 5 points subtracted from its score;
- c. Any paper turned in after 9:50 a.m. will receive a score of zero for the assignment.

Your paper must be 1 2/3 to 3 typed pages (not including the title page, any references, or any appendix). Please do not turn in a paper shorter than 1 2/3 pages or longer than 3 pages. Use standard margins and typeface size.

Each paper will be worth 20 points. The paper will be graded on the basis of several characteristics: (1) the extent to which your paper integrates material from the lecture and textbook and offers insight on the topic; (2) if the paper is an interview or a child observation, your original thinking and creativity in asking questions or designing a test; (3) if the paper is a summary of a research article, your understanding of the article and your ability to apply research-methods concepts; (4) the use of critical thinking in your analysis; and (5) writing style, including organization, sentence structure, clarity of expression and other stylistic issues.

Here are some additional details on the four kinds of papers:

1. **An interview** would typically be a summary of your conversation with a parent, teacher, social worker, or someone else having expertise about children.

Choose a fairly narrow topic, such as "Class management techniques in a day care center" or "A mother's recall of her childbirth experience." Plan to interview this individual for about 45-60 minutes, and have a basic set of questions written out in advance. Include a typed version of your set of questions when you turn in your paper. (It won't count in the page limit.) Avoid direct quotations. (If you feel that one quotation is necessary, limit it to 2 or 3 sentences.) I want to read your insights about this individual's remarks. Be sure to give this individual a false name and--if necessary--a false address. Also be sure to conduct your interview following ethical principles.

2. **An analysis of life events** can focus on some component of your own life (e.g., ideas about gender roles); if you choose this, you will want to question a parent or an older relative, or check some family scrapbooks. If you focus on a component of someone else's life, you may select a child for whom you baby-sat, a next-door neighbor child, or someone you knew well but cannot directly interview now. (Comment about how memory errors could potentially influence people's recall of events.) Be sure to give this individual a false name if it does not describe yourself. If it does describe yourself, but the issues are somewhat embarrassing, discuss the situation in the third person, using a false name and--if necessary--a false address. Do not examine any sensitive issues in this paper (e.g., child neglect).

3. **An observation of a child** or children should take 45-60 minutes. At some point in your observation, include an original task that you have designed (e.g., if you are studying a 2-year-old, a series of pictures that you ask the child to identify). Use only limited direct quotes from the child. Be sure to give the child a false name and--if relevant--a false address. Also, be sure to conduct your observation following ethical principals.

4. **A summary of a research article** requires you to go to Milne Library and locate a journal article that has been published in 2001 or more recently. For this assignment, you must not use an article you located on the Web or other electronic media. Instead, the article must be a research study that you photocopied from one of the scholarly journals on the list you will receive. (One exception: If you want to use a research-based article from another scholarly journal, you must photocopy it and show it to me or the TI for prior approval--at least one week before the due date. An article from a non-approved source is not acceptable.) To make sure that you located an appropriate article, check to make sure that it has sections labeled "Method," "Results," etc. Find an article that looks interesting and fairly straightforward, and use a yellow highlighter to mark the important parts of the article that you will emphasize in your summary. Then, summarize the article, incorporating material you have learned in the course. (For example, was the study cross-sectional or longitudinal? Does it support or contradict anything you learned about in the textbook or during class?) Also, point out one or two practical applications of the research. You must include the

complete photocopy of the article with your paper. (It won't count in your page limit.)

Because you have been given sufficient warning, I cannot accept any excuses for late papers. (For example, you cannot say, "I have a good excuse--my printer didn't work." Be sure that your paper is ready in advance, so that you can avoid a last-minute disaster!) I'm hopeful that you will find this assignment to be interesting, informative, and even fun!