

Psychology 380C
SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Dewey 238
Thursdays, 8:30 – 11:15
3 credits

Instructor

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Office Hours: Tuesdays 1-2 pm and by appointment

Contacting Me

E-mail is the best way to reach me. Although I usually check my email frequently, please know that a response may take up to a couple of days. I'll do our best to get back to you earlier, if possible.

Course Overview

This seminar is intended for graduate students in psychology or related fields. This course will include an examination and critique of psychological theories, methods, and research about social development from infancy through young adulthood. We will consider normative development as well as the emergence of individual differences. Class sessions will focus on two related themes: 1) *processes* involved in social development and 2) central *research topics* in the area of social development. We will consider developmental models and theories as well as the relational and regulatory processes involved in socioemotional development. Course readings and discussion will emphasize multi-level nature of social development (from “neurons to neighborhoods”) and the interactions between children and their social contexts. Students will also be exposed to advanced developmental research methods and the field of applied developmental psychology.

Course Objectives

Upon completion of this course, you should be able to:

- Describe theoretical explanations and models of socioemotional development
- Evaluate processes involved in normative developmental change and individual differences
- Discuss and critically evaluate research regarding social development
- Incorporate issues of social development into your own research

Course Format

- Readings. Required readings are available on Blackboard (under “Course Materials”). Be sure to complete all readings assigned for the day before class.

- **Meetings.** The primary format for this course is discussion. On some days, the instructor will provide a lecture to provide a foundation for the discussion. Please bring in newspaper articles, internet stories, etc., that relate to the topics we discuss.

Course Requirements

Class Participation (30% of your grade)

This is a seminar course and focus on class discussions of course material and related topics. The quality of this course depends on your thoughtful and active contributions to the class. Active participation includes listening attentively to others, making contributions regarding your own thoughts and ideas, and responding to the ideas of others. I understand that some students are more comfortable in discussion than others; however, the success of this course depends on participation from all students. Thus, I expect active participation from each class member. I expect you to attend every class, to complete all of the course readings before class, and to actively engage in class discussions. Please note that exemplary engagement is not simply making many contributions to discussions – grades are based on the quality of the discussion and the use of course readings to inform discussion points.

Students should come to each class with ideas and questions to discuss. **To encourage class discussion, students should email me 2-3 discussion questions 24 hours before each class (by 8:30 am each Wednesday) and bring a hard copy of their questions to class.** Discussion questions should be developed to facilitate discussion, and should not simply reflect clarification questions. I will often ask you to present one of your discussion questions in class and to facilitate the class discussion based on your question.

Please remember that in a class of this nature, a variety of opinions and views are to be expected. To ensure a positive learning experience and full participation by all, please listen with an open mind and express your thoughts and responses in a respectful manner.

Class Discussion Leader (30% of your grade).

Each student is required to lead class discussion regarding an assigned article for one of the class days. The assigned article for the day is underlined on the Schedule of Readings. Students should bring a rank of their top 3 choices to class on 1/27. I will assign each student one day to lead discussion. Class discussion leaders are responsible for reading 3-4 additional articles on the assigned topic (you should identify these articles based on the reading and/or literature searches), preparing a brief presentation of the topic (10-15 minutes), developing a list of discussion questions based on the assigned reading for the day, and facilitating class discussion. Your brief presentation on the topic should provide an overview of key theories, methods, findings, etc., in the research area and should pull in ideas from the additional readings that you completed.

On the day of your presentation, please provide me with: 1) a list of the additional articles that you read in preparation for your presentation; 2) an outline of your presentation (or PowerPoint slides, if you use PowerPoint), and 3) a list of discussion questions that you have developed for your presentation. I am available to meet with you individually to discuss your ideas, if desired.

Take-Home Final Exam (40% of your grade).

The purpose of the take-home final is to synthesize and integrate course material and respond in concise and well articulated answers (3 mini-papers; 4-5 pages each). You will be asked to respond to 3 integrative questions regarding social development (you will be given a choice of questions). Your answers should be typed and should not exceed 15 total double spaced (12 point font) pages. Questions will be distributed on the last day of class (Thursday April 28th) and your answers are due Tuesday, May 5th, by noon (to me or in my mailbox). Emailed or faxed papers will not be accepted.

Course Schedule and Readings

I. Models of Socioemotional Development

1/20: Introduction

1/21: Attend Cunningham Talk, 12-1, Medical Education Pavilion (required for this course unless you have a class conflict)

1/27: Models of Socioemotional Development: Developmental Psychobiology and Developmental Systems

BRING RANKING OF TOP 3 DISCUSSION LEADER CHOICES TO CLASS

Gottesman I.I., & Hanson, D.R. (2005). Human development: biological and genetic processes. *Annual Review of Psychology, 56*, 263-86.

Gottlieb, G. (2007). Probabilistic epigenesis. *Developmental Science, 10*, 1-11.

Sameroff, A. (2010). A unified model of development: A dialectic integration of nature and nurture. *Child Development, 81*, 6-22.

Howe, M.L., & Lewis, M.D. (2005). The importance of dynamic systems approaches for understanding development. *Developmental Review, 25*, 247-251.

Witherington, D.C. (2007). The dynamic systems approach as metatheory for developmental psychology. *Human Development, 50*, 127-153.

2/3: Models of Socioemotional Development II: Context and Culture

Whipple, S. S., Evans, G. W., Barry, R. L., Maxwell, L. E. (2010). An ecological perspective on cumulative school and neighborhood risk factors related to achievement. *Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology, 31*, 422-427.

Greenfield, P. M. (2009). Linking social change and developmental change: Shifting pathways of human development. *Developmental Psychology, 45*, 401-418.