PSY 640: Foundations of Developmental Psychology

Fridays, 1:30-4 pm
GRG 215

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Goals
The principal goal of this course is to familiarize students with the nature of development inquiry in psychology. Students will learn about historically important theories in developmental psychology and their impact on current research. They will also gain knowledge about methodological issues in developmental research and gain an ability to read and critically evaluate research papers in the field.

The course is recommended as the introductory course in the field for all graduate students in developmental psychology, and it fills one of the "foundations" requirements for students in other programs within the psychology department.

Readings
We will read a substantial portion of Durkin’s (1995) Developmental Social Psychology textbook in this course. It is available for purchase at the bookstore. Additional readings—journal articles and excerpts from books—are indicated on the course schedule. These will either be distributed in class or via email, or else made available in the form of a course pack for purchase from a copy center.

Assignments and Grading
Grades will be based primarily on two short papers and one class presentation. Attendance and class participation will also be a factor in grading.

In the papers, you will be asked to reflect upon and integrate the course material in response to specific questions. These are indicated on the course schedule along with their due dates. There is a strict 800-word limit for each of these papers. Please use your word processor to determine the number of words in your paper (excluding references) and record that at the top of your paper.
The presentations will consist of leading class discussion of one of the assigned readings outside of our textbook. Your goal here is not to summarize the article, as everyone will have read it, but rather to identify key issues for discussion and lead the class in discussing those issues. Handouts providing an outline of the discussion and/or presenting key information to be referenced in the discussion are highly recommended. In addition, it will often be appropriate, in preparation for these presentations, to familiarize yourself with related work beyond the materials the rest of the class is reading. However, the presentation should not be a lecture in which the student who is presenting does all or most of the talking; nor should the presentation be so scripted by the handout as to preclude open discussion. Rather, the leader’s goal is to facilitate a discussion that will deepen the class’ understanding of the research reported in the article and its significance. The instructor will be actively supporting the student leaders in making these discussions as productive as possible; hence, substantial instructor participation should be expected and it should not be interpreted as implied criticism of the student leader’s performance. The amount of time we spend on these presentations may vary, depending in part on how much other materials there is to be covered. Feel free to consult with the instructor after the class period preceding your presentation for clarification as to how your presentation will fit into the overall plan for the next class period.
Course Schedule

1/18  First class

1/25  Cognitive development and learning
Durkin, pp. 14-21, 199-206

2/1  Social development and learning
Durkin, pp. 21-32

2/8  Vygotsky
Durkin, Chapter 11, pp. 368-374

2/15  Attachment
Durkin, Chapter 3 (Attachment to others, pp. 77-110).


**DUE 2/22:** Reflecting on the kinds of developmental analyses offered by Chomsky, Piaget, Bowlby, and Vygotsky, which two theorists strike you as the most similar in the stances they take on the nature/nurture issue (irrespective of differences among them in the aspects of development they focus on, i.e., language, cognition, attachment)? Explain the similarity you see between the two theorists you have chosen, and how it contrasts with the positions each of the other two theorists promulgate.

### 2/22  Language development

Durkin, Chapter 6 (Language Development I, pp. 195-222) & pp. 224-230


### 2/29  Knowledge Acquisition


### 3/7  Evolution, culture, and development


3/14  Socialization: Family and Peers
Durkin, pp. 116-123, 130-135, 144-145

4/4  Self Knowledge and Self Regulation
Durkin, pp. 287-302

4/11  Theory of Mind and Social Cognition
Durkin, pp. 302-317
4/18  Development of Reasoning

4/25  Development of Aggression
Durkin, Chapter 12 (pp. 391-427)

**DUE 5/2:** Compare the ways the “contribution of the learner” (in Chomsky’s terms) is conceptualized in research on cognitive development versus in research on social development. What insights into (a) cognitive development, (b) social development, or (c) the nature of the contribution of the learner in general can be gleaned from this comparison?

5/2  Prosocial Behavior and Moral Development
Durkin, Chapter 13 (pp. 429-461), also pp. 483-485