

Psychology 329**Developmental Psychology: Infancy and Childhood**

Dr. Marsha Walton	121 Clough		
Office hours:	Mondays	10:00-12:00	drop-in (no appointments)
	Wednesdays and Fridays		by appointment
Seminars:	Tuesdays and Thursdays	12:30 – 1:45	
Service Learning Fellow:	Meredith Guillot	guima	

Course Objectives

Knowledge Objectives: You will be expected to become familiar with current theoretical issues and with research data concerning the development of infants and children. These will be applied to practical problems of child welfare. We will critically examine the potential for scientific theory and research to contribute to our efforts to create social and physical environments that facilitate human development. Each week students will identify factual knowledge and theoretical/conceptual understanding gleaned from course material.

Personal Values/Commitment/Application Objectives: It is my hope that this course will make us all more aware of the needs of children in our own community, and of the extent to which those needs are not being met. Work in this course should make it clear how much needs to be done, and also how much difference it makes if we do even a little. I want you to leave the course with a recognition that we must all take responsibility for the welfare of the next generation, and with a sense of hopefulness and a belief that your efforts can make an important contribution. This course objective will be met as students apply course material to critical problem solving in areas of concern for the world's children. Experiences in psychology 329 should help students examine their personal commitment to contributing to the developmental opportunities and wellbeing of children.

Student Skills Objectives: The assignments and the use of class time in this course focus on exercising and improving a set of skills used by professionals in developmental psychology and in many other related fields. Most notably, these will include:

- observation skills: the ability to use the vocabulary and conceptual frameworks of the discipline to describe child behavior and the contexts in which children interact.
- professional communication skills: the ability to collaborate with others to create an oral presentation in standard professional style, and the ability to contribute to conversations (in-person, and on-line) that encourage the thoughtful expression of different points of view and that deepen our mutual understanding of the material we cover.
- application skills: evaluate empirical evidence and assess its relevance to theoretical and applied problems.

Course Focus

This year marks the 50th anniversary of the Brown v. Board of Education Supreme Court decision that began an effort to end racial segregation in American schools. In December the college will mark this anniversary with a series of talks and panels by distinguished scholars and activists who will discuss where the nation stands, 50 years after we made this commitment to educational equality. As the campus prepares to host this important conference, we will focus much of our attention in psychology 329 on what role race plays in child development at the beginning of this new millennium. As we study the various aspects of child development, we will continually ask questions about how developmental opportunities and outcomes differ for different racial and ethnic groups in the United States today and we will consider how racism, ethnocentrism, and cultural prejudices affect the development of all our children.

Required Texts

Bruner, J. (1983). *Child's talk: Learning to use language*. New York: W.W. Norton.

Cole, M., Cole, S. R. & Lightfoot, C. (2005). *The development of children, 5th Edition*. New York: Worth.

Donaldson, M. (1978). *Children's minds*. New York: W.W. Norton.

Thorne, B. (1993). *Gender play: Girls and boys in school*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.

Course Requirements

Service Journals (20 % of final grade)

You will be required to spend a minimum of 10 hours during the semester doing volunteer work with children - - at least an hour a week for ten weeks of the semester. There are many possibilities for a variety of kinds of work in central city schools, churches, hospitals, or social service agencies. You are encouraged to work with our service learning fellow to find a way to match your own talents and interests with needs of children in our community.

Meredith Guillot, our service learning fellow, will be responsible for all the administrative issues involved in setting up your service placement. She will also check in with you and your on-site supervisor over the course of the semester. If problems arise for you, Meredith will be available to advise you and to help in seeking solutions. Please talk to her often. She is willing to discuss your journals with you and to make suggestions that may help you get more out of your service learning experience.

Entries in your journal should relate experiences to course readings, to in-class discussions, and to other material you collect relevant to this course. As a class, we will call on the experience of students in their service sites in discussions of public policy and socio-cultural issues that relate to the welfare of children.

The first half of the journals will be turned in at midterm, and at that time students must have completed at least five of the ten entries. Late journals will be penalized one letter grade. At the end of the term, the entire journal must be turned in, including the entries that were graded at midterm. For the final journal, there will be an accumulating late penalty of one-half letter grade per day, accruing at 5 p.m. each day.

I will evaluate service journals according to three criteria:

- quality and insightfulness of the descriptions, observations of the service site
- appropriate use of course concepts, vocabulary, and research to explain and elaborate on observations
- quality of critical analysis of the problems faced at the service site, and the application of course material to relevant social policy issues

Journal entries should be made weekly (not all during the week before they are due), and students must indicate both the date of the site visit, and the date of each journal entry. Entries must be printed in good, dark ink, according to specifications below.¹ Before turning in the journals, both at midterm, and at the end of the term, students should select their best example of descriptive observation (label DO), their best use of course concepts (label CC), and their best discussion of relevant social policy (label SP). These entries, designated by students as

¹ All work in this course must be typed, double spaced, in a font no smaller than Times New Roman 14. (This syllabus is in font size 10, but this paragraph is size 14, and this is the smallest font I will read.) Any assignment turned in in smaller fonts will be returned and will suffer a late penalty.

examples of their best work, will be given greater weight in the journal evaluation. **If a journal is turned in that does not meet all the specifications, it will be returned to the student and will suffer the late penalty.**

Racism/Ethnocentrism Project (30% of final grade)

Students will work together in groups of three or four to address one aspect of the question: “50 years after Brown v. Board of Education, what role does race or ethnicity play in the development of American children?” We will ask:

- How do the social injustices of racism and ethnocentrism impact the development of children?
- How do children come to adopt the prejudices and racial and ethnic attitudes of their culture?
- What efforts have been made to reduce the threats to children caused by various forms of racial and ethnic prejudice, and how well have these interventions worked?

Each research team will endeavor to do a thorough review of the relevant research literature addressing one aspect of the question, and each will discuss the issues raised by the evidence gathered. The work will be reported publicly using presentation technologies. Students will endeavor to present research data clearly and engagingly, and to involve a general audience in critical thought about the issues. Presentations will be made to classmates first, and each group will use class feedback to help in the production of a polished and professional presentation.

As they work on this project, students will turn in preliminary bibliographies and brief (about 500 words) summaries of the research studies they are using.

Reading Notes (20% of final grade)

For each reading assignment, students will turn in brief notes listing:

1. Five things you **KNOW**, because of this reading (any 5 facts you found interesting)
2. Three things you **UNDERSTAND**, because of this reading (any 3 ideas or concepts you consider important)
3. Two things in this reading that made you **FEEL** (fascinated, intrigued, angry, sad, awed – anything in this reading that produced an emotional reaction for you).

These notes must be typed (according to footnote 1 specifications) and will be due at the beginning of each class session. Each will be worth 10 points. Students will generally get full credit for these as long as they include all ten requested items, although I may ask for re-writes if they are unclear or if they show misunderstanding. Reading Notes turned in later than the beginning of the class period for which the reading is assigned will receive only 5 points. (No late Reading Notes will be accepted after Reading Day.) Students’ grade for this part of the course will be the total number of points divided by two. (Students who turn in at least 20 up to all 25 assignments on time will top out with an A+. Someone who turns in all 25 late will get 125 points, which will be D- with a 62.5)

The purposes of this assignment are:

- To encourage students to take responsibility for deciding what material in the course is important, and serves their own educational goals.
- To help me come to know what is interesting and important to each student in the class.
- To help students keep a record of the most important things they are learning.
- To encourage students to read material in time, and therefor to get the most out of our class meetings.

Preparation for Class Discussions (15% of final grade)

It is critical to the success of this class that students read thoughtfully and critically and spend time preparing to contribute to class discussions. You should bring your copy of the reading we will discuss to each class, along with your notes and questions or comments prepared for discussion.

I will prepare discussion questions for the major topics we will cover in class, and those will be posted in our webCT discussions folder, which students should visit frequently. You are encouraged to write responses to these questions as

you do the relevant readings, and to post these responses by midnight before the reading will be discussed in class. All students are required to check webCT before class, and to read their classmates' discussion responses.

Discussion responses will be graded pass/fail, and the grade for this part of the course will be determined by the number of contributions: 5 = A, 4 = A-, 3 = B, 2 = C, 1 = D. Late discussion responses will be counted as 'Afterthoughts' (see below). We will assign one discussion response to each student, so there will always be at least one person's thoughts contributed to begin our discussions. After that, students may contribute to whichever discussion items interest them most.

If you must be absent from a class session for any reason (including illness or other excused absence), you are required to contribute your thoughts on the reading in the discussion questions for the class you missed. These may be submitted after the class session if you are ill, before if you miss class for athletic travel or other reasons. Discussion responses that are make-ups for missed classes must have the date of the missed class in the heading. Discussion responses written to make-up absences will not be included in the count used to establish this part of the course grade.

Contributions to Class Discussions (15% of final grade)

About a third of the class sessions in Psychology 329 are discussion classes, and many of the lecture sessions will include discussion. Your participation in these discussions will be critical to the success of the class. My assessment of your participation in discussion classes will be based not only on how clearly you express your own ideas, but also on how well you elicit the ideas of your classmates. Be attentive to opportunities to ask follow-up questions, and to respond to or elaborate on the ideas expressed by others in class.

We will often be discussing controversial issues of considerable importance to us all. Please remember that a good discussion is not necessarily an argument. We certainly will have arguments in class, but our overriding goal is to increase our mutual understanding of the issues, not to prove one another right or wrong.

One way to make good contributions to class discussions is to stay alert to relevant news or commentary on the issues we will be discussing. It will often be appropriate and useful to bring in news clippings or material that you have read for other classes. Needless to say, good class participation will always require that you have done the assigned reading for the course thoughtfully.

Sometimes you will find that you are unable to express your ideas on a topic during a class discussion. The course of the discussion may move on before you have had enough time to formulate your thoughts, or you may be especially interested in discussing an aspect of the reading that we never get to in class. Sometimes you just need to contemplate your reactions and to explore your own ideas on the topic after the class session has ended. When this happens, you are encouraged to contribute your remarks to the 'Afterthoughts' section of our webCT folder. In this medium, class members can respond to one another, continuing and expanding discussions beyond the classroom. Afterthought contributions will be considered equally with in-class comments as part of the class participation grade. All students are required to read all Afterthoughts and are encouraged to respond to them either in class or subsequent afterthoughts. WebCT provides a daily report to the professor of student log-ins, and of the discussion and afterthought entries read. Students are expected to read all of their classmates' contributions, and to check in at least once before each class.

Final Exam

During the college's scheduled final exam hours, students will come with a paper copy of each of their Reading Notes. We will use this time to assess how well we have met the course objectives. Final Exam performance is Pass/Fail, but students who do not attend will fail the course.

Honor Code

All work in this course should be pledged. Students are encouraged to collaborate and to help each other as much as possible on all assignments. Sources used should be cited in accordance with APA style. In this course, we replace the standard college pledge (that I have neither given nor received help) with the following:

I pledge that this work reflects my own ideas and my current understanding of this material.

Schedule of Lecture and Discussion Topics, Reading and Assignment Due Dates

Date	Reading	Topic	Assignment Due
8/26		Introductions	
		Big Questions, Developmental Principles	
8/31	CCL1	The big questions and how to answer them.	
9/2	CCL2	Epigenesis	Service placement requests
9/7	CCL7 243-256	Ethics of Developmental Research and Intervention, Ethics of Service Learning	Racism group requests
9/9	CCL7 256-275	What do Babies Need? First Service Learning Reports	
		Infancy and Gene-Environment Interaction	
9/14	CCL3	Birth, breastfeeding, and bonding.	
9/16	CCL4	BBB, contd.	
9/21	CCL5	The politics of breastfeeding	Racism Grp Prelim Bibliography
9/23	CCL6	Temperament and the epigenetic landscape	
		Linguistic Geniuses	
9/28	CCL8 279-297	Baby Talk	
9/30	Bpref-3	LADs and LASSes	Racism Grp organizing framework
10/5	B4-6	Deprivation and intervention	
10/7	CCL8 297-317	Service Learning observations of child language	Racism Grp research summaries (6-10)
		Social and Emotional Development	
10/1 2	CCL10	First Love and the Psychodynamic Self	
10/1 4	T1-5	Theories of Gender Identity	Midterm Service Journals (5 entries)
		Fall Recess	
10/2 1	CCL11	Violence in Childhood Protecting children from racism	
10/2 6	CCL14	Moral Development Service Learning observations of peer conflict	Racism Grp research summaries (6-10)
10/2 8	T6-8	The Gender Act/What to do about gender? Service Learning observations of gender.	
		Cognitive Development and Schooling	
11/2	CCL9	Piaget and the Philosopher Child	Racism Grp organizing framework (rev)
11/4	D1-4	What is the nature of children's thinking?	
11/9	CCL12	Service Learning observations of reasoning	
11/1 1	CCL13	What would a really good school be like?	
11/1 6			Racism Grp Presentations
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8			
11/23	D5-8	What we have to be thankful for	Feedback to presentation groups
		Thanksgiving	
Date	Reading	Topic	Assignment Due
11/30	D9-11 T9	What do Children Really Need? Final Service Learning reports	
12/2			Public Presentations by Racism Groups
12/7		Preserving a Culture of Childhood	Service Journals Due by 5 p.m.
12/9		Reading day	Any late Reading Notes Due by 5 p.m.
12/15		Final Exam, 1 p.m.	

CCL indicates readings in the Cole, Cole, & Lightfoot text
 B indicates readings in the Bruner book.
 T indicates readings in the Thorne book.
 D indicates readings in the Donaldson book.