

Psychology 230
Principles of Development: Adolescence and Early Adulthood

Rhodes College
Spring, 2007

Dr. M. Walton, Professor of Psychology

Office hours (121 Clough):

Mondays 10:00-12:00 drop-in (no appointments)
Wednesdays and Fridays by appointment

I. Course Objectives

A. Content/Knowledge Objectives

Students will be expected to acquire a familiarity with current theories of adolescence and early adult development, and to evaluate the evidence relevant to them. This will involve

- Learning concepts, terminology, and methods used by researchers in this area
- Learning to evaluate theories and evidence critically, and to participate in discussions about the important questions in the field.
- Learning to apply the theory and research we cover to matters of social and educational policy that affect the welfare of adolescents.

B. Student Skills to be Developed

The assignments and the use of class time in this course focus on exercising skills and dispositions required of professionals in adolescent psychology. These include:

- Learning to formulate your own questions and hypotheses in professionally sophisticated formats, and learning to find relevant information for addressing those questions. Students will be encouraged to give special attention to course material that stimulates their own interests and questions.
- The ability to contribute to a productive discussion both by expressing your own ideas and by facilitating the development and expression of others' ideas. Students should be mindful of preparing themselves to join an important national discourse concerning the well-being and the education of our youth.
- The ability to find and evaluate a body of scientific research relevant to a well-defined question, and to write a review of those findings in standard professional style.

C. Recurring Themes

There are three major themes that will continually come into focus throughout this course. These will come into our conversations as we consider every aspect of development.

- (1) Most theorists recognize that the primary psychological tasks of adolescence are organized around the development of something we call 'identity.' We will be occupied frequently with considerations of what we mean by identity development, and of how this construct relates to the various 'problems' of adolescence and to our efforts to improve the well-being and the education of our youth.
- (2) It is difficult to avoid the conclusion that gender and sexuality are pre-eminent features in the world of adolescence. Although some theorists believe that gender identity is established years earlier, no one disputes the notion that the adoption of gendered roles and coming to terms with sexuality and gender are critical challenges for this part of the life cycle. Many of the experiences, opportunities, and outcomes of adolescent development may be different in interesting ways for girls and boys, and few topics in adolescent development can be understood without considering how they relate to questions of gender and sexuality.
- (3) We will find that 'adolescence' has very different meanings depending on the socio-cultural and historical context. We will examine ways that adolescent development is influenced by (a) media messages and general beliefs about what teens are like and how they can be expected to behave, and (b) cultural norms that specify the appropriate times for economic independence, marriage, childbearing, etc. The experiences, opportunities, and outcomes of adolescent development vary markedly and in interesting ways for individuals in different ethnic and racial groups and for teens with different cultural traditions. We must be careful not to talk about "adolescent development" without asking "Which adolescents?"

II. Required Texts

Cobb, N. J. (2007). *Adolescence: Continuity, change, and diversity*. (6th edition.) Boston: McGraw-Hill.

Garbarino, J. (1999). *Lost boys: Why our sons turn violent and how we can save them*. New York: Free Press.

Rosnow, R. L., & Rosnow, M. (2001). *Writing Papers in Psychology*. Belmont, Ca.: Wadsworth.

Way, N. (1998). *Everyday courage: The lives and stories of urban teenagers*. New York: New York University Press.

III. Course Requirements

A. Engaged Reading and Identifying your own Interests (10% of final course grade)

As you read for this course, you are encouraged to monitor and to make note of your own knowledge, understanding, feelings, and questions relevant to the material.

For readings in the Cobb book, students will turn in Reading Notes that include 10 items:

- Four FACTS, things that you know because of this reading. A “fact” is an empirical assertion that is backed up by substantial evidence, so that there is general agreement among experts of its validity. (Definitions are not facts.) Note the five facts you consider most interesting or most important. Facts can be important for a lot of different reasons. What I want to know, is which facts you expect yourself to remember. Facts that you probably knew last year, or that most people who have NOT taken adolescent development probably know, should not be included even if they are important and memorable.
- Three CONCEPTS, things you understand because of this reading. A concept is a way of thinking about something. Concepts include explanations and explanatory constructs. You may include among the concepts you select, approaches or ways of studying development. Select concepts you consider most important.
- Two REACTIONS, things you felt as you were doing this reading. Your own reactions (fascination, anger, sorrow, awe, puzzlement, etc.) are important guides to your interests and are significantly related to your memory and understanding.
- One QUESTION that you formulated as you read this material. The ability to ask your own questions as you approach new material is a quintessential characteristic of a liberally educated person that you should deliberately cultivate.

For readings in the Way and Garbarino books, students will turn in Reading Notes that include 5 items:

- Two CONCEPTS.
- Two REACTIONS.
- One QUESTION.

Students should come to class with two copies of their Reading Notes (RN's) printed in a dark black ink¹. One copy will be turned in to me and one will be given to one of your classmates. Each student will keep a folder of reading notes

¹ One of the copies, and all work turned in to me for this course must be double-spaced and printed with a good, dark print in a font sized no smaller than this footnote, and with 1-inch margins. (The font for this syllabus is only 10, but this footnote is Times New Roman 14. This is the smallest print I will read.) Work that does not meet these specifications will be returned to the student and will suffer the late penalty.

that will include both their own RN's and those they receive from classmates. Try to have at least one set of RN's for each reading, and over the course of the semester, be sure to receive RN's from each of your classmates.

Each Cobb RN will be worth 10 points and the Way and Garbarino RNs will be worth 5 points. Reading Notes turned in later than the beginning of the class period for which the reading is assigned will receive half credit. (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 they accumulate, up to 100. (There are 225 possible points, so you should plan make reading notes for about half of your reading.)

The purposes of the RN assignment are:

- To encourage students to take responsibility for deciding what material in the course is important, and serves their own educational goals. (Note that the ability to formulate your own questions is an important professional skill you should be nurturing.)
- To help me come to know what is interesting and important to each student in the class, and to help you get to know each other.
- To help students keep a record of the most important things they are learning.
- To encourage students to read material in time, and therefore to get the most out of our class meetings.

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 copies of each reading to class, along with your notes and questions or comments prepared for discussion.**

B. Contributions to Class Discussions (15% of final course grade)

You are encouraged to develop your skill at contributing to in-class discussions, both by bringing up good questions and comments, and by facilitating and encouraging the development of others' ideas. **Being a good contributor to class discussion does not typically mean being the person who talks the most.** It should be the goal of all of us to see that each of us has an opportunity to express ideas. If there are members of the class community whose ideas we do not hear, this should be seen as a problem for all of us, and all of us should be thinking about ways to include those individuals in our conversations. Class participation grades are positively affected by contributions that highlight or encourage the contributions of other students.

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 class electronically at our Moodle website.

The 'afterthoughts' you enter in Moodle will be considered equally with in-class discussion as part of the class participation grade. Students may write afterthoughts for any class session, but are especially encouraged to write them for the lecture classes and other class sessions that do not allow as much time for student discussion. Students are required to read the contributions that have been submitted by their classmates before each class session. Failing to do this will hurt the class participation grade. Just as with in-class discussions, you are expected to respond to one another, and to encourage the expression, clarification, and development of ideas.

If you must be absent from class for any reason (including illness or other excused absence), you are required to contribute your thoughts on the reading by Moodle in the section titled "Missed Classes." Missed-class essays should be about 500 words, and should be posted as soon after the absence as possible. (For absences caused by illness, you may wait until you have recovered; for absences due to athletic travel or other scheduled events, you should contribute your essays in advance of the class session.) All students are required to read the 'missed class' essays submitted by their classmates, and responses are encouraged. Each absence diminishes our class discussion, so this is a way to recover what we miss.

C. Research Paper (25% of final grade)

Students will select a topic early in the term and begin to review the relevant scientific literature in a paper (approximately 3000 words) written in accordance with APA style.² The Rosnow and Rosnow handbook will serve as a guide for format and style, and also offers useful suggestions for selecting a topic, developing a thesis, conducting library research, and writing. You should consult with me about your paper early in the term. Topic statements, preliminary bibliographies, thesis statements, and organizational frameworks will be due during the term, and each will count toward the final paper grade. A 1-point penalty will be subtracted for each of these that are late. Final papers are due on April 27 at 4:30, and there will be a three-point late penalty that will accrue every day at 4:30.

Students are encouraged to collaborate in pairs on term papers and to co-author their final paper. Collaboration is not required, but many students find they learn more from working together. Most of the professional work in our discipline is collaborative, and most of the papers you read are co-authored. As you work on your research paper, be attentive to the development of the following skills, all of which are critical to our discipline and to many others:

- the ability to develop your own questions about an area of research,
- the ability to evaluate previous literature that pertains to your questions, and
- the ability to develop an argument or conclusions.

Final papers will be evaluated according to the following point system:

Early Preparation (total 16 pts)

- Preliminary Topic and Bibliography: Feb. 1 (2 pts)
- Research Bibliography: Feb. 8 (2 pts)
- Preliminary Thesis: Feb. 27 (2 pts)
- Preliminary Organizational Framework: Feb. 27 (2 pts)
- Annotated Bibliography: Mar. 22 (4 pts)
- Revised Thesis: Apr. 10 (2 pts)
- Revised Organizational Framework: Apr. 10 (2 pts)

Final Paper

- Library Research Skills (15 pts)
 - Adequate coverage of current scholarly journals and books on the topic
- Conceptual Work (25 pts)
 - Focus
 - Recognition and discussion of important issues relevant to the topic
 - Clear statement of problem, clear statement of thesis and conclusions
 - Conceptual framework
 - Organization of material is clear and sensible
 - Relates to developmental theory and conceptual issues
- Clear presentation of previous research (20 pts)
 - Adequate attention to operationalization and to research procedures
 - Appropriate inferences or generalizations made from research findings
- Original contributions, creative thought (15 pts):
 - evaluation of previous work,
 - proposing research that needs to be done,
 - pointing out aspects of the problem that have been overlooked or oversimplified.
- Style (10 pts)
 - Clarity of Writing
 - Mastery of APA Style

D. Research Reports (20% of final grade)

Twice during the term, students will prepare a report of a study they have read pertaining to their term paper topic. Each student will write a brief (500 - 1000 words) summary of the article, partly as practice in reviewing empirical research for the term paper. These reports will be prepared in the format described below. On the day that these are assigned, each student will be given 5 minutes to describe the study to the class. Late reports will suffer a full letter grade penalty.

² The only deviations from APA style will be those required to meet the specifications of footnote 1.

Complete Reference Information for the Article, in APA Style.

Description and Explanation of Research Question. Describe the authors' research question, the hypothesis they tested, and/or their purpose in doing the project.

Description of Method.

Participants: Detail the number and relevant characteristics of the research participants (e.g., age, education, how recruited, etc).

Procedure: Using the vocabulary presented in Chapter 14 of the Cobb text, describe the design of the research. Is it an experiment, quasi-experiment, or correlational study? Is it longitudinal, cross-sectional, or sequential? What types of variables are assessed and how are they operationalized (e.g., self-report, direct observation, etc.)

Results. Give a brief summary of the research results. You may attach photocopied tables or figures if this helps explain the findings.

Conclusions and Evaluation. Summarize the authors' conclusions and consider how it relates to other material we have read or to the thesis of your paper. How valid do you consider the study and how worthwhile?

E. Panel Discussion Examinations (30% of final grade)

Two oral examinations will be conducted as panel discussions. Students will come in groups of three. Each student will respond to a discussion question, and the other two students will have an opportunity to elaborate or expand. The grade will be based on how thoroughly and thoughtfully you responded to your own question (10%) and on how insightful and helpful your comments are on your classmates' responses (5%).

IV. Honor Code

I value collaborative work highly, and I believe that students frequently learn most when they work together on assignments. I will **not** ask you to pledge that you have neither given nor received help on any assignment. However, I will ask you to be very attentive and careful to give credit and to acknowledge those who have helped you. An acknowledgment foot note to your term paper should credit those people who helped edit and proofread, as well as those who shared ideas and made substantive suggestions.

All written work in this course should include the following two pledges:

"I pledge that the above paper reflects my own thinking and my current understanding of this material."

"I pledge that the word count for this essay/paper is _____."

In addition, for coauthored papers, both authors should sign the following pledge:

"I pledge that I have contributed my fair share to this project."

V. Estimated Time Commitment Required

Typical students should plan to devote 10 hours a week to each class at Rhodes. Students who are taking a course in an area of study with which they are unfamiliar or for which they have little preparation, may have to spend more time than this. Psychology 230 usually requires approximately 80 pages of text-book reading and 30 pages of primary-source reading each week, with about half that assigned on weeks when other work is due. Many students can complete this amount of reading thoughtfully in about 5 hours if they are adequately rested and healthy.

As you plan your schedule for the semester, try to set aside approximately 5 hours to spend on course reading each week, and plan to work on longer term assignments (most importantly, the term paper) for the other 5 hours each week. You are strongly encouraged to maintain steady work on the paper throughout the term, starting in the very first week.

VI. Schedule of Assignments

(C indicates the Cobb text. W indicates the Way book. G indicates the Garbarino book. RR indicates the Rosnow and Rosnow book.

		Assignment Due	Class Topic
Th	Jan 11		Introductions; Overview of Themes
Tue	16	C1, W3 Top Ten Topics	Questions Provoked by Malcolm's Stories, Formulating Questions
Th	18	C2, W1	The Nature of Development: Conflict, Crisis, Change Life Cycles and Cultural Change
Tue	23	C14, W2	How we know what we know about adolescents.
Th	25	C3, RR1	Working on the Body / The embodied self Writing Papers in Psychology
Tue	30	C5, Moshman handout	Identity, Gendering Identity Stability and Change, Nature of Self and Identity
Th	Feb. 1	W4 Prelim Topic & Bibliography	Voice and Silence and Poor Little White Girls?
Tue	6	C6, RR2	Sex and Romance, Sexual Values
Th	8	Research Bibliography	Reading/Critiquing Research
Tue	13	C8, Research Reports	Peers: Imaginary Audience and the Adolescent Gaze
Th	15	W5	Friendship and betrayal
Tue	20	C7	Family Systems and 'Mattering'
Th	22	W6	The Teens of Soccer Moms and Ghetto Moms/ Teenage Moms and Menopausal Moms
Tue	27	RR3-4 Preliminary Thesis Organizational Framework	Adolescent Pregnancy
Th	Mar. 1	Midterm Panel Exams No Class	
Fri	2		Midterm Conferences
Tue	6	C4, W8	Whom to Blame for Poor School Performance
Th	8	C9	Adolescent Academics
		Spring Recess	
Tue	20	C10	Cognition in College, Making Adult Commitments
Th	22	C11 Annotated Bibliography	Moral Development, Values Commitments
Tue	27	W7, G1 Research Reports	Injustice and Moral Development; Epidemic Violence?
Th	29	G2,	Shame and depression in boys Student oral reports on paper topics
Tue	3	W9	'Tough Guise'
Th	5	Easter Recess	

		Assignment Due	Class Topic
Tue	10	12	Pick a Problem
Th	12	G3, Revised Thesis Statement/ Organizational Framework	Adolescent Consequences of Early Loss
Tue	17	G4, G5, RR6	Knowing Evil Too Soon
Th	19	G6, G7	Prevention: What the lost boys needed
Tue	24	G8 C13, W epilogue	What the lost boys need now: Boot Camps or Monasteries? What teens cope with
Th	26	Research Paper	Most Interesting Thing I Learned Writing my Paper
Sat	May 5	Final Exam Panels	