

Child Development

PSYC 313 – 003

Wednesdays 7:20-10:00pm, Innovation 132

Instructor Information

Tanya Tavassolie

Office: David King Hall 1032 (basement level, inside 1021)

Email: ttavasso@masonlive.gmu.edu (this is my preferred method of contact)

Phone: 703-993-4712

Office Hours: Wednesdays, 6:00-7:00pm, or by appointment

Mailbox: located on the second floor of David King Hall, down the hall from the Undergrad Office

Required Textbook

Siegler, R., DeLoache, J., Eisenberg, N., & Saffron, J. (2011). *How children develop* (4th ed.). New York, NY: Worth Publishers.

Course Description and Goals

This course will acquaint students with the developmental journey of the child from conception to early adolescence. It will emphasize an empirical, theoretical, and applied approach to child development and will cover major topics including cognitive, social, emotional, and physical development. Developmental theorists such as Freud, Piaget, Erikson, Vygotsky, Bowlby, Skinner, and Bronfenbrenner will be covered. Note that this is not a course on parenting or abnormal development. The overall goals of this course are to:

1. Facilitate an understanding and appreciation for the complexity of child development
2. Foster critical consumers of empirical research

Class Format

Lecture material will be taken from the textbook, additional readings, and other sources. Students are responsible for all material discussed in class and the material from the textbook, unless otherwise noted by the instructor. Aside from lectures, classes will also consist of a variety of discussion, small group activities, and/or short videos. I will post lecture slides the night before every class period. They will be available on the course Blackboard page.

Attendance and Participation

Attendance at every class meeting is important for each student's success and learning in this course. Information will be presented in lecture that is not available in the textbook. In order to make the most out of your learning experience, it is imperative that you are not only present at each class meeting, but are alert, attentive, and ready to learn. Please limit technology use (cell phones and computers) to course related material during class time.

Article Critiques

Three times during the semester you will choose a scholarly article to critique. These will be worth 10 points each, and should be 1.5-2 pages in length, double-spaced, Times New Roman 12pt font. Late submissions will NOT be accepted. Electronic submissions will be accepted through Blackboard. You will review/summarize key points of the article, reflect on the findings, and relate it to your own

experiences. See below for a list of possible articles to choose from, all of which will be available to download from Blackboard. A rubric and clear description of expectations can also be found on Blackboard. Below are options of articles that you may pick from:

1. Gartrell, N., Deck, A., Rodas, C., Peyser, H., & Banks A. (2005). The national lesbian family study: 4. Interviews with the 10-year-old children. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, 75(4), 518-524.
2. Harris, J. R. (1995). Where is the child's environment? A group socialization theory of development. *Psychological Review*, 102(3), 458-489.
3. Jackson, L. A., von Eye, A., Biocca, F. A., Barbatsis, G., Zhao, Y., & Fitzgerald, H. E. (2006). Does home internet use influence the academic performance of low-income children? *Developmental Psychology*, 42(3), 429-435.
4. Lillard, A., & Peterson, J. (2011). The immediate impact of different types of television on young children's executive function. *Pediatrics*, 128, 644-649.
5. Mervis, J. (2011). Past successes shape effort to expand early intervention. *Science*, 233(6045), 952-956.
6. Morgan, P. L., Hillemeier, M. M., Farkas, G., & Maczuga, S. (2014). Racial/ethnic disparities in ADHD diagnosis by kindergarten entry. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry*, 55(8), 905-913.
7. Sawyer, M. G., Harchak, T., Wake, M., & Lynch, J. (2011). Four-year prospective study of BMI and mental health problems in young children. *Pediatrics*, 128, 677-684.
8. Schacter, H. L., White, S. J., Chang, V. Y., & Juvonen, J. (2014). "Why me?": Characterological self-blame and continued victimization in the first year of middle school. *Journal of Clinical Child and Adolescent Psychology*, 1-10.
9. Wang, Y., & Benner, A. D. (2014). Parent-child discrepancies in education expectations: Differential effects of actual versus perceived discrepancies, 85(3), 891-900.
10. Ybarra, M. L., Huesmann, L. R., Korchmaros, J. D., & Reisner, S. L. (2014). Cross-sectional associations between violent video and computer game playing and weapon carrying in a national cohort of children, 40, 345-358.

Toy Project

Most toys made for children are assigned a suggested age rating (e.g., "For ages 4+"). Your assignment will be to find a toy (or two toys) in a store and write a description (2-3 pages, double spaced, 12pt. Times New Roman font) and evaluate how developmentally appropriate it is for the age rating. You are not required to purchase the toy, simply provide a description and a picture of the toy. This project will be worth 25 points total. You will be required to identify the skills that the toy should elicit, and comment on the theories that support these skills. A rubric and clear description of expectations for this project can also be found on Blackboard. Late submissions will be deducted 1 point per day, no submissions will be accepted later than 5 days after the project is due. Electronic submissions will be accepted through Blackboard.

Small Group Discussions

Periodically, throughout the semester, I will provide the class with discussion question(s) that should promote debate and conversation among the class. No written assignment will be required for these discussions, it is simply a way to encourage critical thinking about the topics we discuss in class. Points are earned simply by being present in class and participating in the group discussions. Additionally, I will ask groups to report on what they discussed to allow the entire class to collaborate on the topic. There

will be 4 small group discussions throughout the semester and each will be worth 5 points. If you are absent on the day that we do a discussion, you will forfeit those points. No make-ups are permitted.

Exams

There will be 4 exams in this course, of which only 3 will be factored in to your final grade. Therefore, you may use the highest 3 exam scores toward your overall final grade. This means students may only drop **one exam**. If you miss one exam, your grade will be based on the other three exams. The final exam is *not* cumulative; each exam is worth 25 points. There will be absolutely NO make-up exams. Exams will consist of both multiple choice and short answer questions, and will cover material from lecture, class discussions, and the textbook.

Points for the Course

Assignment	Possible Points
Article critiques – 10 points each x 3	30
Toy project – 25 points	25
Small group discussions – 5 points each x 4	20
Exams – 25 points each x 3 (required)	75
Total points	150

Grade Calculation

Grades will simply be calculated by total points earned in the course. For example, if you receive 140 points in the course, I will divide that by 150, and you will receive an 93%, which is a A.

Grade Breakdown (these correspond to percentages)

A+	100+%	B+	89 – 87%	C+	79 – 77%	D	69 – 60%
A	100 – 93%	B	86 – 83%	C	76 – 73%	F	59% and below
A-	92 – 90%	B-	82 – 80%	C-	72 – 70%		

Honor Code

Students in this course are expected to behave at all times in a manner consistent with the GMU Honor System and Code. (<http://mason.gmu.edu/~montecin/plagiarism.htm>). Students are encouraged to study together as much as possible throughout the course, however, no assistance, sharing of information, or discussion of exam items or answers between students may take place. For all work, the name that appears on the paper must be the author. Violations of the Honor Code will not be tolerated in this course and will be immediately reported according to GMU procedures. The instructor reserves the right to use software to determine the extent to which the work is the student’s. The instructor for this course reserves the right to enter a failing grade to any student found guilty of an honor code violation.

Psychological Services

Life is stressful and we all need a little support sometimes. Students are encouraged to contact Counseling & Psychological Services (caps.gmu.edu) for assistance with any kind of psychological/life problem or crisis situation. I can help with referrals for students with particular counseling needs so please feel free to talk with me for help with anything.

Disability/Other Issues

If you are a student with a disability and you need academic accommodations, please see me and contact the Disability Resource Center (DRC) at 709-993-2474. All academic accommodations must be arranged through that office.

Official Communications via GMU E-mail

Mason uses electronic mail to provide official information to students. Examples include communications from course instructors, notices from the library, notices about academic standing, financial aid information, class materials, assignments, questions, and instructor feedback. Students are responsible for the content of university communication sent to their mason e-mail account, and are required to activate that account and check it regularly. As a tip, please include your G-number and the course section in the subject of the email in all email correspondences with all instructors.

Disclaimer

The instructor reserves the right to change the syllabus and its content. Any changes will be announced orally and in writing.

Important Campus-Wide Dates

Martin Luther King Day (no classes)	Mon Jan 19
First day of classes ; last day to submit Domicile Reclassification Application; Payment Due Date; full semester waitlists removed	Tue Jan 20
Last day to add classes —all individualized section forms due Last day to drop with no tuition penalty	Tues Jan 27
Last day to drop with a 33% tuition penalty	Tues Feb 10
Final Drop Deadline (67% tuition penalty)	Fri Feb 20
Selective Withdrawal Period (undergraduate students only)	Mon Feb 23 – Fri Mar 27
Spring Break	Mon Mar 9 – Sun Mar 15
Last day of classes	Mon May 4
Reading Days	Tue May 5
Exam Period (beginning at 7:30 a.m.)	Wed May 6 – Wed May 13

Course Schedule

Day	Chapter	What's Due?
January 21	Syllabus Chapter 1: Introduction to Child Development	
January 28	Chapter 2: Prenatal Development Chapter 3: Brain & Physical Development	Bjorn, 2008
February 4	Chapter 4: Cognitive Development	
February 11	Chapter 5: Seeing, Thinking & Doing in Infancy	Article Critique 1 Due
February 18	Exam 1 (Chapters 1-5) Chapter 6: Language & Symbol Use	
February 25	Chapter 6: Language & Symbol Use (cont.) Chapter 7: Conceptual Development	<i>Hart & Risley, 2003</i>
March 4	Chapter 8: Intelligence and Academic Achievement	Article Critique 2 Due <i>Will, 2014</i>
March 11	Spring Break	
March 18	Exam 2 (Chapters 6-8)	
March 25	Chapter 9: Social Development	Article Critique 3 Due <i>Zero to Three, 2010</i>
April 1	Chapter 10: Emotional Development	
April 8	Chapter 11: Attachment and Development of Self	
April 15	Exam 3 (Chapters 9-11) Chapter 12: Family	Toy Project Due April 17 by 11:59pm
April 22	Chapter 13: Peer Relationships Chapter 14: Moral Development	<i>Dunfield et al., 2011</i>
April 29	Chapter 15: Gender Development	
Finals Week	Exam 4 (Chapters 12-15) Wednesday, May 6, 7:30-10:00pm	

Have a great summer!

Last Day to Add: January 27

Last Day to Drop: February 20