

PSY 3300 (Lifespan Development)

Instructor

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Course Description

Survey of the psychology of human development from the pre-natal period through adulthood. Emphasis placed on cognitive, motivational, and physiological processes of development in childhood and adolescence.

Scope & Nature of the Course

Who are you? How did you get to be the way you are today? Lifespan development can help you understand some of the influences that affect your thoughts, feelings, and behavior. This course covers development from conception to death.

I was interested in developmental questions early in my life. Growing up on a farm in Kansas, I spent some summer nights lying on my bed, looking out the screen window (no air conditioning) at the cars going by. I remember thoughts like "What if I were one of the people in the cars instead of me?" "What would my life be like?" "How did I get to be the way I am?" "What makes those people the way they are?" "How are they different than me?" Did you ever have thoughts like these?

In this course you will study areas such as hereditary transmission, prenatal development, and how the infant as well as the aging adult perceive the world around them. What is language, and how can we explain language acquisition? Another important topic is how cognition, our thought process, changes during the lifespan.

Social development includes changes in our concept of self and in our personality. Closely related concepts are the understanding of gender, being a male or female, and what we believe is right and wrong. How do members of a family influence each other, and how have families changed in recent years? The course ends with coverage of theories explaining biological aging and perspectives on death and dying.

Much of the material is organized by topics and covers the theory and research on each of these topics. Theories, while emphasizing different aspects of development, are complementary and help us build a "picture" of the developing person. Theories also stimulate more research to help us test the accuracy of the "picture" that we have. The information that you will be studying is the result of research to discover what you, I, and others were like during infancy and childhood and what we might expect as we continue to develop during adulthood years.

Questions that developmental psychologists ask are often very relevant to decisions parents and others working with children make as they interact with them. "What kind of discipline is the most effective in the long run?" "What are possible effects of maternal employment?" "How does parents' divorce impact a child?" "In what ways does television affect a child?" Developmental issues can be just as important in considering questions relevant to the aging adult. "Since perception capacities decline later in life, should an older adult have to take and pass driving tests?" These are just some of the questions with practical applications that will be considered in this course. You probably have developmental questions of your own that you would like answered. In general, the purpose of this course is to provide a broad overview of human development from the prenatal period through adulthood. The human being is a complex, intricate system. While we have made much progress in understanding ourselves, much remains to be done. New information is being added all the time that contributes to our understanding of lifespan development.

Required Materials

You are required to use the following textbook in order to complete this course:

Sigelman, C. K. & Rider, E. A. (2012). *Life-Span Human Development* (7th ed.). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth/Cengage Learning. ISBN-13: 978-1-111-34273-9. (Note that the textbook is accompanied by free online materials, including study materials such as flashcards. Access these free materials [here](#).)

Prerequisite

A course in Introduction to Psychology or permission of the instructor is the prerequisite to this course.

Course Goals

After completing this course, you should be able to describe the following:

- the major theories and research methodology of lifespan development;
- hereditary transmission and genetic bases of behavior;
- development during the prenatal period, including the effects of harmful substances on development;
- how the sensory and perceptual capacities change over the lifespan;
- the process of language acquisition and theories for explaining the acquisition;
- Piagetian stages of cognition as well as Vygotsky's sociocultural approach to cognition;
- how intelligence is defined and measured, as well as developmental implications;
- the development of self-concept, and differing approaches towards personality development;
- changes in sexuality and in understanding gender, and developmental influences on gender role acquisition;
- the development of social cognition and moral reasoning;
- how parenting behaviors relate to the development of attachment to the parent, and theories for explaining the attachment relationship;
- changes in emotions from birth on;
- how the family contributes to development, recent changes in family structure, and a systems perspective to understanding the family; and
- developmental issues related to aging and dying.

Course Outline

Lesson 1: Conceptualizing Lifespan Development: Themes, Research, & Theories

What is lifespan development? You will be introduced to recurring issues/themes, as well as research methods that psychologists and other social scientists use. Psychological theories, with special emphasis on learning theory, will also be introduced in this lesson.

Lesson 2: Heredity, Prenatal Development, & Birth

This lesson includes the fundamentals of heredity, and describes prenatal development and birth.

Lesson 3: Perception & Language

What were you able to see, hear, think, smell, and taste as a newborn? The measurement and development of sensory and perceptual abilities is summarized. Language acquisition is also explored.

Complete the Midcourse Exam

Lesson 4: Cognitive Development

Three perspectives on lifespan cognition are included in this lesson. The Piagetian approach emphasizes different developmental stages in how children think, whereas the information processing approach focuses on gradual changes in memory and thought processes. The third approach, the intelligence testing approach, emphasizes measurement and comparison of people regarding cognitive capacities.

Lesson 5: Self, Personality, & Gender

This lesson includes the development of personality and a sense of “self.” The understanding of gender and sexuality is tied to how people perceive themselves.

Lesson 6: Social Cognition, Moral Development, & Attachment Relationships

Our understanding of the thoughts of others may be related to empathy and moral reasoning. Social relationships, including the first attachment relationship, as well as the development of emotions, are also considered.

Lesson 7: The Family & Issues Related to Aging & Death

Familial influences on development are considered, as well as adult perspectives on the family (marriage, grandparenting). In addition, theories of aging are covered, and developmental changes in our understanding of and reaction to death and dying are reviewed.

Complete the Final Exam

Course Procedure

You have nine months from your date of enrollment to complete this course. The course material is divided into seven lessons. (To help you plan out your progress throughout the course, complete the [Course Study Schedule](#) before you begin your first lesson.) For each lesson, you will be expected to carefully read and review the assigned chapters from your text, as well as the material in this online course. The lessons in this course include a review of some of the major points in the text and additional material not included in your text. For each lesson in this course, after reading the chapters from your text and the online lesson, complete the self-assessment and assignment. Submit the self-assessment online and check your answers. If you miss more than one item in a self-assessment, you may want to review that lesson's material before proceeding to the assignment for that lesson.

Self-Assessments: Self-assessments are objective assessments designed to help students gauge their readiness for the assignments. They are not graded, but I strongly encourage you to complete them, as some of the questions may appear on your exams.

Assignments: At the end of each lesson, you will be asked to submit an assignment online. Each assignment includes a quiz with fifteen multiple-choice questions (accessible by clicking *Assessments* in the left menu bar), worth one point each, and an essay question (accessible by clicking *Essays* in the left menu bar), worth five points. Each assignment, then, is worth twenty points; a total of 140 points (20 X 7 assignments) of your grade is based on the assignments. *Both parts of the assignment are required. You may submit no more than two assignments per week.*

Exams: You will take two exams for this course: a midcourse exam and a comprehensive final exam. After you have submitted the first three assignments, you may apply to take the midcourse exam, and after you have submitted all seven assignments, you may apply to take the final exam. (See the [Correspondence Course Information](#) page for information on arranging to take these exams.) I strongly recommend that you wait until the first three assignments are graded and returned to you before you take the midcourse exam, and that you wait until all seven assignments are graded and returned to you before you take the final exam. (You should

do so because a percentage of the questions on the midcourse and final exams will come from the multiple-choice questions in the assignments; you need review the assignment questions and essay feedback to study for your exams.)

Your midcourse exam will contain sixty multiple-choice questions, with twelve of these coming from your previous self-assessments and assignments. The other questions will come from material covered in your text and the course content. Each question is worth two points, so the midcourse exam is worth a total of 120 points.

The final exam consists of seventy multiple-choice questions worth two points each, for a total of 140 points. Ten of these questions will come from material covered in Lessons 1 to 3; sixty of the questions will come from Lessons 4 through 7. Of these sixty questions, twelve will come from the multiple-choice questions included in self-assessments and assignments. As was the case with your midcourse exam, the remaining questions will come from text and course content.

Grading Criteria

Your grade is based on 400 points. Of these points, 140 (35%) are based on your seven assignments, 120 (30%) are based on your midcourse exam, and 140 (35%) are based on your final exam.

<u>Assessment</u>	<u>Point Value</u>
Assignments	140 points total (20 points each)
Midcourse Exam	120 points
Comprehensive Final Exam	140 points
Total	400 points

Final course grades are computed as follows:

<u>Grade</u>	<u>Points</u>
A	360 - 400 points (90% or better)
B	320 - 359 points (80% - 89%)
C	280 - 319 points (70% - 79%)
D	240 - 279 points (60% - 69%)
F	Below 240 points (below 60%)

No pluses and minuses will be added to the final, reported grade. *You must submit all assignments and make a 60 percent or better on the final exam in order to pass the course.*

Free Tutoring Resources

A variety of free tutoring resources are available for students enrolled in correspondence courses. All correspondence students have access to several hours of free online tutoring from Smarthinking for subjects ranging from grammar and writing to mathematics and Spanish. Free online tutoring for writing-related assignments is also available from the Texas State Writing

Center. For information on accessing these resources, please visit the Office of Distance and Extended Learning's [Free Tutoring](#) page. Currently-enrolled, degree-seeking students able to visit the Texas State campus are eligible for free in-person tutoring from the [Student Learning Assistance Center \(SLAC\)](#) on the fourth floor of Alkek Library and from the [Math Lab](#) in Derrick 233.

Students with Disabilities

The Office of Distance and Extended Learning is committed to helping students with disabilities achieve their education goals. A disability is not a barrier to correspondence study, and we strive to provide reasonable and appropriate accommodations to individuals in coursework and test taking. Students who require special accommodations (e.g., testing accommodations, information in alternative format, sign language interpreting services) need to provide verification of their disability to the Office of Disability Services (<http://www.ods.txstate.edu/>), Suite 5-5.1 LBJ Student Center, (512) 245-3451 (voice/TTY).

Scheduling Your Time

To some extent you can set your own pace in a correspondence course, but it is important that you schedule your time effectively. You should be able to complete each lesson, along with the assignment for each lesson, in two weeks, so completing the course in four to five months is quite possible if you carefully budget your time. Remember, you have a maximum of nine months to complete this course. Use the [Course Study Schedule](#) to help you proceed through the course effectively.

Faculty-Student Contact

According to "Seven Principles for Good Practice in Undergraduate Education," faculty-student contact is very important. Even though this is a correspondence course, I encourage you to contact me personally if you have any concerns, questions, or problems. My office phone number is 512.245.3156 or 512.245.2526. If you prefer, you are welcome to e-mail me by using the Mail tool in the left menu bar. (It is important to keep all mail related to this course contained within this TRACS site.) My policy is that during non-holiday breaks or announced away times, any email I receive between Monday morning and Friday at noon will receive a reply within 48 hours. Emails received between Friday at noon and Sunday night will receive a reply on the next business day.

Texas State Academic Honor Code

The Texas State Academic Honor Code serves as an affirmation that the University demands the highest standard of integrity in all actions related to the academic community. The Honor Code applies to all Texas State students, including correspondence students. As stated in the Texas State [Student Handbook](#),

As members of a community dedicated to learning, inquiry and creation, the students, faculty and administration of our university live by the principles in this Honor Code. These principles require all members of this community to be conscientious, respectful and honest.

WE ARE CONSCIENTIOUS. We complete our work on time and make every effort to do it right. We come to class and meetings prepared and are willing to demonstrate it. We hold ourselves to doing what is required, embrace rigor and shun mediocrity, special requests and excuses.

WE ARE RESPECTFUL. We act civilly toward one another and we cooperate with each other. We will strive to create an environment in which people respect and listen to one another, speaking when appropriate, and permitting other people to participate and express their views.

WE ARE HONEST. We do our own work and are honest with one another in all matters. We

understand how various acts of dishonesty, like plagiarizing, falsifying data and giving or receiving assistance to which one is not entitled, conflict as much with academic achievement as with the values of honesty and integrity....

Academic work means the preparation of an essay, thesis, report, problem, assignment, or other project that is to be submitted for purposes of grade determination.

Violation of the Honor Code includes, but is not limited to, cheating on an examination or other academic work, plagiarism, collusion, and the abuse of resource materials.

Cheating means engaging in any of the following activities:

- Copying from another student's test paper, laboratory report, other report or computer files, data listing, programs, or from any electronic device or equipment.
- Using, during a test, printed, audio, or electronic materials not authorized by the person giving the test.
- Collaborating, without authorization, with another person during an examination or in preparing academic work.
- Knowingly, and without authorization, using, buying, selling, stealing, transporting, soliciting, copying, or possessing, in whole or in part, the content of an unadministered test.
- Substituting for another student—or permitting another person to substitute for oneself in taking an examination or preparing academic work.
- Bribing another person to obtain an unadministered test or obtaining information about an unadministered test.
- Purchasing, or otherwise acquiring and submitting as one's own work, any research paper or other assignment prepared by another individual or firm. This section does not apply to the typing of the rough or final versions of an assignment by a professional typist.
- Submitting the same essay, thesis, report, or other project, without substantial revision or expansion of the work, in an attempt to obtain credit for work submitted in another course.
- Falsifying data.

Plagiarism means the appropriation of another's work and the unacknowledged incorporation of that work in one's own written, oral, visual, or original performative work that is offered for credit.

Collusion means the unauthorized collaboration with another person in preparing any work offered for credit.

Abuse of resource materials means the mutilation, destruction, concealment, theft, or alteration of materials provided to assist students in the mastery of course content.

Psychology Department Policy

The Texas State Psychology Department has also adopted a policy on academic honesty, which applies to correspondence students as well as to on-campus students. As the policy states,

The study of psychology is done best in an atmosphere of mutual trust and respect. Academic dishonesty, in any form, destroys this atmosphere. Academic dishonesty consists of any of a number of things that spoil a good student-teacher relationship. A list of academically dishonest behaviors includes:

- passing off others' work as one's own;

- copying off of another person during an examination;
- signing another person's name on an attendance sheet;
- in written papers, paraphrasing from an outside source while failing to credit the source or copying more than four words in sequence without quotation marks and appropriate citation.

The Psychology Department faculty believe that appropriate penalties for academic dishonesty include an "F" in the course and/or prosecution through the Student Justice System.