PSYCHOLOGY 475/575
COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT - SPRING 1997

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Lecture Place and Time: 146 Straub, Tues. & Thurs. 2:00-3:20

Course Description: This course will be devoted to children's thinking and intellectual growth, focusing primarily on infancy and early childhood. We will consider different theoretical accounts of how mental abilities develop, examine the methodologies used to test young children, and discuss how the findings of research in this area are relevant to a range of applied questions (e.g., Should academic instruction begin in the preschool years? Are children reliable witnesses in a court of law? What accounts for the differences between Asian and American children in mathematical achievement? When and how should children be educated about AIDS?)

Textbook:
Flavell, J.H., Miller, P.A., & Miller, S.A. (1993). Cognitive Development (3rd Ed.) Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Readings: The readings are all empirical articles published in professional journals. A packet of the readings will be available for purchase fromthe Bookstore. A copy of the readings will be on reserve at the library.

Exams (50% of course grade): There will be two exams. Each exam will have a short answer and essay format and each will be worth 25% of your course grade. The exams will cover the material presented in lectures, readings, class discussions, and films. The final exam will cover the last half of the course (i.e., not a cumulative final). The final will not be given at any time other than scheduled. If you know you have a conflict with the time of the final, please drop the class.

Paper (30% of course grade): All students will be required to write a paper (about 15-20 pages long) reviewing the literature in one area of cognitive development. Here are some possible topics for your paper: perceptual abilities in newborns, infantile amnesia, children's understanding of disease, developmental change in the concept of self, nonverbal communication in infancy, children's drawings, cross-cultural differences in cognitive development. These are just suggestions -- you should feel free to choose a topic that is not listed above. I encourage you to pursue your own interests, but please discuss your paper topic with me before you begin.

Research proposal/case study (20% of course grade):

A. Write a brief (3-4 page) research proposal in which you describe the design for a new experiment that answers an important question concerning cognitive development. The topic of the experiment does not necessarily have to be on the same as your review paper, although the process of writing the paper is likely to help you identify unanswered questions and generate ideas for new research.

OR

Record and discuss in a 3-4 page paper the behavior of one child on a task which is commonly used in research in cognitive development. The task might be one that is used in the research reviewed in your paper. In your write-up you will present the data you have collected and discuss how this child's peformance fits with the findings reported in the literature. If you choose this option, an outline of your project AND written permission from the parent must be submitted to me for approval before you observe and record the child's behavior.

B. The other students in the class are likely to be very interested in your research proposal or case study. On June 3, you will have the opportunity to share your ideas and findings with the class in the form of a poster or oral presentation, closely following the format used in professional meetings and conferences (you will be given detailed instructions).

The research proposal/case study requirement for graduate students who have registered for Psych 575 will slightly different. Graduate students will be required to propose a new experiment and collect data from one child. Graduate students will be required to give a short talk presenting the results to the class.

READINGS

1. DeCasper, A. J., & Fifer, W. P. (1980). Of human bonding: Newborns prefer their mothers' voices. Science, 208, 1174-1176.

2. Baillargeon, R. (1987). Object permanence in $3^1/_2$- and $4^1/_2$-month-old infants. Developmental Psychology, 23, 655-664.

3. Wynn, K. (1992). Addition and subtraction by human infants. Nature, 358, 749-750.

4. Gelman, S. A., & Markman, E. M. (1986). Categories and induction in young children. Cognition, 23, 183-209.

5. Taylor, M., Cartwright, B.S., & Carlson, S.M. (1993). A developmental investigation of children's imaginary companions. Developmental Psychology, 29, 276-285.

6. Baldwin, D. A. (1991). Infants' contribution to the achievement of joint reference. Child Development, 62, 875-890.

7. Lewis, M., Sullivan, M. W., Stanger, C., & Weiss, M. (1989). Self development and self-conscious emotions. Child Development, 60, 146-156.

8. Gopnik, A., & Astington, J. W. (1988). Children's understanding of representational change and its relation to the understanding of false belief and the appearance -reality distinction. Child Development, 59, 26-37.

OUTLINE OF LECTURE TOPICS

Date	Topic	Reading
April 1	Introduction to Cognitive Development	Chapter 1
April 3	The development of the brain (Guest lecturer: Prof. Paul Collins)	
April 8, 10	The development of perception	Chapter 2, Reading 1
April 15, 17, 22	Understanding the physical world: Objects, causality, number	Chapter 3 (pp. 116-127) Readings 2 & 3
April 24, 29	Understanding the biological world: Natural kinds, biological processes	Chapter 3 (pp. 85-100) Reading 4
May 1	The development of imagination	Chapter 3 (pp. 76-85), Reading 5
May 6	MIDTERM	
May 8 & 13	Language and communication	Chapter 7, Reading 6
May 15, 20, 22	Understanding the social world: Self and other, theory of mind	Chapter 3 (pp. 100-116), Chapter 5, Readings 7 & 8
May 27, 29	Memory: Developmental issues and implications	Chapters 4 & 6
June 3	Student presentations	
June 5	Conclusions & speculations	
June 11 (Wed.) 1:00-3:00	FINAL EXAM	