

**PSYCHOLOGY 475/575
COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT -WINTER 1998**

Professor: Dr. Marjorie Taylor
Office: 201 Straub, 346-4933
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Lecture Place and Time: 146 Straub, Tues. & Thurs. 11-12:20

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., Are children reliable witnesses in a court of law? When and how should children be educated about AIDS?)

Textbook: Siegler, R. S. (1998). Children's thinking. 3rd Ed., Upper Saddle River, N.J.: Prentice Hall.

Readings: The readings are on reserve at the library.

Exams (40% of course grade): There will be two exams. Each exam will have a short answer and essay format and each will be worth 20% 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.

Review paper (45% of course grade): All students will be required to write a paper (about 18-20 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, developmental change in the concept of self, theory of mind, children's conception of number, the development of memory. 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. The topic must be in the area of cognitive development. Papers that review an area of cognitive psychology, social development, etc. will not be accepted.

This course is designed to help develop your writing skills. For this reason, there are several deadlines associated with your review paper. Failure to meet deadlines 1, 2, and 3 will result in forfeiting the points indicated below. Failure to meet the deadline 4 will result in a loss of 10 points. Late papers will not be accepted after March 12.

- 1. February 3:** Submit a two page outline of your review paper. (5 points)
- 2. February 17:** Submit your review paper (18-20 pages) to be read by another student. I will collect these papers on February 17, remove the cover pages with names, and then on February 19, I will pass out these papers (with no identifying information) to students in the class for written feedback. Thus, everyone who passes in a paper on February 17 will be given a paper by another student on February 19.
- 3. February 24:** Submit your written feedback (1-2 pages) plus the edited paper. (10 points)
On February 26, I will give everyone back their own review papers along with the written commentaries.
- 4. March 5:** Turn in the final draft of your paper to me. (30 points)

Research proposal/case study (15% of course grade):

Option A: Write a brief (4-5 pages) 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 the same as your review paper, although the process of writing the review paper is likely to help you identify unanswered questions and generate ideas for new research.

OR

Option B: Record and discuss in a 4-5 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 performance fits with the findings reported in the literature.

IMPORTANT: Students who choose Option B must meet with me to discuss their plan before they test the child. In addition it is required that the parents give written consent to have their children tested. The letter of consent to be signed by the parent must be approved by me before the child is tested and before the letter is given to the parent. Failure to do so will result in receiving no credit for this project.

EXTRA CREDIT: The other students in the class are likely to be very interested in your research proposal or case study. Students who want to earn five additional points toward their final grade will have the opportunity to share their ideas and findings with the class in the form of short oral presentation (about 10-12 minutes). Please let me know by **February 26** if you want to give a presentation.

PSYCH 575: The requirements for graduate students who have registered for Psych 575 will be slightly different. For the research proposal/case study, graduate students will be required to propose a new experiment and collect data from one child. Graduate students also will be required to give a short talk presenting the results to the class (i.e., the extra credit option for undergraduates will be a requirement for graduate students).

READINGS (on reserve in library)

1. Baillargeon, R. (1994). How do infants learn about the physical world? Current Directions in Psychological Science, 3, 133-140.
2. Wynn, K. (1996). Infants' individuation and enumeration of actions. Psychological Science, 7, 164-169.
3. Gopnik, A., & Meltzoff, A. N. (1997). Words, thoughts, and theories. Cambridge: MIT Press. Chapter 5, The child's theory of actions.
4. Baldwin, D. A. (1991). Infants' contribution to the achievement of joint reference, Child Development, 62, 875-890.
5. Woolley, J. D. (1997). Thinking about fantasy: Are children fundamentally different thinkers and believers from adults? Child Development, 68, 991-1011.
6. Astington, J. W. (1993). The child's discovery of mind. Cambridge, Harvard University Press. Chapter 8, Thinking about believing.
7. Taylor, M., Esbensen, B. M., & Bennett, R. T. (1994). Children's understanding of knowledge acquisition: The tendency for children to report that they have always known what they have just learned, Child Development, 65, 1581-1604.

8. Baron-Cohen, S. (1992). The girl who liked to shout in church. In R. Campbell (Ed.), Mental lives: Case studies in cognition. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.
9. Gelman, S. A., & Markman, E. M. (1986). Categories and induction in young children. Cognition, 23, 183-209.
10. Solomon, G. E. A., Johnson, S. C., Zaitchik, D., & Carey, S. (1996). Like father, like son: Young children's understanding of how and why offspring resemble their parents, Child Development, 67, 151-171.

OUTLINE OF LECTURE TOPICS

Date	Topic	Reading
Jan. 6	Introduction to Cognitive Development	Chapter 1
Jan. 8	Perceptual development	Chapter 4
Jan. 13,15,20	Understanding the physical world: Objects, causality, number	Chapter 2, Readings 1 & 2
Jan. 22, 27	Self and other	Reading 3
Jan. 29 & Feb. 3	Language and communication	Chapter 5, Reading 4
Feb. 5	The development of imagination	Reading 5
Feb. 10	MIDTERM	
Feb. 12, 17, 19	Understanding the social world: Theory of mind	Readings 6, 7 & 8
Feb. 24, 26	Understanding the biological world Natural kinds, biological processes	Chapter 7, Readings 9 & 10
March 3 & 5	Memory: Developmental issues and implications	Chapter 6
March 10	Student presentations	
March 12	Conclusions & speculations	Chapter 10
March 18 (Wed.) 8-10 am	FINAL EXAM	