# Cognitive Development
## Psy 475/575

**Instructor**
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Straub 420, Office hours: Thursday 1:30 to 2:30 and by appointment

**Teaching Assistant**
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**Course Description**
This course will cover cognitive development with an emphasis on infancy and early childhood. Major topics covered will include perception, attention, memory, language, and social cognition.

**Goals and Learning Objectives of Course**
This course is designed as a broad introduction to cognitive development. It is intended to familiarize students with current empirical research and theoretical approaches to understanding how cognitive processes develop over time. Students who complete the course should be:

1. Informed consumers of cognitive development research. Students should have sufficiently mastered the major concepts, methods, and theoretical approaches so that they are able to understand new research on cognitive development.
2. Effective critics of cognitive development research. Students should be able to critically evaluate the contributions and limitations of new research on cognitive development.
3. Content producers. Students should be able to synthesize existing research to produce novel observations about the current content and future directions of cognitive developmental research.

**Prerequisites**
WR 121 and 122 or 123; PSY 303

**Text and Supplemental Readings**
Bjorklund, D. F. (2005). *Children's Thinking*. Fourth Edition. Wadsworth.
Supplemental readings will be posted to blackboard.

**Class Project**
The class will create a website designed to convey key concepts and research findings from the cognitive development literature to a general audience. This class project is designed to give each student the opportunity to read, discuss, critique, and write about cognitive development research. This class project also gives each student the opportunity to contribute to a publicly available resource that will increase the general populations understanding and appreciation of cognitive development. See the class project handout for additional information.

**Group Project**
Students will be assigned to a group for the course of the term. Each group will specialize in a specific research topic. Each group will be responsible for developing a section of the class website that summarizes and reviews research in their assigned topic area. At the end of the semester each group will give a brief presentation describing the design and implementation of their section of the website.

Participation in the group project is designed to provide each student with in-depth exposure to research within a particular area of cognitive development. See the group project handout for additional information.

## Empirical Research Summaries

Students will write articles summarizing and critiquing recent empirical studies from the cognitive development literature. The summaries will address research relevant to the student's group project. Students will receive 0 or 1 summary credits for each summary they contribute to the class website. An additional summary credit may be awarded by the instructor for exceptional work. See the empirical research summaries handout for additional information.

## Course Points

Course points will be earned through exams, pop-quizzes, classroom exercises, and group projects. The majority of the class points will come from the following:

- 100 Points – Exam 1
- 100 Points – Exam 2
- 100 Points – Exam 3
- 50 Points – Group Project, Instructor Evaluation of Website
- 25 Points – Group Project, Class Presentation
- 25 Points – Group Project, Group Evaluation of Student's Contribution

## Grading – Undergraduate Students

A. Students earning an A have demonstrated that they have mastered the major concepts, methods, and theoretical approaches presented in class. They have also shown the ability to critically evaluate and synthesize current research on cognitive development. To earn an A, students must have earned each of the following:
   1. Four summary credits
   2. 90% of available course points
B. Students earning a B have demonstrated good understanding of the major concepts, methods, and theoretical approaches presented in class. They have also shown the ability to critically evaluate and synthesize current research on cognitive development. To earn a B students must have earned each of the following:
   1. Two summary credits
   2. 80% of available course points
C. Students earning a C have demonstrated adequate understanding of the major concepts, methods, and theoretical approaches presented in class. To earn a C students must have earned the following:
   1. 70% of available course points
D. Students earning a D have demonstrated minimal understanding of the major concepts, methods, and theoretical approaches presented in class. To earn a D students must earned the following:
   1. 60% of available course points

## Grading – Graduate Students

Grades for graduate students will be assigned using the same criteria used for undergraduate students (see above) with one addition. To earn an A or B, graduate students must contribute to the class website a summary of a major theoretical approach to cognitive development. See the theory paper handout for additional information.

## Course Schedule

See attached. All dates are tentative. Modifications to the schedule will be posted to blackboard.

## Guidelines for Teaching and Learning: Best Practices and Expectations

The Psychology Department has guidelines for instructors and students. Please read these guidelines carefully: http://psychweb.uoregon.edu/guidelines/

## Academic Integrity

UO's statement on integrity: http://darkwing.uoregon.edu/~conduct  "As a member of the university community you are expected to be honest and forthright in all your academic endeavors. To falsify the results of one's research, to present the words, ideas, data, or work of another as one's own, or to cheat on an examination corrupts the essential process by which knowledge is advanced. All work submitted in this course must be your own and produced exclusively for this course. The use of sources (ideas, quotations, paraphrases) must be properly acknowledged and documented. For the consequences of academic dishonesty, refer to the Schedule of Classes published quarterly. Violations will be taken seriously and are noted on student disciplinary records. If you are in doubt regarding any aspect of these issues as they pertain to this course, please consult with the instructor before you complete any relevant requirements of the course."

Do not cheat. Do not plagiarize. It is bad for your intellectual development.

## Students with Disabilities

If you have a documented disability and need accommodations please make arrangements with the instructor or contact Disability Services (164 Oregon Hall, 346-1155). Also please request a letter verifying your disability from the Counselor for Students with Disabilities: *Molly Sirois, sirois@uoregon.edu.*

## Missed Exams, Late Papers

Make up exams will only be made available to students with documented excuses. Late papers will only be accepted from students with documented excuses.

## Acknowledgements

The content and organization of this course are based on or inspired by materials generously provided by my peers and my own instructors. These people include: William Graziano, Thomas Berndt, Rob Kail, Meredith Meyer, Dare Baldwin, and Jen Simonds.

## Course Schedule – Topics and Readings
All dates are tentative. Modifications to the schedule will be posted to blackboard. Supplemental readings will be announced in class and posted to blackboard.

| Class | Date | Topic | Reading 1 |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 9/26 | Introduction and Overview | None |
| 2 | 9/28 | Basic Concepts and Issues | Chapter 1 |
| 3 | 10/3 | Biological Contributions | Chapter 2 |
| 4 | 10/5 | Social Contributions | Chapter 3 |
| 5 | 10/10 | Piaget | Chapter 4 |
| 6 | 10/12 | Information Processing Approaches | Chapter 5 |
| 7 | 10/17 | Exam #1 | None |
| 8 | 10/19 | Perception in Infancy | Chapter 7 |
| 9 | 10/24 | Spatial Cognition | Chapter 8 |
| 10 | 10/26 | Representation | Chapter 9 |
| 11 | 10/31 | Language, Part 1, Genie | None |
| 12 | 11/2 | Language, Part 2 | Chapter 11 |
| 13 | 11/7 | Exam #2 | None |
| 14 | 11/9 | Attention | Columbo (2001) |
| 15 | 11/14 | Problem Solving and Reasoning | Chapter 12 |
| 16 | 11/16 | Schooling and Cognition | Chapter 14 |
| 17 | 11/21 | Imagination and Pretend Play | TBA |
|  | 11/23 | No Class |  |
| 18 | 11/28 | Conclusions, Group Presentations | Epilogue |
| 19 | 11/30 | Group Presentations | None |

## Course Schedule – Due Dates
Research summaries are due in class on the due date listed below. Late papers will not be accepted except with documented excuses. All dates are tentative. Modifications to the schedule will be posted to blackboard.

| Class | Date | Topic |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | 9/26 |  |
| 2 | 9/28 |  |
| 3 | 10/3 |  |
| 4 | 10/5 | Research Summary #1 Due |
| 5 | 10/10 |  |
| 6 | 10/12 |  |
| 7 | 10/17 | Exam #1 |
| 8 | 10/19 |  |
| 9 | 10/24 | Research Summary #2 Due |
| 10 | 10/26 |  |
| 11 | 10/31 |  |
| 12 | 11/2 |  |
| 13 | 11/7 | Exam #2 |
| 14 | 11/9 | Research Summary #3 Due |
| 15 | 11/14 |  |
| 16 | 11/16 |  |
| 17 | 11/21 | Research Summary #4 Due |
|  | 11/23 |  |
| 18 | 11/28 | Group Presentations |
| 19 | 11/30 | Group Presentations |