

Cognitive Development: Summer 2006

Monday-Thursday 2:00-3:50
202 Cascade

Instructor

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398 Straub Hall

Office Hours: Monday 10:00-11:00

Friday 2:00-3:00

or by appointment

Course Description:

Do you know how much more you can do than a child?

--You know that other people act based on their own wants and beliefs, but a four-year-old doesn't understand that.

--You can sit still (like through a lecture!), but a three-year-old's brain isn't ready for that yet.

--You can read a map, but a two-year-old can't represent what pictures symbolize (and a chimpanzee can!)

Maybe none of that is surprising. But do you know SOMETIMES how much "smarter" a child is than you?

--You might be doing well learning a second language, but a two-year-old could do it a lot better.

--You might be able to tell your friends' faces apart, but a six-month-old could do that, and do it with monkeys, too (and you couldn't!)

--You can only hear the difference between sounds that are used in the languages you know, but nine-month-olds can tell the difference between sounds that are used in other languages, too.

Across development, we see remarkable changes in the abilities that humans use in going about their lives, whether it be in memory, language, social cognition, face recognition, symbolic and analogical reasoning, and myriad other skills. What accounts for the huge growth in knowledge that we see in human development? And is knowledge change what cognitive development is all about? Or do children's thinking skills also change? If so, in what ways? In what ways is cognitive development in human children different from what we see in other species? How dependent is normal cognitive development on a certain kind of environment (e.g., nutritional, familial, academic, and/or cultural)? These are among the questions we will consider in this course. We will consider different accounts of how mental abilities develop, as well as the scientific methodologies psychologists use to investigate cognitive development. A particular focus will be the latest breakthroughs in the study of cognition in infancy and early childhood, as these are areas where rapid scientific progress is currently being made.

Text:

Siegler, R., & Alibali, M. W. (2005). *Children's Thinking* (4th Ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice-Hall Inc.

Required Reading: A list of lecture topics and reading assignments follows. The lecture topics will generally supplement rather than retrace materials presented in the text and readings, and will reflect topical issues of

contemporary interest in the field. Readings that are not from the textbook will be posted as .pdf documents on blackboard.

Technological Note: Some Mac users (including myself!) have had trouble opening readings in the past. It is recommended that you use Adobe Acrobat/Adobe Reader (download available at:

<http://www.adobe.com/products/acrobat/readstep2.html>

to open all .pdf documents, and *not* Preview. If you still have trouble opening documents, using a public university computer will probably prove more successful. In *any* case of trouble, though, please do not hesitate to contact me via e-mail or phone so that you can make sure to have your readings available to you in a timely manner.

Blackboard: Blackboard will be a critical source of course-related information throughout the term. Study-guide questions for tests and test scores will all be posted online. As well, powerpoint slides for each lecture will be posted by noon of the corresponding day. Check the blackboard website regularly for course-related announcements; important announcements will also be sent over e-mail, so it is best to get into the habit (if you're not already!) of checking your e-mail daily.

Grading: Your grade in the course will be based on four weekly tests (20% each) and a class project (20%).

Tests: The four tests will be multiple choice and short answer. They will not be cumulative, although basic concepts covered during the first week will be required for understanding later material. Tests will be administered during the first hour of class on Thursdays, and lecture will follow the test. A list of review questions *covering lecture material* to assist in your preparation for each of the tests will be provided on Tuesdays and updated on Wednesday to include that day's material. Spending time with the study guide and working together with others in the class in preparing answers to the study guide questions will be very helpful in improving your exam performance. You will be responsible for material covered in assigned readings as well, and I encourage you to construct your own study guides for these sources.

If you are unable to take an exam at its scheduled time, you can make it up on the Friday following the exam (i.e., one day after the exam is administered). However, please note: 1) the only possible time to make up the test is at 2:00, 2) you will be assigned all short answer topics rather than having a choice of topics, and 3) you must e-mail or call me *on Thursday* to let me know that you will be coming on Friday. **Come to Straub 398** for any Friday make-up unless I announce otherwise via e-mail.


Class Project: The class project will involve both a written and presentational component. The goals of the project are threefold: 1) to review relevant empirical literature and suggest directions for new research on a topic of your choosing (within limits, see below) in a 10-12 page APA-style **paper** 2) to create an informational **pamphlet** on this topic that is accessible, factually correct, and thorough, and 3) to present your work in a brief (5-7 minute) **class presentation**. You may select your topic from a list of approved topics or come up with your own as long as it is relevant to something we covered in class; however, in order to avoid redundancy in class presentations, one topic should only be covered by one person (or two partners, see below).

Working with a partner is an option but is not required. If you choose to work with a partner, your pamphlet and class presentation may be a *joint product*, but your papers must be *independently* written. Partnering up with a classmate may be desirable in cases when both people want to work on the same topic.

The final paper will be due Friday, July 21st at 4:30 p.m. This must be handed in as a hard-copy at my office (Straub 398) or to the undergraduate secretary, Cindy Salmon, in the front office. Please make sure to write my name on top of your paper if you turn it in to Cindy.

Extra Credit to improve your overall grade by up to 2% can be earned by participating in Psychology Department research through the Psychology Department Human Participants Pool (formerly known as the Human Subjects Pool). For each credit of participation assigned to Psych 475, you can earn a 1% improvement to your final grade. You can gain information by contacting the human participants coordinator, Jeff Loucks, by email at hscoord@uoregon.edu. You can also gain additional information by going to the HSP website at <http://darkwing.uoregon.edu/~hscoord>. An alternative to research participation is to write summaries (2-3 pages, double-spaced) of an empirical article related to cognitive development. This is more fully described in a document entitled “HSP Alternative,” posted under Course Information. Please note that this is an *alternative* to research participation, meaning that the maximum amount of extra credit from any source is 2%. If you want to “mix and match” (i.e., do one credit worth of research participation and one empirical article summary), that’s fine, too.

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE FOR LECTURE TOPICS

<u>Date</u>	<u>Lecture Topic</u>	<u>Readings</u>
6/26	Introduction	
6/27	Perception I	Chapter 5 (focus on vision), Reading 1
6/28	Perception II	Chapter 5 (focus on audition)
6/29	TEST I and Object Knowledge	Chapter 5 (focus on objects), Reading 2
7/3	Language I	Chapter 6
	Fireworks (NO CLASS)	(optional) Declaration of Independence
7/5	Language II	Reading 3
7/6	Test II and Memory I	Chapter 7
7/10	Memory II	Reading 4
7/11	Concepts and Symbols	Chapter 8
7/12	Social Cognition I	Chapter 9, Reading 5
7/13	Test III and Social Cognition II	Reading 6
7/17	Action Processing	Reading 7
7/18	Autism and Mental Retardation	Reading 8 (easy one!)
7/19	Intelligence and Academic Achievement AND class presentations	Chapter 11
7/20	Test IV AND class presentations	

THREE IMPORTANT ADDITIONAL NOTES:

Guidelines for Teaching and Learning: The Psychology Department has recently developed guidelines for teaching and learning in Psychology. These guidelines can be accessed at the following web address:
<http://psychweb.uoregon.edu/guidelines/>

- Please read these guidelines carefully as they clarify our general expectations and goals for each other in this course.

Academic Honesty: 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. (Text adopted here as recommended from the UO web site regarding academic honesty at: <http://darkwing.uoregon.edu/~conduct>)

IMPORTANT! PLEASE READ! With specific regard to assignments for this class:

You are expected to have read and understood the university's policy on academic dishonesty including the section in which plagiarism is defined. Particularly in cases where aspects of paper-writing involve summarizing the work of others, lifting phrases from the original text is a tempting option. Don't do it! If I find instances of plagiarized work, you will be reported to Student Judicial Affairs and may risk failing the course.

Students with Disabilities: If you have a documented disability and anticipate needing accommodations in this course, please make arrangements to meet with the instructor soon. It would be wise to contact Disability Services (164 Oregon Hall, 346-1155). Also please request that the Counselor for Students with Disabilities send a letter verifying your disability. [Counselor for Students with Disabilities: Molly Sirois, 346-3211, 164 Oregon Hall, 346-1073, sirois@uoregon.edu]