



Psychology 475

## **Cognitive Development: Summer 2007**

Monday-Thursday 4:00-5:50

116 Eslinger

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### **Course Description:**

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.

#### **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.

**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 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 us 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. We'll make an effort to post powerpoint slides for each lecture by 2 pm of the corresponding day. Test scores will also be posted online. 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 (15% each), a paper (30%), and five pop quizzes (10% total).

**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. We encourage you to construct your own study guide and study with others in the class. The exams will cover material from the lectures, textbook and assigned readings. Tests will be administered during the first hour of class on Thursdays, and lecture will follow the test. If you have a legitimate reason for why you are not able to take the exam at its scheduled time, you should let us know in advance so that we can discuss your options.

**Paper:** Each student will write an 8-10 page paper proposing a new study. The paper will be due Monday, August 20<sup>th</sup> at noon. This must be handed in as a hard-copy to the undergraduate secretary, Cindy Salmon, in the front office. Please make sure to write our names (as well as yours) on top of your paper.

**Extra Credit:** to improve your overall grade by up to 3%, you can participate in Psychology Department research through the Psychology Department 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 subjects coordinator, Jeff Loucks, by email at [hscoord@uoregon.edu](mailto: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.

## **TENTATIVE SCHEDULE FOR LECTURE TOPICS**

<b><u>Date</u></b>	<b><u>Lecture Topic</u></b>	<b><u>Readings</u></b>
7/23	Introduction and Piaget's Theory	Chapters 1, Chapter 2
7/24	Perception I	Chapter 5, Reading 1
7/25	Perception II	Chapter 5
7/26	TEST I and Object Knowledge	Reading 2
7/3	Concepts and Symbols	Chapter 8
7/31	Social Cognition I	Chapter 9, Reading 3
8/1	Social Cognition II and Pretend Play/Imagination	Reading 4
8/2	Test II and Language I	Chapter 6
8/6	Language II	Reading 5
8/7	Action Processing	Reading 6
8/8	Autism and Mental Retardation	Reading 7
8/9	Test III and Problem Solving I	Chapter 10
8/13	Problem Solving II & Intelligence and Academic Achievement	Chapter 11, Reading 8
8/14	Memory I	Chapter 7
8/15	Memory II	Reading 9
8/16	Test IV	

## IMPORTANT ADDITIONAL NOTES:

**All papers must be turned in as a hard copy** printed in black ink, either in class or to one of our mailboxes in Straub Hall.

Computer problems are not allowed as an excuse for late submissions of assignments in this course. Because of the availability of computers in campus labs (library, EMU, etc.), you are expected to submit assignments printed clearly and on time.

**Summer Workload:** If you complete this course, you will earn 4 credits toward your degree. It is important to iterate that the requirements for this course are equivalent to those in the same course over 10 weeks during the regular academic year. By continuing in this course, you are accepting that **the workload for this class is 2.5 times that of a 4-credit class during the regular academic year.** According to University principles governing credit and contact hours, each credit is equivalent to 30 hours of work. Your 4 credits for this course are equivalent to 120 hours of work over 4 weeks, which is 30 hours per week. You will spend 8 hours in class each week and should expect to spend up to 22 hours engaged in reading, studying, writing papers and/or completing homework assignments outside of class each week.

**Academic Learning Services:** If you are not getting the grade you would like, in addition to speaking with the instructors, you may contact Academic Learning Services (<http://als.uoregon.edu/>) for assistance. They offer services aimed at increasing student performance by teaching effective studying habits and providing tutors to help with paper-writing. This is a particularly valuable resource for students who are having difficulty with any aspect (e.g., grammar, organization, APA style, etc.) of writing the papers for the 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](mailto:sirois@uoregon.edu)]