

Psychology 410/510: Winter 2014

# INFANCY

Tuesdays & Thursdays 4:00-5:20p.m., McKenzie 229



**Professor:**

Dr. Dare Baldwin  
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**Graduate Teaching Fellow:**

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Office hours: W 2:30-3:30, F 10-11

**Course Description:**

Human infancy: a remarkable period in each of our lives that none of us can remember for ourselves. The human infant is a fascinating combination of helplessness and powerful potential, of preprogrammed responses and resilient plasticity. For parents, the advent of a newborn can bring untold joy while wreaking havoc on daily routines and healthy sleep schedules. The pace of change during infancy – which we will define as the period from birth to 24 months -- seems nearly explosive: newborns with little voluntary control transform into walking, talking dynamos. How can we account for the rapidity of change during this crucial period in human development? In what ways do prenatal experiences set the stage for subsequent developmental outcomes? How do cultural attitudes and approaches toward infants vary, and what is the significance of such differences for development? What kinds of parenting practices best promote infants' well-being? What accounts for human infants outstripping the infants of other species in cognitive and linguistic development? What is unique about the human infants' brain? These are among the questions we will consider in this course. A particular focus will be mechanisms and processes that underlie and promote infant development across domains. We will also examine a range of innovative new methodologies that in recent years have provided a new window into the inner workings of the infant mind. I hope you will come away from the course with a host of new information, an appreciation for what psychological science can reveal about fundamental issues concerning human nature and human capability, and an awareness of the many important topics of investigation about infancy that are as yet still in their infancy.

**Text:** Fogel, A. (2010). *Infant Development: A Topical Approach*. Cornwall-on-Hudson, NY: Sloan Publishing. A copy of the text is available at Knight Library. It may be borrowed for a maximum of two hours at a time.

**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 will reflect topical issues of contemporary interest in the field.

**Blackboard:** Blackboard will be a critical source of course-related information throughout the term. Study-guide questions for exams and exam scores will all be posted online. As well, powerpoint slides from lectures will be posted within a day or two after lectures have occurred. Please check the blackboard website regularly for course-related announcements, and take advantage of the communication features to communicate with your term-project team and to undertake commentary on team initiatives.

**Attendance:** Class attendance is important to doing well in this course. And it makes the class a lot more engaging for you as well as for all involved if you are there. Please come and join in our collective learning enterprise. If you anticipate missing more than three classes, please come and discuss it with me.

**Grades:** Undergraduates taking PSY 410: Your grade in the course will be based on weekly quizzes (collectively worth 50% of your overall grade) and a term-project (50%). Extra-credit options are available to boost your overall grade by up to 3%. Graduate students taking (PSY 510) will have the additional requirement of identifying and evaluating two informational resources (e.g., websites, review articles, books) describing recent research findings relevant to a topic addressed in one or more lectures. Thus, for graduate students the breakdown for grading will be: weekly quizzes (50% overall), term project (40%), two informational resources (10%). The same extra credit options available to undergraduates (to boost your grade by up to 3%) will be available to graduate students.

**Quizzes:** The weekly quizzes will be short answer/short essay format. The last 20 minutes of class each Thursday will be devoted to the weekly quiz. Quizzes will test your knowledge of lecture and text material assigned prior to that week. In particular, some quiz questions may require you to integrate across information covered in earlier weeks of the course (in either text and/or lecture). There will not be a final exam in the course, even though you will see an exam time scheduled in the University's exam calendar. Everyone's lowest quiz score will automatically be dropped before calculating your overall quiz average. If you miss a quiz and receive a zero, that quiz will automatically be the score dropped from your overall quiz average. If you miss more than one quiz, you should arrange to make the quiz up at office hours within the week following the quiz. It won't be possible to schedule make up quizzes once a week has passed since the original date of the quiz. If you anticipate missing more than one or two quizzes at the most, you should consider dropping the class.

**Term Project: Team initiative and individual debate paper.** The term-project will involve both team and individual components. The goals of the term project are threefold: 1) to provide an opportunity to focus on an important, and potentially controversial, national policy issue concerning infancy that is of particular interest to you, and to engage in a dialectic with other students on the topic, 2) to communicate with the class at large about your findings in order to help build our collective knowledge base on the topic, and 3) to build your individual writing skills. Because there is no final exam in this

course, the term project will be a major focus of your intellectual efforts in the class, and it will account for 50% (40% for graduate students) of your overall grade.

To carry out the team portion of the term project, you will join a team of 4-5 students who share an interest in creating a particular infancy-related policy initiative to be supported at the national level. As a team you will research the initiative and produce a powerpoint that a) makes the case for the initiative, b) outlines how best to proceed with the initiative, and c) explains why this initiative is especially deserving of support. Remember to include in your presentation possible downsides or costs of your initiative, and how to manage or offset them. Your team's powerpoint presentation must be posted to our course's Blackboard website by 5 p.m., Friday of Week 7.

To carry out the individual portion of the project, you will carefully examine the powerpoint presentations from the other teams that are posted on Blackboard, and come to a conclusion regarding which of the initiatives is most deserving of support. This might be your own team's initiative, or it might be a different team's initiative. You will identify the one other initiative that you think is the strongest contender to your chosen initiative. Your individual position paper will present as persuasive a case as you can for the initiative you regard as most deserving of support in comparison to the other strongest contender, bolstering your case with research evidence wherever you can. Your paper should be on the order of 4-5 double-spaced pages, and is due by 5 p.m. on Monday of Week 10. In class on Thursday of Week 10, we will hold our Great Policy Debate, in which we will decide, as a collective, which of the initiatives we will authorize for support.

**Extra Credit:** There are two extra credit options, each of which potentially enables you to improve your overall grade by as much as 3%. You may choose one or the other, but cannot get credit for both, nor for any combination of the two. Extra credit work is due latest by 5 p.m., Friday of Finals Week.

**Extra Credit Option 1 (Raise Questions, Identify Gaps):** You can provide commentary, on Blackboard, in relation to other teams' powerpoint presentations of their favored initiative. You might raise questions regarding the initiative, the plan for action or the evaluation strategy, or you might not gaps in the evidence or in the consideration of possible costs to the initiative. Each double-spaced page's worth of debate commentary that you provide has the potential to improve your grade by as much as 1%, for a total possible improvement of 3%. Excellent, carefully articulated commentary will earn you the full amount of extra credit. You will need to print out your commentary and turn it in by Friday of Finals Week in order to receive your extra credit.

**Extra Credit Option 2 (Research Participation):** You can participate in Psychology Department research through the Psychology Department Human Subjects Pool. For each credit of participation assigned to Psych 410/510, you can earn a 1% improvement to your final grade, for up to 3%. Also necessary for gaining the extra credit is that you hand in a one-page description of the research you participated in for each of the participation credits. You can gain information by contacting the human subjects coordinator, Bill Schumacher, 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>.

### TENTATIVE SCHEDULE FOR LECTURE TOPICS

<u>Date</u>	<u>Lecture Topic</u>	<u>Readings</u>
Week 1	Infancy: The best of times, the worst of times	Ch. 1
Weeks 2-3	Prenatal programming, learning, and birth	Chs. 2-3

Weeks 4-5	Sense and moveability	Ch. 4-5
Week 6	Deeply social	Ch. 6
Week 7	Relationships start early	Ch. 7
Week 8	Concentric circles of belongingness	Ch. 8
Week 9	Health, exceptions and challenges	Chs.9
Week 10	What persists?	Ch. 10

### **Dates of Special Significance:**

Every Thursday	In-class Quiz
Feb 21 (Week 7, Friday, 5 p.m.)	Team Powerpoint Due
Mar 10 (Week 10, Monday, 5 p.m.)	Individual Paper Due
Mar 13 (Week 10, Thursday, in class)	Great Policy Debate
Mar 21 (Finals Week, Friday, 5 p.m.)	Extra Credit Due

### **THREE IMPORTANT ADDITIONAL NOTES:**

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

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

**2. 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. For more information regarding academic honesty and the student conduct code at the University of Oregon, visit the University's Office of Student Life website at:  
<http://studentlife.uoregon.edu/StudentConductandCommunityStandards/StudentConductCode/tabid/69/Default.aspx>

**3. 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, [disabsrv@uoregon.edu](mailto:disabsrv@uoregon.edu), <http://ds.uoregon.edu/>). 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)]