

Psychology 407/507 Winter 2018

PROMOTING HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

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Office Hours: W 10-11, Th 11:30-12:30



We often think of childhood as a special developmental phase that should be safeguarded and even extended to protect children's natural ability to grow, develop, and flourish before they must join the potentially stressful adult world. At the same time, as a society, we invest considerable resources of time, energy, and funding to foster and accelerate children's development, and we are impressed by children who mature quickly and display a level of skill beyond what is typical for children of their age (e.g., prodigies). Most of us readily endorse a range of developmental interventions on a large societal scale – interventions such as public school, special education programs, Head Start, immunization and nutrition programs, music, arts, sports training, and the like. As parents, educators, and concerned citizens we are confronted with a myriad of choices concerning how best to foster children's development. We frequently encounter information concerning factors thought to promote children's development that can be challenging to evaluate; for example, you've probably encountered information about infant sleep training, prenatal vitamins, breast-feeding, omega-3 fatty acids, exposure to classical music in infancy, baby sign, benefits of growing up multilingual, early introduction to reading, and many other factors suggested to meaningfully affect children's developmental well-being. But how fully or effectively have you been able to assess the validity of the information you've encountered? In this seminar we will examine evidence regarding possible benefits – and of course consider possible costs – of a selected set of interventions that are thought to facilitate children's development, with an eye to charting a course toward the best empirically-based practice in fostering children's development. I hope you will find the course advances your knowledge and helps you acquire a new set of skills for evaluating the success of developmental interventions.

REQUIREMENTS:

- 1) **Readings and reaction posts (20%)**: A set of required readings for each class meeting will be posted on our course-related Canvas website. Prior to each class meeting you are required to make a post to Canvas in which you comment on, react to, or expand upon, the readings for that week. **Reaction posts are due (posted to Canvas) the evening before each class meeting by 8 p.m.** No posts are needed prior to the first day of class. As well, everyone gets "forgiveness" for four reaction posts over the course of the term, meaning that you can skip posting for four class meetings of the term without any cost to your grade. Thus, you will be required to provide 14 reaction posts in all. Collectively the 14 reaction posts will account for 20% of your grade.

- 2) **Supplementary readings and Mini-lectures (35%)**: Each of you will present a mini-lecture during one class-meeting, which will involve a) identifying and locating at least one supplementary reading (typically an interesting empirical paper) on the selected topic for the week, and b) providing a 15- to 20-minute slide presentation (e.g. powerpoint or Prezi) summarizing and debating the implications of the supplementary reading for the topic at hand. Please work together with me during office hours to identify your supplementary reading. **You will post the reading to Canvas (so it is accessible to the rest of the class to read) at least one week prior to the class meeting during which you present on the topic** The slides you generate for your mini-lecture will also be posted to our course-related Canvas site to serve as a resource to everyone. **Your slides should be posted to Canvas by 8 p.m. the day of your mini-lecture.** Your reading choice and mini-lecture/presentation slides will jointly account for 35% of your grade.
- 3) **Review paper/research proposal (35%)**: Your paper will focus on either a) reviewing the current state of the evidence regarding an intervention, or set of interventions, designed to promote children's development, or b) proposing research that would provide a valuable addition to current knowledge concerning an existing intervention, or c) proposing a new intervention and research to investigate its value in promoting human development. A target length to aim for is 8-10 double-spaced pages, with at least ten scholarly citations. Your review/research proposal will account for 35% of your grade. It is due **Friday, March 9 (Week 9) by 8 p.m. in the form of a digital file posted to Canvas.**
- 4) **Classroom participation (10%)**: A crucial part of participating in a seminar is simply being present and contributing generously to discussion. Please don't self-censor too much, and do ham it up! If you find that you will miss more than one class meeting during the term, you'll need to check with me directly to determine how to make up for the absence. If you know going in that you will be missing more than two class meetings during the term, you should drop this course. Classroom participation will account for 10% of your grade in the course.

Grades:

If your total percentage is:

- 90-100%, your grade will be an A
- 80-89.9%, your grade will be a B
- 70-79.9%, your grade will be a C
- 60-69.9%, your grade will be a D
- < 59.9%, your grade will be an F
- For those taking the class pass/fail your grade must be $\geq 69.9\%$ to receive a P

Within each letter grade, a plus will be assigned to scores within roughly the top third and a minus will be assigned to scores within roughly the bottom third. I may choose to curve grades upwards at the end of the quarter if necessary.

Classroom conduct: Please be respectful of me, and your fellow students, in the following ways.

Technology: Don't use technology (computers/tablets/cell phones/etc.) for non-lecture related purposes like social media or texting friends. Research shows that divided attention reduces learning. It is also really distracting to me and your classmates.

Time: This is a small seminar class and there is a lot of material to cover each time we meet, so please be on time. Critical announcements will be made at the beginning of each class meeting (and copied to Canvas); you are responsible for staying up to date via Canvas if you miss or are late to class.

Inclusivity: My goal is to create a learning environment that is accessible and welcoming to all kinds of diversity, including but not limited to race, ethnicity, gender identity, sexual orientation, ability, age, socioeconomic status, religion, language, and culture. Please be respectful of diverse experiences and perspectives in this course, especially

when we are discussing potentially sensitive topics – many of which arise in the study of development. My door (and email inbox) is always open to suggestions or concerns related to inclusivity.

Discussion guidelines: You are likely to have many relevant experiences, perhaps as a parent, childcare worker, or former child, and some of the topics we discuss may have special meaning for you. If you find yourself frequently sharing about your experiences, try to make sure your comments or questions enrich our class discussion. Also keep in mind that there is a wide range of normal development, and your experiences may vary from what is described in class. That is not necessarily cause for alarm (especially for parents), but neither does it mean that what you're learning in class is wrong. Be patient with your classmates, and be open to their helpful insights that can maximize your learning.

DATES OF SPECIAL SIGNIFICANCE:

- Reaction posts to Canvas by 8 p.m. the evening prior to each class meeting (14 reaction posts total)
- Supplementary readings posted to Canvas by 5 p.m. one week before your mini-lecture
- Mini-lecture slides posted to Canvas by 8 p.m. the day of before your mini-lecture
- Review paper/research proposal posted to Canvas by Friday, March 9, 8 p.m.

THREE IMPORTANT ADDITIONAL NOTES:

1. 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/conduct>.

2. Students with Accessibility Issues: If you have a documented disability or accessibility issue and anticipate needing accommodations in this course, please let me know if there is anything I can do to help. It would be a good idea to contact the Accessible Education Center (164 Oregon Hall, 541-346-1155, email uoaec@uoregon.edu, <http://aec.uoregon.edu/>). Support through the AEC is not special treatment, but is there to help you have the best possible educational experience. Also please request that the Accessible Education Center send a letter verifying that accommodations are needed.

If one of the following applies to you, please see me ASAP to make adjustments:

- Documented learning or medical disability
- Non-documented need for adjustments to help you learn
- Member of a sports team that travels this quarter
- Non-native speaker of English for whom language proficiency may create challenges

With advance planning, adjustments are relatively straightforward. Adjustments at the last minute can be problematic and sometimes are not possible.

SCHEDULE OF TOPICS FOR THE TERM:

<u>Week</u>	<u>Day</u>	<u>Topic</u>	<u>Presenter</u>
1	1 (1/09)	Intro and planning	Dare
	2 (1/11)	Breastfeeding	Dare
2	3 (1/16)	PUFA benefits? Bilingualism	Dare
	4 (1/18)	Bilingualism benefits/cognitive reserve	Dare
3	5 (1/23)	Exercise	Dare
	6 (1/25)	Musical training	Dare
4	7 (1/30)	Anti-bullying intervention	Dare
	8 (2/01)	Anti-bullying intervention	Maddy
5	9 (2/06)	Parenting style/attachment	Dare
	10(2/08)	Parenting style/attachment	Morgan
6	11(2/13)	Early intervention/Head Start	Emily
	12(2/15)	Early intervention/Foster Care	Lydia
7	13(2/20)	Mindfulness intervention	Aaron
	14(2/22)	Emotional intelligence training	Min
8	15(2/27)	Value of gesture	Dare
	16(3/01)	Benefits of “babysign”	Mikayla
9	17(3/06)	Attention/Executive function training	Matthew
	18(3/08)	Universal health care benefits	Hanna
10	19(3/13)	Wildcard Day	Julianna?
	20(3/15)	WRAP!	Dare