PSYC 854
Cognitive/Conceptual Development
Syllabus Fall 2025

Let us acknowledge that Queen's University occupies traditional Anishinaabe and Haudenosaunee territory. To acknowledge this traditional territory is to recognize its longer history, one predating the establishment of the earliest European colonies. It is also to acknowledge this territory's significance for the Indigenous Peoples who lived, and continue to live, upon it and whose practices and spiritualties are tied to the land and continue to develop in relationship to the territory and its other inhabitants today. Indigenous communities in Kingston/Katarokwi continue to reflect the area's Anishinaabe and Haudenosaunee roots. There is also a significant Métis community and First Peoples from other Nations across Turtle Island present here today.

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Quick questions? Come by my office
Bigger questions? Let's set up a meeting
Medium-sized questions? Just send me an email

Course Description

Current theoretical and methodological issues in cognitive development research, covering the development of perception, memory, thinking as well as social cognition.

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course, students will have demonstrated the ability to:

1. Analyze and critique historic and current scientific literature in the field of developmental psychology, with an emphasis on cognitive and conceptual development in early to mid-childhood;
2. Create a novel project, through iterative revisions, that synthesizes and extends knowledge and/or theories about key components of cognitive and conceptual development;
3. Practice skills relevant to academic and peer review, and demonstrate the ability to provide clear, constructive, and supported critique;
4. Develop academic skills relevant to crafting effective research proposals and/or preparing systematic research reviews, via both written and oral communication (i.e., public speaking)

Assessments

Participation		10%
Reviews of Course Readings		25%
Project (Total)		65%
Flash Talk	10%	
Annotated Bibliography	10%	
In-Class Presentation	15%	
Final Project	30%	

Assessment Details

Participation (10%). Final participation scores are determined after the course is completed and considers all class meetings. Particular emphasis is on attendance and thoughtful engagement in discussion, including indications that you have read/reviewed and reflected upon the assigned material.

Reviews of Course Readings (25%). For 5 of the course meetings, there is assigned set of readings. Prior to the meeting time, you will submit a review via OnQ. Details regarding review structure will be discussed in class. (5 points each)

Project (65%). You will be completing three assignments that build to a final project. The final project will be in the form of a Research Grant Proposal or a Review Paper, on a topic of your choice that fits the course content. Topics will be discussed among all students, but final approval of the topic will come from the course instructor.

Flash Talk (10%). During an in-class meeting, you will present a flash talk (~10 minutes) on a paper from your bibliography.

Annotated Bibliography (10%). You will create an annotated bibliography with 10 scientific papers relevant to your paper topic. For each paper, include the full reference (APA format) and 3-4 sentences about the paper. These sentences might include a brief summary, but more importantly, they should explain why the paper is relevant to the goals of your project.

In-Class Presentation (15%). During a class meeting, you will present a talk (~15 minutes) about your project.

Final Project. (30%). Your project can be a Research Grant Proposal or a Review Paper. Further details will be provided in class, but to summarize:

Research Grant Proposal. The proposal will be formatted in a manner similar to an NSERC Discovery Grant or SSHRC Insight Grant project description and knowledge mobilization plan. The project description is 5-6 pages (not counting references), and the knowledge mobilization plan is 1 page, single-spaced.

Review Paper. The paper will be in the style of a 'Mini Review' or 'Perspectives' paper at the journal Frontiers in Psychology. Details are available on the journal website.

	DATE	TOPIC	READING	ASSIGNMENT
1	Sept. 4	Introduction to the course		
2	Sept. 11	Lecture: Learning from Others P.D.: Academic Peer Reviews		
3	Sept. 18	Discussion: Norm Psychology P.D.: WEIRD Samples	Rakoczy & Schmidt (2013)* House et al. (2020)	Review 1 Due 5pm, Sept. 17
4	Sept. 25	Discussion: Norms & Imitation P.D.: Grant Proposal Writing	Kenward et al. (2011) Over & Carpenter (2012)*	Review 2 Due 5pm, Sept. 24
5	Oct. 2	Discussion: Imitation & Innovation P.D.: Review Paper Writing	Legare & Nielson (2015)	Review 3 Due 5pm, Oct. 1
6	Oct. 9	Discussion: Over-Imitation Workshop: Discussion of Project	Schleihauf & Hoehl (2020)	Review 4 Due 5pm, Oct. 8
	Fall Reading Week			
7	Oct. 23	Lecture: Imitation in Animals P.D.: Presenting your Project		
8	Oct. 30	Discussion: Affect & Emotions P.D.: Organizing your library	Gruber et al. (2022)	Review 5 Due 5pm, Oct. 29
9	Nov. 6	Workshop: Flash talk on a paper from your reference list		Annotated bibliography
10	Nov. 13	Workshop: Project presentations		
11	Nov. 20	Workshop: Project presentations		
12	Nov. 27	Workshop: Discussion & Writing Time		

There are no required textbooks for this course. Readings will be available on OnQ. For weeks with more than one reading, review assignments should focus primarily on the paper denoted with an *, But, as discussed in class, reviews should also incorporate any other readings from that week.

Grade Conversion

All components of this course will receive numerical percentage marks. The final grade you receive for the course will be derived by converting your numerical course average to a letter grade according to Queen's Faculty of Arts and Science Official Grade Conversion Scale:

Grade	Numerical Course Average Grade (Range)
A+	90-100
A	85-89
A-	80-84
B+	77-79
B	73-76
B-	70-72
C+	67-69
C	63-66
C-	60-62
D+	57-59
D	53-56
D-	50-52
F	49 & below

Copyright of Course Material

Course materials created by the course instructor, including all slides, presentations, handouts, tests, exams, and other similar course materials, are the intellectual property of the instructor. It is a departure from academic integrity to distribute, publicly post, sell or otherwise disseminate an instructor's course materials or to provide an instructor's course materials to anyone else for distribution, posting, sale or other means of dissemination, without the instructor's express consent. A student who engages in such conduct may be subject to penalty for a departure from academic integrity and may also face adverse legal consequences for infringement of intellectual property rights.

Turnitin Statement

This course makes use of Turnitin, a third-party application that helps maintain standards of excellence in academic integrity. Normally, students will be required to submit their course assignments through onQ to Turnitin. In doing so, students' work will be included as source documents in the Turnitin reference database, where they will be used solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarized text in this course. Data from submissions is also collected and analyzed by Turnitin for detecting Artificial Intelligence (AI)-generated text. These results are not reported to your instructor at this time but could be in the future.
Turnitin is a suite of tools that provide instructors with information about the authenticity of submitted work and facilitates the process of grading. The similarity report generated after an assignment file is submitted produces a similarity score for each assignment. A similarity score is the percentage of writing that is similar to content found on the internet or the Turnitin extensive database of content. Turnitin does not determine if an instance of plagiarism has occurred. Instead, it gives instructors the information they need to determine the authenticity of work as a part of a larger process.

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Queen's Policy Statement on Academic Integrity

Queen's University is dedicated to creating a scholarly community free to explore a range of ideas, to build and advance knowledge and to share the ideas and knowledge that emerge from a range of intellectual pursuits. Each core value of academic integrity, as defined in the Senate Academic Integrity Policy, gives rise to and supports the next.

Honesty appears in presenting one's own academic work, whether in the context of an examination, written assignment, laboratory or seminar presentation. It is in researching one's own work for course assignments, acknowledging dependence on the ideas or words of another and in distinguishing one's own ideas and thoughts from other sources. It is also present in faithfully reporting laboratory results even when they do not conform to an original hypothesis. Further, honesty is present in truthfully communicating in written and/or oral exchanges with instructors, peers and other individuals (e.g. teaching assistants, proctors, university staff and/or university administrators).

Trust exists in an environment in which one's own ideas can be expressed without fear of ridicule or fear that someone else will take credit for them.

Fairness appears in the proper and full acknowledgement of the contributions of collaborators in group projects and in the full participation of partners in collaborative projects.
Respect, in a general sense, is part of an intellectual community that recognizes the participatory nature of the learning process and honours and respects a wide range of opinions and ideas. However, "respect" appears in a very particular sense when students attend class, pay attention, contribute to discussion and submit papers on time; instructors "show respect by taking students' ideas seriously, by recognizing them as individuals, helping them develop their ideas, providing full and honest feedback on their work, and valuing their perspectives and their goals" ("The Fundamental Values of Academic Integrity", 3rd Edition, p. 8).

Ultimately, responsibility is both personal and collective and engages students, administrators, faculty and staff in creating and maintaining a learning environment supported by and supporting academic integrity.

Courage differs from the preceding values by being more a quality or capacity of character – "the capacity to act in accordance with one's values despite fear" ("The Fundamental Values of Academic Integrity", 3rd edition, p. 10). Courage is displayed by students who make choices and integrous decisions that are followed by action, even in the face of peer pressure to cheat, copy another's material, provide their own work to others to facilitate cheating, or otherwise represent themselves dishonestly. Students also display courage by acknowledging prior wrongdoing and taking proactive measures to rectify any associated negative impact.
All of these values are not merely abstract but are expressed in and reinforced by the University's policies and practices.

Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) Tools

Students must submit their own work and cite the work that is not theirs. Generative AI writing tools such as ChatGPT are welcome in this class, provided you cite the material that they generate. Any other use constitutes a departure from academic integrity.