

PSY 843
Theories of Social and Emotional Development
Mondays 9:30 - 11:30am
Winter 2014
Biosci 2109
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Overview of course

This course is designed to help you answer the question, “*what is development?*” The study of development is not simply the observation of things that children do or think or feel, which may or may not be different from what adults do. Development is a process not a state, a verb not a noun, a movie not a picture. The goal of developmental science is to explain how this works.

In this course, we will tackle these big ideas by reading classic and challenging models of development. We will begin by considering the fundamental duality of development: stability and change. Next, we will critically evaluate two classic theoretical models: Bronfenbrenner’s ecological model and Lerner’s developmental contextualism. Going deeper, we will next consider dynamic systems approaches. In the fourth section, we consider two attempts to bring all of this together into a grand unified theory. Finally, we will consider how development may go awry with a more applied developmental psychopathology perspective.

Course Requirements

Readings. All material for the course can be found on the Moodle site for PSYC843. Everyone is expected to read all of the assigned readings before class and be prepared to discuss each in detail. A lack of preparation will be duly noted and factor into the participation portion of your grade.

Participation. All students are expected to attend every class and contribute to the discussion. If for any reason you are unable to attend class you must notify me via email before class. In general, you will not be graded on the content of your questions/comments during discussion but on your effort. That is to say, there are no dumb questions. However, as much as you should focus on contributing to the discussions, please be wary of dominating the discussions. No one cares about how your dog Skippy looks like Rob Ford (unless of course you are using the brief anecdote to illustrate how disgust might be socialized).

If you have any issues or concerns about your participation (or anything else for that matter), please do not hesitate to meet with me.

Paper 1. All students will hand in a paper at the beginning of class on January 13. The paper will have the title “What is Development?” and each student is expected to answer this question by making an argument justifying his or her current conceptual understanding of development. Maximum 5 pages, double-spaced, 1-inch margins, but references, figures, and tables do not have to count for the 5 pages.

Paper 2. All students will hand in a paper at the beginning of class on March 31. The paper will have the title “What is Development?” and each student is expected to answer this question by making an argument justifying his or her current conceptual understanding of development. In this paper, you may refer to similarities to or differences from your first paper. Maximum 5 pages, double-spaced, 1-inch margins, but references, figures, and tables do not have to count for the 5 pages.

Final Paper. The final paper must apply the theoretical ideas discussed in class to your own area of research or interest. This could be the articulation of a specific set of relationships (i.e., a model), a critique of theory and research in a given area in the literature, or a review of ways that broad developmental theory has been tested in your domain of interest.

Format: You must choose a journal that would be appropriate for your manuscript and include the guidelines for that journal as an appendix to your final paper. The guidelines will dictate length and other formatting issues. You must adhere to these as if you were submitting your paper to that journal.

Note: You do not have to submit your final paper to the journal you chose, but I encourage you to work toward that end. Your efforts as a graduate student should advance your career.

Grading

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| Participation | 30% |
| Paper 1 | 10% |
| Paper 2 | 20% |
| Final Paper | 40% |

COURSE SCHEDULE

Class 1 – January 6

Introduction: What is theory? What is development?

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Scientific_theory

Section I: Change and Stability, the Fundamental Duality of Development

Class 2 – January 13

Paper 1 Due

Adolph, K. E., Robinson, S. R., Young, J. W., & Gill-Alvarez, F. (2008). What is the shape of developmental change?. *Psychological Review*, 115, 527 - 543.

Section II: Ecological and Contextual Models

Class 3 – January 20

Bronfenbrenner, U. (1977). Toward an experimental ecology of human development. *American Psychologist*, 32, 513 – 531.

Lerner, R. M. (1991). Changing organism-context relations as the basic process of development: A developmental contextual perspective. *Developmental Psychology*, 27, 27 – 32.

Class 4 – January 27

Bronfenbrenner, U., & Morris, P. A. (2006). The bioecological model of human development. In N. Eisenberg, R.M. Lerner & W. Damon (Eds.) *Handbook of Child Psychology Vol. 3* (pp. 793 – 828). John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

Section III: Dynamic Systems Models

Class 5 – February 3

Thelen, E., & Smith, L. B. (1998). Dynamic systems theories. *Handbook of child psychology*.

Class 6 – February 10

Lewis, M. D. (2000). Emotional self-organization at three time scales. In M. D. Lewis & I. Granic (Eds.), *Emotion, development, and self-organization: Dynamic systems approaches to emotional development* (pp. 37-69). New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.

*****READING WEEK FEBRUARY 17-21: NO CLASS*****

Class 7 – February 24

Witherington, D. C. (2007). The dynamic systems approach as metatheory for developmental

psychology. *Human Development*, 50(2-3), 127-153.

Section IV: Bringing it all together with Unified and Metatheoretical Models

Class 8 – March 3

Sameroff, A. (2010). A unified theory of development: a dialectic integration of nature and nurture. *Child Development*, 81, 6-22.

Class 9 – March 10

Overton, W. F. (2003). Development across the lifespan. In R.M. Lerner, M. A. Easterbrooks, & J. Mistry (eds.) *Handbook of Psychology Volume 6: Developmental Psychology*. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley and Sons.

Section V: Developmental Psychopathology

Class 10 – March 17

Granic, I. (2005). Timing is everything: Developmental psychopathology from a dynamic systems perspective. *Developmental Review*, 25, 386 – 407.

Class 11 – March 24

Ellis, B. J., Boyce, W. T., Belsky, J., Bakermans-Kranenburg, M. J., & Van IJzendoorn, M. H. (2011). Differential susceptibility to the environment: An evolutionary-neurodevelopmental theory. *Development and psychopathology*, 23(1), 7 – 28.

Class 12 – March 31

Paper 2 Due

Brief presentation of final paper thesis.

Final papers due April 25