Psychology 131  
Research in Developmental Psychology

Mondays & Wednesdays 3:00 – 4:50 PM FH A279

Syllabus – Spring 2012

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Course Description: Requisites: courses 10, 100A, 100B, and 130 or one course from 133A through 133I. Designed for Psychology and Cognitive Science majors. The goal of this lab course is to acquaint you with methods used to study developmental change and the socializing environment. Another theme will be that developmentally appropriate methods are used for different ages.

Readings: Links or pdfs will be found on the Psych 131 website, ccle.ucla.edu/course/view/12S-PSYCH131-1?topic=0

Grades: Grades will be assigned on a straight scale:
A+ 97-100%  C+ 77-79%  D- 60-62%
A 93-96%  C 73-76%  F below 60%
A- 90-92%  C- 70-72%
B+ 87-89%  D+ 67-69%
B 83-86%  D 63-66%

Possible points for the various assignments are attached to each item below. They total to 100.

Attendance: Because it is only fair that all members of a group work on the projects equally, we will take attendance on certain days (.5 point/per class). Latecomers will not get any attendance points. We will also take attendance when the projects are presented and the object permanence demonstrations are done. If you miss those, you will have missing data in your report and will only get partial credit. You may not use someone else’s data in your report. The maximum number of attendance points is seven. That means you can be late or miss class three times on the attendance-taking days without losing points. However, if you are late or absent while working in a group, your group may feel you are shirking responsibility and resent that you are giving them more of the work!
Classes:

Week 1  
Monday, April 2  
  a. Introduction to the course. Developmental research designs and procedures (information-gathering methods).

Reading on developmental methods and research ethics with children:  

In preparation for Wednesday’s tour of the Megan Daley Infant Development Program (IDP), read the material on the IDP web pages; enter at https://www.psych.ucla.edu/center-and-programs/idp. Also read the guidelines for the use of the observation room at the Megan E. Daly IDP and A Day at IDP (on class website).

Wednesday, April 4  
Attendance taken: .5 point  
  a. Observational methods: Group projects on the role of socialization and development in early gender-based play preferences. Instructors will form four groups of six each. Plan observations to be completed in the next week. (There will be a handout posted on the class website with instructions for this project; we will go over it in class.)

  b. Introduction to the Megan Daley Infant Development Program (IDP) as research sites (Franz and Fernald). Whole class will go to both sites. At 3:50, the Director, Alma Cortes, will give us a tour and explain procedures for doing observations at the two sites.

  c. .

Readings for project on gender-based play preferences:  

Subrahmanyam, K. & Greenfield, P. M. (1999). Computer games for girls: What makes them play? In J. Cassell & H. Jenkins (Eds.), *Barbie to Mortal Kombat: Gender and computer games* (pp. 46-71). Cambridge, MA: MIT Press. (This chapter will allow you to relate your findings to a broader developmental context.)

Week 2  
Monday, April 9  
Attendance taken: .5 point  
  a. Introduction to infant and child experimental cognitive research, including object permanence: Film – Cognitive Development

  b. Object permanence: Demonstration with younger of two babies. Demonstration with older baby will take place during the next class

*First part of object permanence assignment: Observe and describe the baby’s behavior for each task. What stage was the baby at? (To enable you to do this, there is a handout on the class*
website with information for observing and identifying Piaget’s substages of object permanence.

Wednesday, April 11 Attendance taken: **5 point**
   a. Groups work on pooling data for project on gender-based preferences in IDP children.
   b. Class visit to the Scott Johnson lab. Start to sign up to observe one baby going through an experimental procedure (starting at 3:40, groups of 6)
   c. Object permanence: Demonstration with older baby (4:30)

*Second part of object permanence assignment:* Observe and describe the baby’s behavior for each task. What stage was the baby at? (To enable you to do this, there is a handout on the class website with information for observing and identifying Piaget’s substages of object permanence.) Was there a developmental difference between the two babies? If so, what was it? (Complete this assignment in class; keep to hand in as Part 1 of the longitudinal study; one or both babies will be re tested on the last day of class. **Write-up is due on June 15**

**Readings** on different methods for studying object permanence:
Piaget’s original view: Berk, L. E. (2009), The sensorimotor stage: Birth to 2 years, in *Child Development* (pp. 226-228). Boston: Pearson. (This provides a general context for the specific substages of object permanence described in the handout.)
Two other methodologies for studying object permanence:

*Scott Johnson Lab Assignment:* Write-up your observation: What procedure did you observe? How old and what gender was the participant. Describe the baby’s reaction to the procedure. What did you learn about infant perception/cognition from the technique? What are its strengths and weaknesses? **This assignment should be turned in no later than Monday June 11.** Answer all questions very briefly. Keep the questions separate. Do not write an essay. (5 points).

**Reading:** [http://www.babylab.ucla.edu/index.php?page=research#TOP](http://www.babylab.ucla.edu/index.php?page=research#TOP) (Read the entire page to get an overview of what you might see in the Johnson lab.)

**Week 3**
Monday, April 16 Attendance taken: **5 point**
   Work on group projects on gender-based play preferences.

Wednesday, April 18 Attendance taken: **5 point**
   Work on group projects on gender-based play preferences.

**Week 4**
Monday, April 23
   Lecture on ethical issues in developmental research
*Assignment: Human subjects training. Go to https://www.citiprogram.org/default.asp. **Bring a copy of your completion report to class on Monday, April 30** (the day of the midterm). (5 points)

*Assignment: Turn in group projects on early gender-based preferences (15 points).

Introduction to class project on “Developmental Change in the Meaning of Young Adulthood across Different Ethnic Groups”

Young adulthood: background reading for your project

Wednesday, April 25 Attendance taken: .5 point

a. Plan “meaning of early adulthood” project. Instructors will assign groups. Groups can discuss their preference for component subtopics.
b. Review for midterm

**Week 5**
Monday, April 30 Attendance taken: .5 point

**Midterm exam (32 points).** It will cover material through Week 4, including lecture, film, human subjects training, and information on assigned website readings.

Plan sample for early adulthood project: Ethnic breakdown and number of freshmen and seniors.

Wednesday, May 2 Attendance taken: .5 point

a. Break into groups for this project. Instructors will assign groups.
b. Begin designing components of the survey instrument.

The following articles relate to different aspects of the project; different groups will read the article or articles relevant to their topic. Each group will use a relevant article or articles in their Powerpoint presentation the last week of class. An information sheet about the project will assign different articles to different groups.

**Week 6**
Monday, May 7 Attendance taken: *5 point*
Continue designing survey instrument in groups.
Share the component scales with class and get feedback

Wednesday, May 9 Attendance taken: *5 point*
Finalize the survey instrument.

*Assignment: Collect data from freshmen and seniors from the agreed upon ethnic groups in the agreed upon numbers. Every student will bring in 6 surveys to class on Monday. One point per survey up to 6.*

**Week 7**
Monday, May 14 Attendance taken: *5 point*
Work on surveys and begin database. 1. Number every survey with a unique number for that participant. 2. Number every page of every survey. 3. Separate into 6 component instruments, distributing one instrument to each group. 4. Create a numbered line for every participant, in numerical order in an Excel spreadsheet.

Wednesday, May 16 Attendance taken: *5 point*
Work on “Meaning of Adulthood” project: data analysis

**Week 8**
Monday, May 21 Attendance taken: *5 point*
Work on “Meaning of Adulthood” project: data analysis

Wednesday, May 23 Attendance taken: *5 point*
Work on “Meaning of Adulthood” project: begin to plan Powerpoint report. Since there is no class on Monday, you will have to work on the report out of class during this week.

**Week 9**
Monday, May 28 Memorial day: No class

Wednesday, May 30 Attendance taken: *5 point*
Finish Powerpoint presentations. You will need to practice the presentations outside of class. Everyone in the group should present part of the Powerpoint. However, it is essential that you practice together several times, editing to make the pieces work well together. One grading criteria will be integration of the parts.
**Week 10**

**Monday, June 4**

Attendance taken: **.5 point**

Group Powerpoint presentations on “Meaning of Adulthood” project: **20 points**. Each group will present their instrument in relation to other variables (e.g., ethnicity and age of immigration [with born in U.S. at one end of this scale]). The demographic group can go first and describe the sample.

**Wednesday, June 6**

Attendance taken: **.5 point**

a. Bring one or both babies back. Repeat object permanence experiment.

*Third part of object permanence assignment*: Compare the first and the second testing of the same baby or babies. Compare each child over time: Has there been any longitudinal change in either child’s behavior? From what you have observed in this project, what are the pluses and minuses of longitudinal vs. cross-sectional research for answering developmental questions concerning the nature and causes of change? (Answer each question briefly; do not write an essay.

b. The last one or two Powerpoint presentations

**Exam week**

**Monday, June 11**

*Assignment*: Email to instructor and TA Scott Johnson lab write-up (this is to give more time to do the observation, but it is recommended that you do this earlier, right after you do your observation.)

**Friday, June 15**

*Assignment*: Email to instructor and TA Part 1 (cross-sectional) and Part 2 (longitudinal) analysis of object permanence assignment (**10 points**)

**There is no final exam in this course.**