

PSYCHOLOGY 530: LIFESPAN DEVELOPMENTAL PSYCHOLOGY

Dr. Marilyn Welsh, Fall 2009 (Oct 16 – 18; Oct 30 – Nov 1)

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Objectives: This will be an advanced course in lifespan development designed for students who have already had an undergraduate course in the topic. We will be focusing on the **WHO, HOW, AND WHY** of human development, rather than on the **WHAT AND WHEN**. What do I mean by this? Most undergraduate courses go through the details of developmental milestones and developmental issues/tasks (the **WHAT**) and the chronological ages at which these phenomena typically emerge (the **WHEN**). While this information is important and potentially useful for parents, teachers, and professionals in educational and counseling psychology, I feel it's important to move the advanced course to more theoretical, empirical, and applied issues appropriate for this course level. Here are the three areas of focus:

***The WHO.....**the major theorists both ancient, old, and contemporary that have shaped and continue to shape the field of lifespan development.*

***The HOW....**the mechanisms that underlie development, which involve biological, socio-cultural, and dynamic factors.*

***The WHY....**the ways in which our knowledge of human development and underlying factors can be applied to promote positive human growth and adaptation.*

Text: Bergen, D. (2008). Human Development: Traditional and Contemporary Theories. Pearson/Prentice-Hall.

Selected research articles that will be posted on BlackBoard.

Structure of weekend classes: We will be covering all of the chapters (not all the readings) in the Bergen book, with about **2 – 3 chapters per day**. I will present a short lecture on the chapter, which we will discuss. Following this, students will get into small groups and each group will work on the **Case Study** that follows the chapter. These are applied exercises that will help the material “come alive” and make the class a more active learning experience. Each class session, we will discuss **1 – 3 classic readings** that are found in the second half of the Bergen text. We will also discuss **1 or 2 research articles** that will be assigned for each class session (except the first Friday)----students will select an article for which they will be the “expert” and this group of students will describe the article and answer questions from the class. **There will be substantial writing for this class, but NO EXAMS. The structure of the weekend class doesn't lend itself to meaningful (i.e., something other than multiple-choice) exams.**

Group Projects: Small groups will work on the **Case Study at the end of a selected set of chapters and write up the responses** to the questions. Each group will contribute their answers and reactions to the project to the full class discussion. These projects will be graded on **completeness, effort, and insight** (e.g., connections to the material in the chapter).

About 6 projects @ 25 pts each = about 150 pts

Reaction Papers on the Readings: Students are responsible for writing a **one-two page (double-spaced typed) reaction paper for each of the classic readings** assigned in the course. **These papers should be emailed to me at least one day prior to the beginning of each weekend session and your own hard copy should be brought to class to facilitate discussion.** The paper should address **at least two of the following issues:** (1) did you agree with the points made by the author or not, and why? (2) how does this reading compare and/or contrast with the material in the Bergen chapter (e.g., other theorists)? (3) what do you see as the practical applications or implications of the information in this reading? (4) does the reading seem “dated” to you in any way or do the points made by the author stand the test of time? **The grading will also be based on completeness, effort, and insight. You should clearly demonstrate that you read the paper, thought about how it connected to the text reading, your own experiences, other information from other courses, etc.**

12 papers @ 20 pts each = 240 pts

Research Article Review: Selected research articles will be posted on BlackBoard and will be discussed in every class session, except for the first Friday class. ***Before the first class session, students will be assigned to ONE research article (based on their preferences) and a 3-page summary will be written on the article.*** Those students who are assigned to the same article, will **serve on a “panel” to discuss the article** with the rest of the class (e.g., rationale, method, findings) and answer questions from the rest of the class. This is **NOT a group project**; everyone should be able to serve on this panel by being prepared (i.e., read the article and write the summary). The 3-page summary should include: (1) rationale for study, (2) research questions, hypotheses/predictions, (3) brief method, (4) findings and interpretation, (5) connection to material in class (e.g., theories, applications, etc).

1 article review and panel participation = 50 pts

Final Project and Presentation: Students will select **ONE of the observational projects described on pp. 30 – 32.** Although these are described as group projects, they should be done (with little or no modification) by individual students (if you would like to do it as a pair or small group, let me

know). During the hiatus week, you will **execute the project** as described and answer the questions provided. Your **written paper** will include a description of how the project was conducted and your discussion of the issues. In addition, you will include **one research article** that relates to your project, summarizing it and connecting it to your observations (e.g., were they consistent or inconsistent with the findings in the article?). Each student will **prepare a short (15-minute) powerpoint presentation** on his or her project to present during the final day of class.

Project and Paper = 100 pts
Presentation = 25 pts

Grading: There are **about 565 total points** and the grades will be assigned according to a +/- grading system: 93%+ = A; 90 – 92% = A-; 87 – 89% = B+ 93%+ = A, 90 – 92% = A-, 87 – 89% = B+, 83 – 86% = B, 80 - 82% = B-, 77 – 79% = C+, 73 – 76% = C, 70 – 72% = C-.....we're not going to go there....! It's imperative that you attend every class for the entire session, as a large proportion of your points will come from the in-class group projects and discussions.

Schedule:

Weekend One

*****Email your Reaction Papers to me by 10/15 4 pm**

Friday, 10/16

Theories, Historical Roots, Applications

Bergen Chapters 1 & 2 (followed by group project)

Reading: Skinner

Saturday, 10/17

Personality and Social-Emotional Development

Bergen Chapters 3, 4 & 5 (followed by group project)

Readings: Freud; Greenspan; Erikson (**p. 320**)

Research article:

Lefkowitz & Fingerman (2003), Positive and Negative Emotional Feelings and Behaviors in Mother-Daughter Ties in Late Life.

Sunday, 10/18

Cognitive and Language Development

Bergen Chapters 6 & 7 (followed by group project)

Readings: Piaget; Vygotsky; Fischer & Rose

Research articles:

Talwar, Gordon, & Lee (2007). Lying in the Elementary School Years: Verbal Deception and its Relation to Second-Order Belief Understanding

Discussion of observational projects, papers, presentations

Weekend Two

*****Email your Reaction Papers to me by 10/29 4 pm**

Friday, 10/30

Sociomoral and Gender Role Development

Bergen Chapters 8 & 9 (followed by group project)

Readings: Kohlberg (p. 361); Bem

Research article:

Jackson, Zhao, Witt, Fitzgerald, & von Eye (2009).

Gender, Race, and Morality in the Virtual World and its

Relationship to Morality in the Real World.

Saturday, 10/31

Life Span Theories; Physical, Motor, & Perceptual Dev.

Bergen Chapters 10,11,12 (followed by group project)

Readings: Baltes; Gibson; Thelan

Research article:

Henry et al. (2009). Social Inappropriateness,

Executive Function, and Aging.

Sunday, 11/1

Student Presentations