

Phil 149: Philosophy of (Developmental) Psychology

Instructor: Matthew Fulkerson

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Tu/Th: 2-3:20 RWAC 0426

Office Hours: Tues 1-2 and by appt, RWAC 0495

Course Description:

This course is going to be an in-depth examination of the philosophical issues that arise for and from Developmental Psychology. This is the subfield of Psychology that deals with the processes of psychological development through time, from infancy through adolescence into early adulthood.

These issues include concerns about **methodology** (how do we study the minds of young children, who cannot speak or explain what they are thinking?). They also include several important philosophical topics such as the development of moral reasoning, development of awareness and understanding of other minds, emotional development, and the acquisition of expert-level skill.

Course Mechanics:

The course will involve several elements. **First**, you will get credit just for showing up. If you attend at least 80% of the scheduled course meetings, you will receive full credit for 15% of your final grade. Excused absences will not negatively impact your grade. **Second**, there will be 4 in-class quizzes, each worth 10% of your grade. These will vary in format and length. They will focus on your understanding of the readings and on specific critical thinking skills. Third, there is a **final research paper**. This final assignment is divided into two parts. First, you must submit a detailed proposal for your research paper. This will have a specific structure with a clear thesis statement, reading list, and outline of your paper. The final version of this paper will be submitted as your final for this class.

Materials: Everything is on Canvas. All handouts, slides, homework assignments, and supplementary readings (if any) will be made available through this site. It is your responsibility to check this site regularly.

Grading:

Assignments	Value	Date Due
Attendance and Participation	15%	NA
4 in-class quizzes	40%	See Below
Paper Proposal	20%	Feb 29 th
Final Paper Submission	25%	March 21 st by 6pm

Course Policies:

To avoid penalties for late assignments, students must provide official documentation explaining why the assignment could not be handed in on time. Late homework without documentation will not be accepted. Late papers without documentation will receive a late penalty of 1/3 letter grade for each day a paper is late, including weekend days (no exceptions). This course adheres to all UCSD standards for academic integrity (<https://academicintegrity.ucsd.edu>).

Canvas boilerplate: Students agree that by taking this course all required papers will be subject to submission for textual similarity review to Turnitin or similar service for the detection of plagiarism. All submitted papers will be included as source documents in the Turnitin.com reference database solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of such papers. Use of the Turnitin.com service is subject to the terms of use agreement posted on the Turnitin.com site.

Reading Schedule (subject to small changes):**Week 1: Introduction and Methodological Worries**

Tue 9th: Introduction to course and course mechanics

Thur 11th: Issues with Looking Times

“In Defense of Qualitative Changes in Development” Jerome Kagan

Week 2: More Methodological Worries

Tue 16th: Kagan Continued and Response

“Methodological and Epistemological Issues in the Interpretation of Infant Cognitive Development” Müller and Giesbrecht

Thur 18th: Reliance on Simplified Tasks

“Simplicity and Validity in Infant Research” Kominsky et al.

Week 3: Nativism

Tue 23rd: “Nativism, Empiricism, and the Origins of Knowledge” Elizabeth Spelke

Thur 25th: “Nativism in Cognitive Science” Richard Samuels

In-class quiz #1**Week 4: Conceptual Development**

Tue 30th: “Precis of *The Origin of Concepts*” Sue Carey

Thur 1st: Read BBS Open Peer Commentary

Week 5: Moral Development

Tue 6th: “Moral Nativism: A Skeptical Response” Kim Sterelny

In-class quiz #2

Thur 8th: "Virtue Epistemology and Developing Intellectual Virtue" Wilson and Miller

Week 6: Tomasello's Account

Tue 13th: "The adaptive origins of uniquely human sociality" Michael Tomasello

Thur 15th: "Rethinking Human Development and the Shared Intentionality Hypothesis" Moll et al.

In-class quiz #3

Week 7: Theory of Mind: Burge vs Carruthers

Tue 20th: "Do infants and nonhuman animals attribute mental states?" Burge

Thur 22nd: "Representing the Mind as Such in Infancy" Carruthers

Week 8: Emotional Learning

Tue 27th: "Current Emotion Research in Developmental Psychology" Camras and Shuster

Thur 29th: "Growing pains and pleasures: how emotional learning guides development" Nelson et al

Research Paper Proposal Due

Week 9: Theories of Learning and Skill

Tues 5th: "Childhood cognitive development as a skill"

Thur 7th: "Putting practice into perspective: Child prodigies as evidence of innate talent" Ruthsatz et al

Week 10: Development of Expertise

Tue 12th: "Why expert performance is special and cannot be extrapolated from studies of performance in the general population: A response to criticisms" Ericsson

Thur 14th: Summary and

In-class quiz #4

Final Paper Due by 3/21 at 6pm.