

PSYC 203

Lifespan Developmental Psychology

Spring 2016

Online

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***This syllabus is subject to changes announced in class or on Canvas**

Course Description

Welcome to Lifespan Developmental Psychology! This course is the psychological study of human development from conception to death. Various topics include: biological, cognitive, and emotional processes of development; theories and empirical studies of social/emotional and personality development; important risk factors or assets related to development; prevention and intervention for optimal development; familial and extra-familial influences on development; and cultural and gender-based variation in development. As this is an online psychology course, you should be prepared for a fairly rigorous experience with a lot of reading and writing. What you learn is worth this investment, as knowledge of human development is among the most valuable and applicable to our lives.

Required Texts and Resources

Berk, L. (2013). *Exploring Lifespan Development (3rd Edition)*. New York, NY: Pearson Publishing.
Additional readings provided on Canvas.

Course Learning Goals

At the completion of this course, you will be able to:

1. Develop an understanding of “normal” and abnormal development through the lifespan.
2. Understand biopsychosocial influences on human growth and development.
3. Apply information from course text and activities to explain real-life phenomena.
4. Identify resources of a scholarly nature to further understand topics pertaining to human development.

Departmental APA Goals

- a. Describe applications of psychology.
 - a. Articulate how psychological principles can be used to explain social issues, address pressing societal needs and inform public policy.
 - b. Predict how individual differences influence beliefs, values and interactions with others, including the potential for prejudicial and discriminatory behavior in oneself and others
 - c. Explain how psychological constructs can be used to understand and resolve interpersonal and intercultural issues.
- b. Use scientific reasoning to interpret psychological phenomena.
 - a. Develop plausible behavioral explanations that rely on scientific reasoning and evidence rather than anecdotes or pseudoscience.
 - b. Incorporate several appropriate levels of complexity (e.g. cellular, individual, group/system, societal/cultural) analysis of situations.
- c. Demonstrate psychology information literacy.
 - a. Read and summarize complex ideas accurately, including future directions, from psychological sources and research.
 - b. Evaluate psychology information based on reliability, validity, and generalizability.
- d. Build and enhance interpersonal relationships.
 - a. Exhibit high standards of positive personal values in interpersonal and work-related relationships.

- b. Promote civility in self and others.
- c. Predict and explore how interaction across racial, ethnic, gender and class divides can challenge conventional understanding of psychological processes and behavior.
- d. Accept opportunity to serve others through civic engagement, including volunteer service.
- e. Demonstrate effective writing for different purposes.
 - a. Construct arguments clearly and concisely based on evidence-based psychological concepts and theories.
 - b. Use grammar appropriate to professional standards and conventions (e.g., APA writing style).
 - c. Employ APA writing style to make precise and persuasive arguments.

College-wide Learning Goals

This course addresses the college-wide learning goals of Critical and Analytical Thinking (all assignments and class activities), Global Consciousness, Social Responsibility, and Ethical Awareness (through reading, class discussion, field experience, and associated assignments) and Writing and Other Communication Skills (all assignments).

A Note About the Function of Writing in the Behavioral Sciences:

Similar to other fields of empirical inquiry, developmentalists depend on writing skills to (a) meaningfully summarize and evaluate current research and theory, (b) offer new insights or theories, and (c) inform public policy and cultural practices (by promoting standards underlying optimal child development). In short, effective writing is central to the ongoing progress of developmental psychology research and theory. Accordingly, this course is in part designed to help you learn to write better and consequently think better about the important issues of human development.

Learning to read and write in this field is crucial not only to your current academic success but also to how you will benefit others in the future. You must be an informed consumer of behavioral science research, able to sort through a competitive marketplace of ideas. Conflicting and contradictory assertions of adolescent development abound. You must be “fluent” in the language of the field to critically evaluate the arguments presented. Effective writing—summarizing and critically evaluating research and your own perspectives—is directly tied to your ability to understand the research you encounter. Furthermore, the effectiveness of your response to controversial theories and interpretations of research is largely dependent on your manner of expression. Writing is an exercise in that expression and evaluation process, an invaluable contributor to your efforts as a professional, community member, and a future parent, to meaningfully help others to deal with the complexities of human development.

Whether or not your major is specifically dedicated to human development, I would hope that you will emerge from this course thinking of yourself as a budding developmentalist, interested in the continued pursuit as well as application of knowledge which promises to improve the lives of those around you. Developing your writing skills is an essential part of this ongoing effort, especially for those of you who will go on to earn advanced degrees (e.g., MS, MSW, PhD) in developmental psychology. The most influential researchers and theorists not only pursue provocative ideas but know *how* to express them effectively. You must learn to do the same if you intend to impact your family, others, or the field at large. Accordingly, this course will give you ample opportunity not only to read about the important issues in lifespan development but also to write about them in a couple of formats. You will also note that a considerable amount of the class points are assigned to the various written assignments.

Course Requirements

WRITING ASSIGNMENTS

All writing assignments must be submitted via the course website. No paper copies will be accepted.

Discussion Boards: Each week, the class will focus on a new theme discussed in the textbook. A discussion board in the course website will correspond with this theme, asking you to reflect on and apply what you have

learned from the textbook and additional readings. For each discussion board, answer the question(s) posted, using your own life experiences as well as scholarly sources to support your answers. Initial postings must have a minimum of 400 words and cite at least three scholarly sources, including your textbook, in APA format.

Additionally, you will read and reply to the postings of your peers and instructor each week. Read the posts made in the discussion board each week (the course website is equipped with tracking data that allows the instructor to see if you've accomplished this), then provide a minimum 4-5 sentences in response to at least three postings in the discussion board. These can be reactions to a post, an anecdote of a shared personal or professional experience, suggestion for further research, constructive criticism of a resource, or query for further information about what that person said in their initial post.

You will be graded on your ability to connect theory and application (use proper textbook terminology to describe real-life events); consideration of multiple influences (biological, psychological, social, cultural) on the topic; correct use of spelling, grammar, punctuation; and correct use of APA format to cite sources.

Due Dates: Initial discussion board posts should be completed no later than 11:59 PM Wednesday each week; Responses are due no later than 11:59 the following Sunday.

Research Paper: Select any specific topic within the scope of Lifespan Development for your research paper. Consider your personal and professional goals as you select a topic. Once you've selected your topic, narrow it down further before beginning your research. Ideas of specific topics include, but are not limited to:

- Analysis of biopsychosocial influences on the decision to breastfeed or bottle feed.
- Changes in moral development with age.
- The impact of school food programs on cognition, mood, and social development in middle childhood
- Behavioral and cognitive predictors of early school success
- Marital quality of new parents
- Challenges of "The Sandwich Generation"
- Health disparities between Caucasian vs. minorities in the elderly population
- Topic of your choosing

Using a minimum of 5 scholarly resources, write a 3-5 page research paper (not including cover page and references) giving the reader insight into your topic. Upload this paper into the space provided on the course website.

Due Date: Your research paper should be completed no later than 11:59 PM Monday, April 25.

Book Review: Find a book within the popular media that addresses the topic of research you selected for your research paper. "Popular media" refers to that which is written for a general audience – in other words, not for academic consumption. Examples of popular media include self-help books, memoirs, novels, cookbooks, and advice books. The Westminster library has an excellent selection of topics related to this course.

Read the book, then summarize it and evaluate its usefulness. Put the greatest focus on the accuracy of the information in the book, what you have learned, and how you (or others) could benefit from it.

Due Date: Your book review should be completed no later than 11:59 PM Monday, April 25.

Evaluation

2. Writing Assignments

- a. Discussion Boards (20 points each x 15 boards: 300 points possible)
- b. Research Paper (100 points possible)
- c. Book Review (50 points possible)

Total points possible: 450

Grading

Letter grades will be assigned as follows, based on the percentage of total points possible you have earned:

A 94-100%	B 84-86%	C 74-76%	D 64-66%
A- 90-93%	B- 80-83%	C- 70-73%	D- 60-63%
B+ 87-89%	C+ 77-79%	D+ 67-69%	F Below 60%

Course Policies

Communication and Updates

All outside contact for this class, whether to the class as a whole or to select individuals, will be sent via the course website. Accordingly, please check your Westminster information and make changes there to be sure that notifications for the class are forwarded to your e-mail, and please check your e-mail DAILY. **This is your responsibility!** If you have ongoing problems accessing the class website or setting up mail forwarding from the course website, contact campus Information Systems for help. In addition, the online course website allows you access to your grades—please check them frequently as well.

Attendance/ Participation

Because this class takes place online, “taking attendance” becomes a moot point. However, it will be very difficult for you to succeed in this course and learn the necessary information if you do not stay on top of your reading (both text and additional readings provided by instructor). The discussion boards are your way to demonstrate you have read and understood the course material for the week – it will be very difficult to “fake” your way through the discussion boards.

Assignment Due-Date & Extension Policy

“Life” happens – work schedules, family demands and health concerns sometimes take precedence over other things, like homework. I’m more than happy to grant an extension for the discussion boards – but it is your responsibility to contact me at least *24 hours before it is due* to arrange for an extension. **If you fail to turn in your work on time without making prior arrangements with me, you will not be allowed to turn in that assignment at all.** More than three missed discussion boards will result in an automatic “F” grade for the course. No extensions will be granted for the final paper or book review.

Scholastic Dishonesty

Please refer to the Academic Catalogue or the Student Handbook for the College’s statement on academic honesty.

Sex Discrimination and Sexual Harassment

Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 prohibits sex discrimination against any participant in an educational program or activity that receives federal funds. The act is intended to eliminate sex discrimination and harassment in education. Title IX covers discrimination and harassment based on sex in programs, admissions, and activities. Westminster College’s Discrimination, Harassment, and Sexual Misconduct Policy strictly prohibits gender-based discrimination and harassment, sexual harassment, sexual misconduct, sexual assault, rape, stalking, dating violence, domestic violence, sexual exploitation, and any other form of sexual or interpersonal violence. The Policy extends not only to students of the college but also to employees. The Policy is available at www.westminstercollege.edu/pdf/titleix/Sexual-Misconduct-Policy.pdf and discusses your rights, the process for investigating complaints, and sanctions for violations of the Policy. The Policy strictly prohibits retaliation against anyone who reports or participates in an investigation regarding alleged or suspected violations of the Policy. Westminster’s Title IX Coordinator is Jason Schwartz-Johnson. Jason can be reached at 801-832-2262, jsj@westminstercollege.edu, or in Malouf 107. The Policy has additional support services and resources as well. Please note that to the extent permitted by law, the College aims to protect the privacy all parties involved in the investigation and resolution of alleged or suspected violations of the Policy. However, the College has a duty to investigate and take remedial measures in response to complaints and cannot guarantee confidentiality. As an

instructor I am also required by our school to report incidents of gender-based discrimination or harassment, sexual harassment, sexual misconduct, or other forms of sexual or interpersonal violence to the Title IX Coordinator and thus cannot guarantee confidentiality.

Students with Special Needs

Westminster College is committed to providing a working and learning atmosphere that reasonably accommodates qualified persons with disabilities. If you have any disability that may impair your ability to complete this course successfully, please contact the Office of Disability Services, specifically Ginny DeWitt, Disability Services Coordinator, in the START Center (801-832-2280). Reasonable academic accommodations are reviewed for all students who have qualified, documented disabilities. Services are coordinated with the student and instructor by the Disability Services Office. If you need assistance or if you feel you have been unlawfully discriminated against on the basis of disability, you may seek resolution through established grievance policy and procedures by contacting the Office of the General Counsel at 801-832-2565.

Discrimination

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 prohibits discrimination based on race, color or national origin at any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance. The Department of Education has interpreted Title VI as prohibiting racial harassment, and such harassment is prohibited in all facets of campus life at Westminster College. If you encounter this type of discrimination/harassment, you can contact the Office of the General Counsel at 801-832-2565.

TENTATIVE COURSE SCHEDULE: PSYC 203

Week of: 1/11

Discussion Boards: Introductions, Syllabus Agreement

Assignments: Read Syllabus, Purchase Textbook

Week of: 1/18

Discussion Boards: Prenatal Development, Labor & Delivery

Week of: 1/25

Discussion Board: Infancy & Toddlerhood

Week of: 2/1

Discussion Board: Play

Week of: 2/8

Discussion Board: Childhood Obesity

Week of: 2/15

Discussion Board: Bullying

Week of: 2/22

Discussion Board: Moral Development

Week of: 2/29

Discussion Board: Adolescent Storm & Stress

Week of: 10/19

Discussion Board: Love & Infatuation

Week of: 3/7

NO CLASS – SPRING BREAK

Week of: 3/14

Discussion Board: Balancing Work & Family Life

Week of: 3/21

Discussion Board: Making it in Midlife

Week of: 3/28

Discussion Board: Late Adulthood

Week of: 4/4

Discussion Board: Personal Death Awareness

Week of: 4/11

Discussion Board: Lifespan Reflection

Week of: 4/18

Assignment: Final Review Project, Book Review

Syllabus Agreement

Psychology 203

Spring 2016

Dr. Susan Lacke Manville

I have read, and I understand and agree to all the terms of this syllabus.

Student Signature: _____ Date: _____

****In lieu of a pen-and-paper submission, please insert your “signature” by typing your name and date in the above text, then cut-and-paste into a post on the “Syllabus Agreement” discussion board in the Syllabus Agreement discussion board no later than 11:59 PM Sunday, January 17.**