PS230 Lifespan Development  
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Course Description

PS 230 Lifespan Development (3)  
Study of the physical, psychological, cognitive, moral, and social development of the human person from conception through death. Prerequisite: PS 101

Course Objectives

Knowledge
The student will:
1. define and explain terms, phrases and concepts used in Developmental Psychology
2. appraise and assess historical and current theories in studying children, adolescents, and adults
3. summarize significant experiments in this field
4. compare and contrast human behavior at different stages of development
5. recognize normal and abnormal behavior at different stages

Skills
The student will:
1. apply sound principles of Psychology in dealing with people
2. make personal decisions regarding her/his own life on the basis of knowledge and sound reasoning
3. direct her/his talents toward helping her/himself and others grow in maturity
4. research, write, and speak effectively on current issues in Developmental Psychology

Attitudes
The student will:
1. become more sensitive and open to the needs of people of all ages
2. be receptive to further study and learning in this field

Values
The student will:
1. believe in the importance of understanding human behavior at each stage of development
2. appreciate each person’s distinct and unique characteristics
3. value scientific method and inquiry
4. develop a philosophy of life which includes a respect for life and importance of each individual

Materials


This course module is designed as a guide for exploring and understanding lifespan developmental psychology. Individual instructors may add, delete, or modify assignments as they see fit, while retaining the integrity of the course description and rigor of a college course in the psychology curriculum.

Preparation and Assignments

Students are responsible for the preparation of assignments during a week's module. You are expected to prepare reading notes to assist you with the comprehension of course content.

Grading Criteria

There are 10 quizzes, each worth 15 points = 150 (100%)
There is one extra credit opportunity worth 10 pts.
Class #1

Topics
1. Understanding Lifespan Development
2. Theories of Human Development
3. Genes, Environment and Development
4. Prenatal Development

ASSIGNMENTS TO BE COMPLETED PRIOR TO CLASS #1

Read Chapters 1, 2, 3, 4

Prepare notes from these reading assignments related to the OBJECTIVES below.

OBJECTIVES:
(The bold faced numbers below refer to broad chapter objectives, e.g., 1.1 is Chapter 1, objective 1, and the normal faced number below each broad chapter objective are specific objectives)

1.1 HOW SHOULD WE THINK ABOUT DEVELOPMENT?
1. How do developmental scientists define development? What does the typical path of development look like across the life span?
2. How has our understanding of different periods of the life span changed historically? What cultural and subcultural differences exist in perspectives of the life span?
3. What are the main components of each side of the nature-nurture issue?
4. What are the features of the bioecological model and why is this perspective important to our understanding of development?

1.2 WHAT IS THE SCIENCE OF LIFE-SPAN DEVELOPMENT?
5. What are the three goals of developmental psychology and the seven assumptions of the modern life-span perspective on human development?

1.3 HOW IS DEVELOPMENT STUDIED?
6. What is the scientific method “mindset” and how is the scientific method used to study development?
7. What are the essential features of the experimental method? What sorts of information can be gathered from an experimental study and what are its strengths and weaknesses?
8. What are the important features of the correlational method? What sorts of information can be gathered from this type of study and what are its strengths and weaknesses?
9. What are the advantages and disadvantages of the cross-sectional and longitudinal designs and how does the sequential design resolve the weaknesses of these designs?

1.4 WHAT SPECIAL CHALLENGES DO DEVELOPMENTAL SCIENTISTS FACE?
10. What challenges arise in studying development and how can scientists address these issues?

2.1 DEVELOPMENTAL THEORIES AND THE ISSUES THEY RAISE
1. What are the five basic issues in human development? Where does each major theorist—Freud, Erikson, Skinner, Bandura, Piaget, and Gottlieb—stand on each of these issues?

2.2 FREUD: PSYCHOANALYTIC THEORY
2. What are the distinct features of Freud’s psychoanalytic theory? What are the strengths and weaknesses of the theory?

2.3 ERIKSON: NEO-FREUDIAN PSYCHOANALYTIC THEORY
3. How does Erikson’s psychoanalytic theory compare to Freud’s theory? What crisis characterizes each of Erickson’s psychosocial stages?

2.4 LEARNING THEORIES
4. What are the distinct features of the learning theories covered in this chapter: Watson’s classical conditioning, Skinner’s operant conditioning, and Bandura’s social-cognitive theory? What are the strengths and weaknesses of the learning theories?
2.5 PIAGET: COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENTAL THEORY
5. What is Piaget's perspective on cognitive development? What are the strengths and weaknesses of Piaget's theory?

2.6 SYSTEMS THEORIES
6. How do systems theories, in general, conceptualize development?
7. What are the essential elements of Gottlieb's epigenetic psychobiological systems perspective of development? What are the strengths and weaknesses of the systems approaches to development?

2.7 THEORIES IN PERSPECTIVE
8. How can we characterize the theories in general?

3.1 EVOLUTION AND SPECIES HEREDITY
1. What do evolution and species heredity contribute to our understanding of universal patterns of development?

3.2 INDIVIDUAL HEREDITY
2. What are the basic workings of individual heredity, including the contributions of genes, chromosomes, the zygote, and the processes of mitosis and meiosis? Note the difference between genotype and phenotype.
3. How are traits passed from parents to offspring? What is an example of how a child could inherit a trait through each of the three mechanisms described in the text?
4. What methods are used to screen for genetic abnormalities? What are the advantages and disadvantages of using such techniques to test for prenatal problems? What are some abnormalities that can currently be detected with genetic screening?

3.3 STUDYING GENETIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL INFLUENCES
5. How do scientists study the contributions of heredity and environment to behavioral characteristics? Describe the logic of the methods, as well as strengths and weaknesses of each method.
6. How can concordance rates help researchers estimate the influences of heredity and environment? How do genes, shared environment, and nonshared environment contribute to individual differences in traits?

3.4 ACCOUNTING FOR INDIVIDUAL DIFFERENCES
7. How do genes and environments contribute to individual differences in intellectual abilities, personality and temperament, and psychological disorders?
8. What do researchers mean when they talk about the heritability of traits? Which traits are more strongly heritable than others?

3.5 HEREDITY AND ENVIRONMENT CONSPIRING
9. What is an example that illustrates the concept of a gene-environment interaction?
10. What are three ways that genes and environments correlate to influence behavior?
11. What are the major controversies surrounding genetic research?

4.1 PRENATAL DEVELOPMENT
1. How does development unfold during the prenatal period from conception until the time of birth?
2. How does prenatal behavior of the fetus relate to postnatal behavior of the infant?

4.2 PRENATAL ENVIRONMENT
3. How and when do various teratogens affect the developing fetus? How can you summarize the effects of teratogens during the prenatal period?
4. How do maternal age, emotional state, and nutrition affect prenatal and neonatal development? What about the father's state—can this influence development?

4.3 PERINATAL ENVIRONMENT
5. What is the typical perinatal environment like? What hazards can occur during the birth process?
6. What is the birth experience like from the mother's and father's perspectives, and from different cultural perspectives?

4.4 NEONATAL ENVIRONMENT
7. What are the advantages of breast feeding? Are there disadvantages of breast feeding?
8. How can at-risk newborns be identified? What treatments are available to optimize development of at-risk babies?
9. To what extent are the effects of the prenatal and perinatal environments long lasting? What factors influence whether effects are lasting?

ACTIVITIES:

1. Prepare to actively discuss issues related to the OBJECTIVES
2. At your discretion, complete chapter related activities at the publisher’s website
4. Quiz: Chapters 1, 2, 3, 4
CLASS #2

Topics
5. Health & Physical Self
6. Perception
7. Cognition

ASSIGNMENTS TO BE COMPLETED PRIOR TO CLASS #2

Read Chapters 5, 6, 7

Prepare notes from these reading assignments related to the OBJECTIVES below.

OBJECTIVES:

5.1 BUILDING BLOCKS OF GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT
1. How do the workings of the endocrine and nervous systems contribute to growth and development across the life span? To what extent are cells responsive to the effects of experience?
2. What is lateralization? How does it affect behavior?
3. How does the brain change with aging?
4. What principles underlie growth? What are examples of each principle?
5. How can we apply a life-span developmental approach to our understanding of health?

5.2 THE INFANT
6. What is the difference between survival and primitive reflexes? What are examples of each type of reflex? What other capabilities do newborns have?
7. How do locomotion and manipulation of objects evolve during infancy? What factors influence the development of infant's motor skills?
8. What health issues should be considered during the first two years of life?

5.3 THE CHILD
9. How are children’s motor skills advanced relative to those of infants?
10. What factors influence children’s health? How can health be optimized during childhood?

5.4 THE ADOLESCENT
11. What physical changes occur during adolescence? What factors contribute to sexual maturity of males and females? What psychological reactions accompany variations in growth spurt and the timing of puberty?
12. What health issues may confront adolescents?

5.5 THE ADULT
13. What physical changes occur during adulthood? What are the psychological implications of the physical changes that occur with aging?
14. What health concerns arise as adults age? How can health of older adults be preserved?

6.1 ISSUES OF NATURE AND NURTURE
1. What are the views of constructivists and nativists on the nature/nurture issue as it relates to sensation and perception?

6.2 THE INFANT
2. How are perceptual abilities of infants assessed?
3. What are infants' visual capabilities? What sorts of things do infants prefer to look at?
4. What are the auditory capabilities of infants? What do researchers know about infants’ abilities to perceive speech?
5. What are the taste and smell capabilities of infants? To what extent are infants sensitive to touch, temperature, and pain?
6. To what extent can infants integrate their sensory experiences? What is an example of cross-modal perception?
7. What role do early experiences play in development of perceptions? What factors contribute to normal visual perception?

6.3 THE CHILD
8. What changes occur in attention throughout childhood?

6.4 THE ADOLESCENT
9. How can hearing loss be minimized across the lifespan, beginning with adolescence?

6.5 THE ADULT
10. What changes occur in visual capabilities and visual perception during adulthood?
11. What changes in auditory capabilities and speech perception occur during adulthood?
12. What changes occur in taste and smell, and in sensitivity to touch, temperature, and pain during adulthood?

7.1 PIAGET'S CONSTRUCTIVIST APPROACH
1. How do organization, adaptation, and disequilibrium guide development?

7.2 THE INFANT
2. What are the major achievements of the sensorimotor stage and how do infants progress towards these achievements?

7.3 THE CHILD
3. What are the characteristics and limitations of preoperational thought?

7.4 THE ADOLESCENT
4. What are the major characteristics and limitations of concrete operational thought?
5. What are the main features of formal operational thought?
6. In what ways might adult thought be more advanced than adolescent thought?

7.5 PIAGET IN PERSPECTIVE
7. What are the limitations and challenges to Piaget's theory of cognitive development?

7.6 VYGOTSKY'S SOCIOCULTURAL PERSPECTIVE
8. What is the main theme of Vygotsky's theory of cognitive development?
9. How does social interaction contribute to cognitive development according to Vygotsky's theory?
10. In what ways are Vygotsky and Piaget similar and different in their ideas about cognition?

ACTIVITIES:

1. Prepare to actively discuss issues related to the OBJECTIVES
2. At your discretion, complete chapter related activities at the publisher's website
3. Quiz: Chapters 5, 6, 7
ASSIGNMENTS TO BE COMPLETED PRIOR TO CLASS #3

Read Chapters 8, 9, 10

Prepare notes from these reading assignments related to the OBJECTIVES below.

OBJECTIVES:

8.1 THE INFORMATION-PROCESSING APPROACH
1. What is the general orientation of the information-processing model to cognition? What are the specific components of the model and how does information “flow” through the system?
2. What are the different forms or types of memory?

8.2 THE INFANT
3. How do researchers assess infant memory? What information can infants typically remember? What are the limitations of infants’ memory?

8.3 THE CHILD
4. What are four major hypotheses about why memory improves with age? Is there evidence to support each hypothesis?
5. When do autobiographical memories begin and what possible explanations can account for childhood amnesia?
6. How do scripts influence memory?
7. How do problem solving capacities change during childhood? What explanation does Siegler propose for changes in problem solving?

8.4 THE ADOLESCENT
8. What developments occur in the information processing abilities of adolescents?

8.5 THE ADULT
9. In what ways do memory and cognition change during adulthood? What are the strengths and weaknesses of older adults’ abilities?
10. What factors help explain the declines in abilities during older adulthood? And what can be done to minimize losses with age?
11. How are problem solving skills affected by aging?

9.1 WHAT IS INTELLIGENCE?
1. What is the psychometric approach to intelligence and how have different psychometric theorists defined intelligence?
2. What are the traditional measures of intelligence and what are some of the advantages and disadvantages of these approaches? What are some alternatives to these traditional measures of intelligence?
3. What is creativity and how does it relate to intelligence?

9.2 THE CHILD
4. What methods have been used to assess infant intelligence and how successful is each method? To what extent is infant intelligence related to later intelligence?
5. Are IQ scores stable during childhood? What factors contribute to gains and losses in IQ scores?
6. What are the typical characteristics of creative children?

9.3 THE ADOLESCENT
7. How well do IQ scores predict school achievement? To what extent is IQ related to occupational success?
8. How can creativity be fostered?

9.4 THE ADULT
9. How do IQ and mental abilities change with age? What factors predict declines in intellectual abilities in older adults?
10. To what extent does wisdom exist in older adults?
11. How does creativity change throughout adulthood?

9.5 FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE IQ SCORES
12. What evidence shows genetic influence on IQ scores? What other factors influence IQ scores?

9.6 THE EXTREMES OF INTELLIGENCE
13. How are mental retardation and giftedness defined? What are the outcomes for individuals who are mental retarded or gifted?

10.1 MASTERING LANGUAGE
1. What is the typical developmental course of language development?
2. How do learning, nativist, and interactionist perspectives explain the acquisition of language? Which explanation is best supported by research?

10.2 THE INFANT
3. What factors influence mastery motivation of infants? How is this related to later achievement?

10.3 THE CHILD
4. What are the pros and cons of early education?
5. What factors contribute to differences in levels of achievement motivation during childhood and what can be done to foster achievement motivation?
6. What are the components of learning to read? Is there a most effective way of teaching reading? What distinguishes skilled and unskilled readers?
7. How does school affect children? What factors characterize effective schools?

10.4 THE ADOLESCENT
8. What changes in achievement motivation occur during adolescence? What factors contribute to these changes?
9. How does science and math education in the United States compare to science and math education in other countries?
10. What are the pros and cons of integrating work with school during adolescence?

10.5 THE ADULT
11. How does achievement motivation change during adulthood?
12. How do literacy, illiteracy, and continued education affect adult’s lives?

ACTIVITIES:
1. Prepare to actively discuss issues related to the OBJECTIVES
2. At your discretion, complete chapter related activities at the publisher’s website
3. Quiz: Chapters 8, 9, 10
ASSIGNMENTS TO BE COMPLETED PRIOR TO CLASS #4

Read Chapters 11, 12, 13

Prepare notes from these reading assignments related to the OBJECTIVES below.

OBJECTIVES:

11.1 CONCEPTUALIZING THE SELF AND PERSONALITY
1. How is personality typically defined, and what are the five principles of defining personality?
2. How do psychoanalytic, trait, and social learning theories explain personality development?

11.2 THE INFANT
3. How does self-concept emerge during infancy and how does it change across the life span?
4. How has infant temperament been categorized? How do these temperament styles interact with caregiver characteristics? How does temperament relate to later personality?

11.3 THE CHILD
5. What changes occur in the development of children’s self-esteem? What factors influence self-esteem?
6. How does personality evolve over childhood and what do children understand of their personality?

11.4 THE ADOLESCENT
7. How do adolescents conceptualize their selves, including self-esteem and personality?
8. What factors influence the development of identity during adolescence? How do adolescents make vocational choices and how does work affect adolescents’ identities?

11.5 THE ADULT
9. How does personality change during adulthood? Why do people change or remain the same? How does culture influence personality?
10. What is the focus of each of Erikson's psychosocial stages? What factors can influence how each crisis is resolved?
11. How do career paths change during adulthood? How do adults cope with age-related changes that affect their working selves? How are older adults influenced by retirement?
12. How can we characterize successful aging?

12.1 MALE AND FEMALE
1. What are gender norms and stereotypes? How do they play out in the behaviors of men and women?
2. What actual psychological differences and behaviors exist between males and females?
3. How does Eagley’s social role hypothesis explain gender stereotypes?

12.2 THE INFANT
4. How do gender role stereotypes influence infants’ behavior and treatment?

12.3 THE CHILD

12.4 THE ADOLESCENT
6. What theoretical explanations account for gender-typed behaviors? How well supported are these theories?

12.5 THE ADULT
7. How do gender roles change throughout adulthood?
8. What is androgyny? To what extent is it useful?

12.6 SEXUALITY OVER THE LIFESPAN
9. How are infants affected by their sex? What do we know about infant sexuality?
10. What do children know about sex and reproduction? How does sexual behavior change during childhood?
11. What factors contribute to the development of sexual orientation?
12. What are adolescents' sexual attitudes today? How would characterize the sexual behaviors of today’s teens?
13. What changes occur in sexual activity during adulthood?

13.1 SOCIAL COGNITION
1. What is a theory of mind? How is it assessed? What developmental changes occur in the acquiring a theory of mind and what factors affect its emergence?
2. How do person perception and role taking skills develop? Why are these skills important? How do they change over the lifespan?

13.2 PERSPECTIVES ON MORALITY
3. What is morality? What are the three basic components of morality?
4. What is Freud’s explanation for the development of morality?
5. How did Kohlberg assess moral reasoning? What are the important characteristics of each level and stage of Kohlberg’s theory? What are examples of responses at each stage of reasoning?
6. How do social learning theorists explain moral behavior?
7. According to evolutionary theory, what are the functions of morality?

13.3 THE INFANT
8. What do infants understand about morality and prosocial behavior?

13.4 THE CHILD
9. What changes in moral reasoning and behavior occur during childhood? What factors influences children’s moral thinking?
10. What parenting characteristics contribute to the development of morality? Which parenting style is “best”?

13.5 THE ADOLESCENT
11. What changes in moral reasoning occur during adolescence? How is moral development related to antisocial behavior of adolescents? What other factors influence antisocial behavior?

13.6 THE ADULT
12. What changes in moral reasoning and behavior occur during adulthood?
13. How does Kohlberg’s theory of moral reasoning fare in light of research findings? In what ways might the theory be biased or incomplete?

ACTIVITIES:

1. Prepare to actively discuss issues related to the OBJECTIVES
2. At your discretion, complete chapter related activities at the publisher’s website
3. Quiz: Chapters 11, 12, 13
CLASS #5

Topics
14. Attachment & Social Relationships
16. Developmental Psychopathology
17. The Final Challenge: Death and Dying

ASSIGNMENTS TO BE COMPLETED PRIOR TO CLASS #5

Read Chapters 14, 16, 17

Prepare notes from these reading assignments related to the OBJECTIVES below.

OBJECTIVES:

14.1 PERSPECTIVES ON RELATIONSHIPS
1. How do relationships with others contribute to development?
2. How does Bowlby’s attachment theory explain attachment? In this model, how do nature and nurture contribute to the development of attachment?

14.2 THE INFANT
3. In what ways are infants emotional beings? How are emotions socialized and regulated?
4. How do infants become attached to a caregiver? What are some observable signs of infant attachment?
5. What types of attachment relationships can develop between infants and caregivers? What infant, caregiver, and contextual factors determine the quality of early attachments?
6. How do early relationships relate to later development? What are the consequences of early social deprivation?

14.3 THE CHILD
7. What features characterize peer relations and friendships at different points of the lifespan?
8. What different types of play evolve during the first few years of life? What are the developmental benefits of play?
9. What factors contribute to peer acceptance and popularity, or to peer rejection, during childhood?

14.4 THE ADOLESCENT
10. How do relationships with peers and parents change during adolescence? How do peers and parents influence adolescents' lives?

14.5 THE ADULT
11. How do social networks and friendships change during adulthood? How do these connections affect adult development?
12. How do early attachment styles relate to romantic relationships?

16.1 WHAT MAKES DEVELOPMENT ABNORMAL?
1. What criteria are used to define and diagnose psychological disorders?
2. What is the perspective of the field of developmental psychopathology? What sorts of questions or issues do developmental psychopathologists study?
3. How does the diathesis-stress model explain the causes of psychopathology?

16.2 THE INFANT
4. What are the characteristics, suspected causes, treatment, and prognosis for individuals with autism and its related syndromes?
5. In what ways do infants exhibit depression-like conditions? How is depression in infants similar to, or different from, depression in adults?

16.3 THE CHILD
6. What are the symptoms, suspected causes, treatment, and long-term prognosis for children with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder?
7. How is depression during childhood similar to, or different from, depression during adulthood?

16.4 THE ADOLESCENT
10. What are the characteristics, suspected causes, and treatment of eating disorders such as anorexia nervosa?
11. What is the course of depression and suicidal behavior during adolescence? What factors influence depression during adulthood?

16.5 THE ADULT
12. What are the characteristics and causes of dementia?

17.1 MATTERS OF LIFE AND DEATH
1. How is death defined? Why is the definition of death controversial? How does the social meaning of death vary across groups?
2. What factors influence life expectancy? Is it possible to extend life expectancy?
3. What is the main difference between programmed theories of aging and damage theories of aging? What is an example of each type of theory?

17.2 THE EXPERIENCE OF DEATH
4. What are Kübler-Ross's stages of dying? How valid and useful is this theory?
5. What is the Parkes/Bowlby attachment model of bereavement? Is there evidence to support this model?

17.3 THE INFANT
6. What is the infant's understanding of separation and death?

17.4 THE CHILD
7. How do children's conceptions of death compare to a "mature" understanding of death? What factors might influence a child's understanding of death?
8. What is a dying child's understanding of death? How do dying children cope with the prospect of their own death? How do children grieve?

17.5 THE ADOLESCENT
9. What is the adolescent's understanding of death? Is an adolescent's reaction to death different from the reactions of a child or adult?

17.6 THE ADULT
10. How do family members react and cope with the loss of a spouse, a child, and a parent?
11. What factors contribute to effective and ineffective coping with grief?

17.7 TAKING THE STING OUT OF DEATH
12. What can be done for those who are dying and for those who are bereaved to better understand and face the reality of death?
13. What are the major themes of lifespan development that have been covered throughout the text?

ACTIVITIES:
1. Prepare to actively discuss issues related to the OBJECTIVES
2. At your discretion, complete chapter related activities at the publisher's website
3. Quiz: Chapters 14, 16, 17
4. Course Evaluation