

# PSYCH-UA 34: Developmental Psychology

Fall 2024 Tuesday / Thursday 9:30 am – 10:45 am

Cantor Film Center, Room 101

## Who you'll be working with

Dr. Kelsey Moty (Pronouns: she/her)

You can contact me at: moty@nyu.edu

You can find me at: Meyer 401 (or on Zoomland)

My office hours are: Thursdays 11 – 12 pm, in-person (or by appointment, on Zoom)

Appointments can be scheduled at: <https://calendly.com/kelseymoty/office-hours>

### Class Assistants:

Damaris Banegas  
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## What you should expect to learn (briefly)

If you have ever wondered, “How did we become who we are?”, then you are in the right course. Developmental Psychology is the scientific study of how and why individuals change over the course of their life. The goal of this course is to introduce students to the major theories, methods, and findings in the field of developmental psychology, and to provide a broad overview of biological, cognitive, social, and emotional development from the prenatal period through early adulthood, with a particular focus on infancy and childhood and the role of experiential factors. This course is intended to serve as a foundation for future courses in Developmental Psychology and no one topic will be covered exhaustively.

My goal for this class is that you will: (1) learn the major themes and questions in developmental psychology, (2) engage critically and thoughtfully with scientific literature and the scientific community, and (3) develop your ability to synthesize developmental science and communicate it effectively. You will be assessed on your knowledge of course material, and your ability to synthesize and communicate scientific information in an accurate and engaging manner.

**tl;dr: people change over the course of their lifespan, and this class will introduce you to how psychologists study this change**

**Prerequisites for this course:** Introduction to Psychology (PSYCH-UA 1) or course equivalent is required. A previous statistics course is helpful for understanding the required readings.

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## **Basic class information**

### **1) This course uses a textbook.**

*Specifically*, this one:

Siegler, R. S., Saffran, J.R., Eisenberg, N., DeLoache, J., Gershoff, E., & Leaper, C. (2024). *How children develop* (Seventh Edition). New York, NY: Worth Publishers.

The 6th Edition also works (and is quite a bit cheaper).

### **2) Attendance at lecture in-person is *highly recommended*.**

The best learning environment for you and your classmates is when everyone attends via the same medium because the demands of an in-person versus a remote class are quite different. This class is designed for in-person learning, meaning your learning experience will likely be the best if you attend in-person.

If for some reason you cannot attend class in-person (e.g., an illness), lectures will be recorded. But I cannot emphasize enough that the class is more engaging if you can attend live and in-person. (1) Some of the material we cover in lecture will not be covered in the readings. (2) Some of the material we cover in lecture will be going over more difficult areas of the readings, particularly the empirical articles. And (3) you'll have the opportunity to talk with your classmates as well as ask questions about the material.

### **3) Attendance at recitation is *required*.**

Recitation provides an additional opportunity to discuss and engage with the material in class. We will go over in more depth, specific research papers during recitation.

Please see the "Recitation" section for more details.

### **4) Please, please, please ask questions.**

Lectures are more interesting (for both you and me!) if I am not talking the entire time. You might think the answer is obvious to others, but there's a good chance that at least several other students in the class have the same question.

I also welcome your opinions and observations and look forward to your contributions to lectures and discussions.

# What you will do in this course

## 1) Exams (60%)

There will be three exams in this course. Exams will consist of a mix of multiple-choice and short response questions. Exams will be in-class and timed (75 minutes). You can use your notes (but **not** the textbook). Notes for the exam must be synthesized onto a single 8.5 x 11" sheet of paper.

An optional final exam at the end of semester can be taken to replace one of your lowest exam scores. The final exam is cumulative.

## 2) Policy Brief (25%)

Developmental psychology has so much to offer with respect to informing policy decisions. One of the goals for this class is for you to see how the research on developmental psychology can be applied to a number of real-world issues and concerns. To this end, you will define and research a topic that is of interest to you. You will then synthesize the literature into a policy brief.

*Sample topics include (but are not limited to):*

The effect of single-sex schooling on gender development or gender stereotyping  
How child separation policies at the border impact child development  
The effect of tech usage on academic achievement  
Whether video games influence aggressive tendencies

There are a total of 5 deadlines for this policy brief:

- 1) Picking a topic (this can always be changed) – 5%
- 2) Generating an annotated bibliography – 10%
- 3) Generating a rough draft – 15%
- 4) Providing peer feedback on the rough draft of the policy brief – 10%
- 5) Your final draft – 60%

## 3) Engaging with Empirical Research (10%)

It's important to be able to read empirical research articles and to synthesize what has been done in each paper. Therefore, you will read two research articles and summarize the findings of that article.

Potential papers will be posted on Brightspace, but if you opt to read another paper, you must get it pre-approved by your TA. More details about how to write this critique / summary will be posted to Brightspace. ***If you are unhappy with a score on one of your research critiques, you can read / write a critique for a third paper to replace your lowest score.***

## 4) Participation (5%)

Come to recitation and participate, and you'll get marked that week for participating.

## Course schedule

On the following page(s), you will see our tentative course schedule. This is roughly broken down by theme. Depending on the pace of our class, I reserve the right to make changes to the course schedule. Updates will be made to the syllabus if changes are made and reflected on Brightspace.

In general, the course is structured thematically.

**Section 1** covers foundational principles. How do children develop physically, learn to interact with the world around them, and how do we study these processes?

**Section 2** is focused on children's cognitive development. How do we learn to think, reason, and represent the world around us?

**Section 3** is focused on how children learn to navigate the social world. What are the influences of families, parents, peers, and other social agents? How do children think about social identities? Here, we focus on race and gender in particular, and how these become both important identities, as well as social categories that children use.

## Class Schedule

Week	Date	Topic	Readings	Assignment due
1	Sept 3	What is developmental psychology?	Chapter 1	
	Sept 5	How do we study development? (part 1)	Chapter 1	
2	Sept 10	How do we study development? (part 2)	Chapter 1	
	Sept 12	How to read and write about research + a statistics primer		
3	Sept 17	Development across a species	Chapter 3	
	Sept 19	Prenatal development	Chapter 2	
4	Sept 24	Brain development	Chapter 3	
	Sept 26	Motor development	Chapter 5	<b>Research Critique 1 due: Sept 27</b>
5	Oct 1	<b>Exam 1</b>		
	Oct 3	Cognitive theories (part 1)	Chapter 4	
6	Oct 8	Cognitive theories (part 2)	Chapter 4	
	Oct 10	Learning and thinking	Chapter 5	
7	Oct 15	No class (Legislative Monday)		
	Oct 17	Sensation and perception	Chapter 5	
8	Oct 22	Memory	See Brightspace	
	Oct 24	Language (part 1)	Chapter 6	<b>Research Critique 2 due: Oct 25</b>
9	Oct 29	Language (part 2)	Chapter 6	
	Oct 31	Conceptual knowledge	Chapter 7	<b>Policy brief topic due: Nov 1</b>
10	Nov 5	<b>Exam 2</b>		
	Nov 7	Causal reasoning	Chapter 7.2	
11	Nov 12	Social Cognition	Chapter 7.1	
	Nov 14	Theories of social development	Chapter 9	<b>Annotated bibliography due: Nov 15</b>
12	Nov 19	Attachment	Chapter 11	
	Nov 21	Emotion	Chapter 10	
13	Nov 26	Self + Personal Identity ( <i>Class via Zoom</i> )	Chapter 11	
	Nov 28	<b>No class (Thanksgiving)</b>		<b>Rough draft of policy brief due: Dec 1</b>

14	Dec 3	Family + Peers	Chapter 12 + 13	
	Dec 5	Development of bias	Chapter 15	<b>Peer feedback due: Dec 6</b>
15	Dec 10	Moral Development	Chapter 14	
	Dec 12	<b>Exam 3</b>		<b>Final draft of policy paper: Dec 16</b>
16	Dec 19	<b>Final Exam (Optional): 8 am – 9:50 am</b>		

## Recitations

<b>Mondays</b>	<b>Wednesdays</b>	<b>Thursdays</b>	<b>Fridays</b>
8:00 am – 9:15 am TA: Esther Location: Zoom	8:00 am – 9:15 am TA: Damaris Location: Zoom	11:00 am – 12:15 pm TA: Esther Location: Silver, Room 410	9:30 am – 10:45 am TA: Ivy Location: GCASL, Room 265
12:30 – 1:45 pm TA: Damaris Location: Silver, Room 509	4:55 pm – 6:00 pm TA: Ivy Location: TBD, till then via Zoom		

### Attendance policy

Attendance in recitation is expected, but I get that life happens, so **you can miss two recitations without any impact on your grade**, no questions asked.

If you see on the schedule below, those in Monday and Wednesday recitations are scheduled to have one extra week of recitations. To balance this inequity, students in M/W recitations are allowed one additional absence.

**1. I am going to miss my recitation this week. Can I attend another one?**

Yes. Generally, this shouldn't be an issue. We may reevaluate this policy if too many students are opting to attend certain recitations.

**2. I was originally signed up for the Thursday, 4:55 pm recitation. Which recitation should I attend? Do I need to change my registration on Albert?**

This recitation has been moved to Wednesdays at 4:55 pm. This is your default new recitation.

If you cannot attend this time but can attend another time, please email the TA of the recitation you are able to attend (plus cc Ivy on the email), so that you can be added to the Brightspace of the relevant recitation section.

If you cannot attend any of the recitation times, please email Dr. Moty to discuss alternatives.

Regardless of which option you choose, **DO NOT** worry about updating your recitation on Albert. I don't want you to get accidentally dropped from the course.



## Recitation Schedule

Week	Lecture	Topic	Monday	Wed	Thurs	Fri
1	1	What is developmental psychology?	No recitation	Intros	Intros	Intros
	2	How do we study development? (part 1)				
2	3	How do we study development? (part 2)	Intros + Review Lecture 1 - 3	Review Lecture 1 - 3	Review Lecture 1 - 4	Review Lecture 1 - 4
	4	How to read/write research + statistics				
3	5	Development across a species	Paper discussion + How to write a critique + Review Lecture 4 - 5	Paper discussion + How to write a critique + Review Lecture 4 - 5	Paper discussion + How to write a critique + Review Lecture 5 - 6	Paper discussion + How to write a critique + Review Lecture 5 - 6
	6	Prenatal development				
4	7	Brain development	Review Lecture 6 - 7	Review for Exam 1	Review for Exam 1	Review for Exam 1
	8	Motor development				
5		<b>Exam 1</b>	Review for Exam 1	No recitation: Optional office hours	No recitation: Optional office hours	No recitation: Optional office hours
	9	Cognitive theories (part 1)				
6	10	Cognitive theories (part 2)	Go over exams	Go over exams	Go over exams	Go over exams
	11	Learning and thinking				
7		No class (Legislative Monday)	Review Cog. Theories <i>(Recitation is on Tuesday)</i>	Review Cog. Theories	Review Cog. Theories	Review Cog. Theories
	12	Sensation and perception				
8	13	Memory	Review Lecture 11 - 12	Review Lecture 11 - 13	Review Lecture 11 - 13	Review Lecture 11 - 13
	14	Language (part 1)				

9	15	Language (part 2)	Review Lecture 13 - 14	Review for Exam 2	Review for Exam 2	Review for Exam 2
	16	Conceptual knowledge				
10		<b>Exam 2</b>	Review for Exam 2	What is a policy brief?	What is a policy brief? + Review	What is a policy brief?
	17	Causal reasoning				
11	18	Social Cognition	What is a policy brief? + Go over Exams + Review Lecture 17	Go over Exams + Review Lecture 17 - 18	Go over Exams + Review Lecture 17 - 18	Go over Exams + Review Lecture 17 - 19
	19	Theories of social development				
12	20	Attachment	Review Lectures 18 – 19 + Paper discussion	Review Lectures 19 -20 + Paper discussion	Review Lectures 19 -20 + Paper discussion	Review Lectures 20 -21 + Paper discussion
	21	Emotion				
13	22	Self + Personal Identity <i>(Class via Zoom)</i>	No recitation this week	No recitation this week	No recitation this week	No recitation this week
		<b>No class (Thanksgiving)</b>				
14	23	Family + Peers	Review Lecture 20 – 22 + Policy brief peer review	Review Lecture 21 – 22 + Policy brief peer review	Policy brief peer review + Exam 3 Review	Policy brief peer review + Exam 3 Review
	24	Development of bias				
15	25	Moral Development	Exam 3 Review	Exam 3 Review	No recitation: Optional office hours	No recitation: Optional office hours
		<b>Exam 3</b>				

## Frequently asked questions

### Related to grades

#### What is the grading scale for this course? Do you round grades?

Your numerical grade will be rounded to the nearest integer and turned into a letter grade as follows:

93-100 A	90-92 A-	87-89 B+	83-86 B	80-82 B-	
77-79 C+	73-76 C	70-72 C-	67-69 D+	60-66 D	0-59 F

#### My grade is an 89.4? Will you round it up an A-?

No. The cutoff for an A- is a 90. Scores of 89.5 will be rounded up.

#### Is there extra credit in this course?

No, but there is a number of opportunities to make up lost points (e.g., lowest exam score dropped, lowest paper dropped). Occasionally, I may offer an extra credit point or two on exams.

### Related to exams

#### Will there be a study guide for exams?

Yes, but it will mostly be a list of key words / topics you should know. It's up to you to create a more comprehensive guide on each topic. I also cannot guarantee that the study guide will be exhaustive, but it should cover at least 90% of the relevant material for the exams. That is, if you knew everything on the study guide, you would be able to get an A on the exam.

#### Will there be practice questions for the exams?

Potentially? I can't guarantee it, sorry. It takes a lot of work to write good exam questions. But there will be review in your recitations.

#### How should I study for the exam?

Come to lecture, read the textbook, go over your notes, work through the study guide, meet with either me or one of the TAs to go over questions you have, create a study group with your fellow students.

#### Can I use notes on the exam?

Yes, I allow one page of notes, 8.5 x 11 inches. Front and back. You can type your notes, handwrite them, whatever. No specific font requirements. I recommend consolidating your notes into your own words. Your notes must be printed out (e.g., no notes on phones, laptops, etc.)

**Can you print out my notes for me?**

No, but you can print your notes out using the university printing services available here: <https://www.nyu.edu/life/information-technology/computing-support/desktop-mobile-and-printing/nyu-print-service.html>

**Do I need a Scantron? A pencil?**

No Scantron needed. You can use whatever writing implement you like best (pen, pencil, whatever).

**Are the exams cumulative?**

No, except for the final. Topics relating to research methods + other major concepts may appear on multiple exams though.

**Are the exams curved?**

In the sense that only X% of students can get an A, X% can get a B, and so on, no. Theoretically, everyone in the class can get an A on the exam.

In the other sense (i.e., adjusting the total points an exam is out of after the fact), I don't write exams with the intention of them being curved, but if it appears the exam was harder than intended, then I might curve the exam by a couple of points.

**Do I need to take the final exam?**

If you are happy with your score on the first three exams, you do not need to take the final (as your lowest exam score is dropped, so the "0" for the final would be dropped).

**Do you offer make-up exams?**

I offer the following make-up exam dates:  
Dates TBA

These make-up exams are intended for students experiencing illnesses, those who have a conflict with a religious holiday, or those otherwise dealing with an emergency. Please do not abuse this policy if one of the following does apply to you. The rooms we have available to hold make-up exams cannot accommodate large amounts of students.

**How do I see my exam after it's been graded?**

Your TA will go over exams during recitation (see schedule). If you cannot attend recitation that week, please contact your TA to set up a time to look over your exam or visit them during their scheduled office hour.

**I did poorly on an exam. Can I retake it?**

No, but good news! Your lowest exam grade is dropped. There are four total exams and only three of them count toward your final grade.

## Related to lecture

### **Will you post lecture slides?**

Yes! Lecture slides will be posted on Brightspace before (or at the start of) class. I cannot guarantee they will be posted in advance of the start of class.

### **Do I need to email you if I am unable to attend lecture?**

No. Unless you anticipate missing multiple class because of extenuating circumstances (e.g., an illness) that will otherwise significantly impact your ability to do well in class.

### **Will lectures be recorded?**

Yes.

### **Where are the recordings available?**

You can find them on Brightspace by going to the “Zoom” tab and clicking on “Cloud recordings”.

### **I can't access the recordings. How do I gain access?**

Make sure you are logged into both Brightspace and your NYU Zoom account. To log into your NYU Zoom account, please visit <https://nyu.zoom.us/>. Lecture recordings are only accessible when logged into your NYU Zoom account.

If you are still unable to access the recordings, there is nothing I can do. I promise there's no special permission that I can give you. Please contact IT to resolve your issue.

## Related to recitation

### **Can I attend a different recitation than my official recitation time?**

Yes, that should generally be fine. Just make sure the TA marks you as attending.

### **Do I need to email my TA that I am missing recitation?**

No, unless you are dealing with a chronic health condition or extenuating circumstance that may impact your ability to attend recitations regularly.

## Related to assignments

### When are assignments due?

At 11:59 pm at the date listed on the syllabus unless otherwise stated.

### Are late assignments accepted?

Yes, but there is a late penalty for each day an assignment is late. Please see below.

Days Late	Penalty
1 day (within 24 hours of original deadline)	10%
2 days	25%
3 days	50%
4 days	75%
5 days	Assignment no longer accepted

If your assignment is less than 7 hours late (i.e., it's turned in before I wake up the next day), no late points will be docked. You do not need to email me or a TA asking for grace: it will be given to you automatically.

If you anticipate turning in an assignment late (for a reason you feel that you should not be penalized for), please email your TA **before the due date** to discuss your situation.

## **Class policies**

### **Email policy**

I will answer emails as soon as possible between the hours of 9 am and 5pm Monday through Friday. Messages outside of these hours will be answered as soon as possible, typically within 24 hours (or not till Monday if over the weekend).

Before sending an email, please check if your question is answered on the syllabus. If your question pertains to the content of the course (e.g., you're confused about something from the book or said in lecture), these questions are usually better answered in-person (with either me or your TA) unless it's a simple yes/no question.

### **For students with disabilities**

I encourage students with disabilities, including non-visible disabilities like chronic diseases or learning disabilities, to meet with me early in the semester to discuss accommodations. You should also contact the [Moses Center](#) as soon as possible to verify eligibility for academic accommodations. Accommodation statements should be shared with me as early as possible, but if there is a change to the course structure that would better serve you (and your fellow students), please let me know!

### **Religious observances**

Some students may wish to take part in religious observances that occur during this academic term. If you have a religious observance which conflicts with your participation in the course, please meet with me by the end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> week of the term to discuss accommodations. If your observance conflicts with an exam, please see make-up exam dates in the FAQ.

### **Respect for diversity**

It is my intent that students from diverse backgrounds and perspectives be well served by the course and that the diversity—in its many forms—that students bring to this class be viewed as a strength. It is my intent to present only materials and activities that are respectful to diversity. As we will discuss throughout the course, the field of developmental science has been—and largely still is—dominated by certain perspectives (those of Western, educated, English-speaking researchers who study primarily Western, White, educated, cisgender children). I hope we can acknowledge these limitations, while still thoughtfully engaging with the foundational material of the field.

## **Don't cheat / plagiarize**

No form of academic dishonesty will be tolerated. Suspicions of academic dishonesty during exams or on writing assignments will be reported to and adjudicated by the Associate Dean for Students. If a case of academic dishonesty is confirmed, it will result in a penalty that is at least as severe as receiving a 0 on the assignment or quiz. Academic dishonesty includes all forms of plagiarism. Plagiarism includes (but is not limited to): copying or paraphrasing from someone else's work (another student, an online source, or a journal article), turning in someone else's work as your own, or presenting someone else's ideas (a student, online source, or scholar) as your own.

Most importantly, cheating only really serves to cheat yourself out of a learning opportunity. There are many opportunities to make up for a less-than-ideal grade, so don't let the possibility of a bad grade tempt you to cheat.

We will do our best to make clear the line between academic dishonesty and collaborative learning. But if you have any questions about where this line is, it is your responsibility to ask me or your TA.

## **Update policy**

The syllabus may change as necessary during the semester (i.e., there are a couple of topics not thoroughly discussed in the book that I am still looking for appropriate readings for). Reasonable efforts (announcement in class and e-mails) will be made to update students if changes arise. Students are responsible for the current syllabus (if there are no changes) and any updates that might occur.