

## **PSYCH-UA 34: Developmental Psychology**

Summer 2024: Mon/Tues/Wednesday 11 am - 1:45 pm

Location: 7 East 12<sup>th</sup> St., Room 121

### **Who you'll be working with**

Dr. Kelsey Moty (Pronouns: she/her)

Email: [moty@nyu.edu](mailto:moty@nyu.edu)

Office: Meyer 401 (or on Zoomland)

My office hours are: By appointment (typically via Zoom) or I can meet after class

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

#### **Class Assistant:**

Lilly Wang: [lilly.wang@nyu.edu](mailto:lilly.wang@nyu.edu)

Office hours: Wednesdays 1:45 to 2:45 pm, 7 E 12<sup>th</sup> lounge

(or by appointment via Zoom)

### **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.

## **Some important information you should read:**

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

*Specifically*, this one:

Siegler, R. S., Saffran, J.R., Eisenberg, N., DeLoache, J., Gershoff, E., & Leaper, C. (2020). *How children develop* (Sixth Edition). New York, NY: Worth Publishers.

The Fifth Edition is pretty much the same (and 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) 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 (40%)

There will be two exams in this course. Exams will consist of a mix of multiple-choice and short response questions. Exams will be in-class. You will have the full class period for exams, but I suspect most students will finish within 75 – 90 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.

Exam 2 will contain an optional cumulative part. This means that if you are unhappy with your grade for Exam 1, you can complete this additional second part to replace your Exam 1 grade.

### 2) Policy Brief (35%)

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 – 25%
- 4) Providing peer feedback on the rough draft of the policy brief – 10%
- 5) Turning in your final draft – 50%

### 3) Engaging with Empirical Research (20%)

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. For one of these papers, you will be required to write a short summary and research critique. For the other paper, you will be required to give a short presentation in class on the findings from this paper.

### 4) Participation (5%)

Come to class and participate, and you'll get marked that day for participating. I get that life happens, so you can miss **two** classes without any impact on your grade, no questions asked.

## **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.

Week	Date	Topic	Readings	Notes
1	May 20	Introduction + Research Methods + Ethics	Chapter 1	
	May 21	Development across a species + Prenatal development	Chapter 2 + 3	
	May 22	Brain development (guest lecture: Dr. Courtney Filippi) + How to read and write about research	Chapter 3 + 5	
2	May 27	<b>No class</b>		
	May 28	Learning and thinking + Motor development	Chapter 5	<i>Class via Zoom</i>
	May 29	Article Presentations 1		<i>Class via Zoom</i>
3	June 3	Cognitive theories	Chapter 4	
	June 4	Sensation and perception + Memory	Chapter 5 + Bonus reading	
	June 5	Language	Chapter 6	<b>Research critique due 6/7</b>
4	June 10	<b>Exam 1</b>		
	June 11	Conceptual knowledge + Causal Reasoning	Chapter 7	
	June 12	Social cognition + Article Presentations 2	Chapter 7.1	<b>Policy brief topic due 6/14</b>
5	June 17	Theories of social development	Chapter 9	
	June 18	Attachment + Emotion	Chapter 11 + 10	<b>Annotated bibliography due 6/21</b>
	June 19	<b>No class</b>		
6	June 24	Self + Family and Peers	Chapter 11 + 12 + 13	
	June 25	Development of gender + bias + Moral development	Chapter 14 + 15	
	June 26	Article Presentations 3 + Peer feedback on policy briefs		<b>Rough draft due 6/26 (before class)</b>  <b>Peer feedback returned to partners by 6/28</b>
	July 1	<b>Exam 2</b>		<b>Policy brief due by 7/3</b>

## Other frequently asked questions:

### 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

### 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.

### 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.

### 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.

### 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.

### Are the exams cumulative?

No. Topics relating to research methods + other major concepts may appear on multiple exams though.

### Are the exams curved?

In the sense that only a certain number of students can get an A, a certain number can get a B, etc., no. In the other sense, occasionally, I'll change the total points the exam is out of if it appears the exam was harder than intended.

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

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

### Is there extra credit in this course?

No, but there are some opportunities to make up lost points. If you are unhappy with your grades associated with the research critique / research presentation, you can read an additional article and write another critique as a way of demonstrating that you learned from

your initial mistakes. You can also take the optional portion of Exam 2 to replace your Exam 1 grade.

**When are assignments due?**

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

**Are late assignments accepted?**

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

<b>Days Late</b>	<b>Penalty</b>
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 6 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.

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

Please only ask for a make-up exam in cases of a serious illness or some other kind of emergency. Writing and administering alternative exams takes a lot of time to ensure fairness to all students.

In the case of a conflict due to a religious holiday, you may request an alternative exam date; please make these requests within the first two weeks of class.

## **Some more important policies:**

### **1) 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.

### **2) 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!

### **3) 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.

### **4) 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.

### **5) 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.

### **5) 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.