PSYC 6376: Developmental Psychology
Spring 2022    CRN 29038

Instructor: Dr. April Gile Thomas
Email: athomas5@utep.edu
Office Hours: By appointment (virtually using course Zoom link)
Class Date and Time: Thursdays, 3:00-5:50 PM Mountain Time
Class Location: Meeting virtually, via Zoom (details below)
https://utep-edu.zoom.us/j/83681614197?pwd=VHduNWVaZk5EaHA0TnJmb1dhOEhTZz09
Meeting ID: 836 8161 4197
Passcode: usz9u2Np

Course Description: In this course students will explore, in depth, life-span development. An objective of this course is to introduce you to the major questions, debates, issues, and theories of developmental psychology. The course will provide an overview of the history of developmental psychology while integrating this background into contemporary research, policy, and applications. The first half of the course will cover the history and major debates and issues of developmental psychology. The second half of the course will cover the major theories of developmental psychology and aspects of development across different phases of the lifespan.

Readings:
Readings assembled for this seminar (see below) include empirical, theoretical, and review articles, as well as book chapters. The readings were selected to sample from various disciplines; article types (e.g., empirical research, review articles); and research strategies (e.g., laboratory analogs, file reviews, field work). Please be sure to read the assigned readings before the associated class date. All readings can be accessed via the class Blackboard website.

Student Requirements

1. Attendance and participation (20%)
   All students are expected to come to class prepared, having read the assigned readings ahead of time and ready to engage in active discussion of the course material. This course is largely discussion-based; therefore, students are expected to contribute to the discussion in a thoughtful manner that is respectful of other students’ views.

2. Weekly discussions and questions (20%)
   Students must read the assigned material prior to each class and participate in class discussion. Class meetings will focus on reading, thinking critically about, and integrating the readings to understand key developmental principles, theories, and topics. To encourage critical thinking and engagement with the material (not just passive absorption of it), students will be required to write between 3-5 questions or comments about the readings. These questions need to be posted to Blackboard by noon on the day before class and should be integrative and thoughtful, demonstrating that students have not only read the material but attempted to integrate the ideas. The questions/comments can tie in prior week’s topics as well.

3. Discussion leader & final week article presentation (20%)
   Students will each sign up to independently lead the class discussion of the readings for one week of the course. All students will be required to read the readings ahead of time and engage
in class discussion every week; however, it will be the primary responsibility of one student to
lead the discussion for his or her designated week. The format of this presentation/discussion is
flexible and may be decided by the student. Additionally, in the final week of class, each student
will select a developmental article that interests them which they will review and present to the
class (details to come about these brief presentations).

4. **Writing assignment (40%) – DUE 4/28/2022**
   a. Select from options below:
      i. **Literature review for journal submission.** Select a topic related to
developmental psychology and conduct a thorough literature review. Prepare a
written review for submission according to journal guidelines.
      ii. **Grant proposal.** Identify an appropriate funding mechanism and follow the
guidelines established for that mechanism. Propose a project with a
developmental psychology focus (using a developmental theory or framework,
as well as developmental research questions).
      iii. **Manuscript for journal submission.** Using a dataset (your own, your advisors,
mine, a public dataset), you will develop and test a research question and
hypothesis relevant to developmental psychology. Identify a journal and
prepare a publication-ready manuscript including standard APA sections
(Abstract, Introduction, Literature Review, Method, Results, Discussion,
References). Aim for 20-30 pages double-spaced (including tables, figures, and
references).

   b. Assignment option and topic must be approved by instructor by 3/24/2022. You
      should indicate which journal or grant you will be submitting to (if appropriate).

   c. Regardless of paper type, you should have a minimum of 10 sources post-2005.

**Policies**

**Academic Dishonesty**
It is the official policy of the university that all suspected cases or acts of alleged scholastic dishonesty must
be referred to the Dean of Students for investigation and appropriate disposition. Any student who
commits an act of scholastic dishonesty is subject to discipline. Scholastic dishonesty includes, but is not
limited to cheating, plagiarism, collusion, the submission for credit of any work or materials that are
attributable in whole or in part to another person, taking an examination for another person, any act
designed to give unfair advantage to a student or the attempt to commit such acts. Cheating or plagiarism
in this class will result in penalties that may include a letter in the student's file as well as failing the course.
The academic honesty code is available online at: http://sa.utep.edu/osccr/academic-integrity/

**Accommodations**
If you require accommodation, please contact the Center for Accommodations and Support Services
(CASS) at 915-747-5148 or via e-mail (cass@utep.edu) during the first week of the semester or visit their
office located in UTEP Union East, Room 106. They will help you with the required paperwork necessary
to obtain accommodation. For additional information, please visit the CASS website at
www.sa.utep.edu/cass

**Discussion Ground Rules**
1. **Respect Each Other.** To create a climate for open and honest dialogue and to encourage the
   broadest range of viewpoints, it is important for class participants to treat each other with
   respect. Name calling, accusations, verbal attacks, sarcasm, and other negative exchanges are
counterproductive to successful teaching and learning about topics.
2. **Discuss with the Purpose of Generating Greater Understanding.** The purpose of class discussions is to generate greater understanding about different topics. The expression of the broadest range of ideas, including dissenting views, accomplishes this goal. However, in expressing viewpoints, students should try to raise questions and comments in way that will promote learning, rather than defensiveness and conflict in other students.

3. **Don't Personalize the Dialogue.** Keep the discussion and comments on the topic, not on the individual. Don’t personalize the dialogue. Rather than personalizing the dialogue, please direct challenging comments or questions to the instructor or the entire class.

4. **Agree to Disagree.** Remember that it is OK to disagree with each other. The purpose of dialogue and discussion is not to reach a consensus, nor to convince each other of different viewpoints. Rather, the purpose of dialogue in the classroom is to reach higher levels of learning by examining different viewpoints and opinions.

5. **Participate and Share.** Everyone is expected to share. Keep in mind that the role of the instructor is to make sure that everyone’s voice is heard in class.
Course Agenda & Assigned Readings

*All readings should be completed before the course date listed

Week 1: History and Overview of Developmental Psychology (1/20/2022)

Week 2: Major Debates – Nature vs. Nurture (1/27/2022)

Week 3: Behavioral Genetics and Gene-Environment Interactions (2/3/2022)

Week 4: Differential Models of Development (2/10/2022)

Week 5: Major Debates – Continuity vs. Discontinuity; Stability vs. Change (2/17/2022)

**Week 6: Plasticity and Sensitive Periods of Development (2/24/2022)**

**Week 7: Approaches in Lifespan and Developmental Psychology (3/3/2022)**

**Week 8: Stage Theories of Development (3/10/2022)**
1. Lerner Chapter 15: Stage Theories of Development

**SPRING BREAK**

**Week 9: Contexts of Development (3/24/2022)  *Paper topic and format selection due***


**Week 10: Cognitive Development & Executive Functioning (3/31/2022)**


2. Best, Miller, & Jones (2009) – Executive functions after age 5: Changes and correlates


**Week 11: Psychosocial Development (4/7/2022)**


**Week 12: Moral Development (4/14/2022)**


**Week 13: Social Relationships (4/21/2022)**
5. Asselmann, E., & Specht., J. (2020). Taking the ups and downs at the rollercoaster of love: Associations between major life events in the domain of romantic relationships and the big five personality traits. *Developmental Psychology, 56*(9), 1803-1816. [http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/dev0001047](http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/dev0001047)

**Week 14: Autonomy & Social Influence (4/28/2022)  *Final paper due before class***


**Week 15: Miscellaneous mash-up (5/5/2022)**

5. Each student should also find and review one paper that they will present with to the class on a topic that is of interest to them.