

Advanced Topics in Developmental Psychology
Psychology 4311(CRN 29028)
Spring, 2022
Mondays & Wednesdays 1:30-2:50, PSYC 308

Instructor: Christine Potter, Ph.D.
Email: cepotter2@utep.edu
Office: Psychology 109
Office Hours: Wednesday 3:00-4:30 or by appointment
<https://utep-edu.zoom.us/j/81575350326?pwd=UFhUSTE1djl6VGIramE4aXNDL29HUT09>
TAs: Diana Uribe duribe@miners.utep.edu
 Rachel Williams rlwilliams4@miners.utep.edu

Course Description

What goes on in the minds of children? How do they learn about and understand the world around them? The goal of this course is to explore central issues in the study of cognitive development. We will review theoretical frameworks for understanding how thinking changes over time and discuss specific aspects of children's thinking, including how they perceive the world, what they learn and remember, and how they solve problems and gain the kind of knowledge that adults may take for granted.

At the end of the course, students should be able to...

- Describe ways in which children's thinking changes over time
- Reason about potential causes and effects of changes in children's thinking
- Compare and contrast different theoretical approaches to understanding human cognition and behavior
- Evaluate claims made based on empirical findings
- Develop the ability to express their ideas using clear and concise language

Course Materials

Most of your reading will come from your textbook and all supplementary materials will be available on Blackboard. You will need the textbook from the beginning of the class, and I will release other materials and assignments through Blackboard, so please make sure that you are checking it regularly.

Textbook: Children's Thinking (2020, Fifth Edition)

by Robert S. Siegler & Martha Wagner Alibali: Pearson

Note: This is a new edition, so it may be difficult to get a used copy, but the 4th edition is 15 years old, so please do get the most recent edition

Course Communication

We will be meeting in person, but we will still be taking advantage of a variety of online tools. I will post announcements and updates on **Blackboard**. Please come to my office hours, either in the Psych building or over **Zoom**. I really want to get to know you, and this is a large enough class that the best way for me to answer questions is likely to be in these smaller settings. You can also use the **Help Board** to ask questions of your classmates, and often, they can provide

helpful tips and answer questions more quickly than I can. If you do need to email me, please use “Psych 4311” in the subject of your email. One other important note is that if you have questions about your grades, I can only answer them face-to-face or if you have used your UTEP email address because of FERPA privacy rules.

Course Assignments & Grading

Assignments

Participation (24 pts). Because I recognize that there may be challenges in attending class this semester, you will have multiple ways to earn credit for attending class and engaging with the material. I will not track attendance on a daily basis, but I do expect you to come to class when you can and to be an active participant in your own learning. This class will be much more productive and interesting for everyone if you speak up and share your thoughts and questions!

‘Discussion Day’ Attendance (6 points). On 3 days during the semester (noted on the schedule), we will spend class breaking down empirical articles, which will be especially critical in helping you write your paper. For that reason, you will receive 2 points for being in class and contributing to the discussion. If for some important reason (health, family emergency), you cannot attend class that day, you can make up the points through an additional post on the Discussion Board, but I strongly encourage you to come if possible.

Discussion Posts (18 points). The other way that you can demonstrate your participation will be through the Discussion Board. Each week, we will use Blackboard to supplement in-class discussions. Prompts will be released after class on Wednesday, and your response is due by **Friday at 9pm**. No credit will be given for late posts. Your responses should be at least 100-150 words (a short paragraph), and you can either respond directly to the prompt or build on prior comments from your classmates. There will be 12 opportunities to earn points (2 pts each), including the first week where instead of posting publicly, you’ll be asked to fill out a short survey. You only need to respond to 9 (including the check-in questionnaire) to receive full credit, if you attend all Discussion Days. You will not receive points for additional posts, but I encourage you to use this as an opportunity to practice your writing and to learn from and engage with your classmates.

Quizzes (16 points). Quizzes will be released after class on Mondays and available through Blackboard. They are due before next class, and you will be able to see your grades within 24 hours of the due date. Quizzes are designed to be comprehension checks so that I can see if there are points of confusion for the whole class. There will be 11 quizzes (2 pts each), and I recommend that you take all of them as a way of making sure that you are studying regularly. However, your grade will be determined by your 8 highest scores, so if you don’t complete up to 3 quizzes, it will not affect your final grade.

Exams (120 points). There will be three exams, including the final. Midterm exams will each cover 1/3 of the course material and will be worth up to 40 points. The final exam will be longer and worth up to 80 points (2/3 of the questions will be about new material, 1/3 will be from earlier parts of the course). I will drop either your lowest midterm or half of the final. That is, your final point total will be whichever combination of the following gives you the highest grade:

- a) Exam 1 (up to 40) + Exam 2 (up to 40) + ½ Final (up to 40)
- b) Exam 1 (up to 40) + Final (up to 80)

c) Exam 2 (up to 40) + Final (up to 80)

All exams will take place online, using Blackboard. You do not have to take midterms during class time, but there will be one class time set aside for each test to make sure that you have time to take it. Because of this flexibility, makeup exams will be offered only under extreme circumstances, so please plan your time well.

Due dates: Exam 1: Monday, 2/21 at 9pm
 Exam 2: Monday, 4/4 at 9pm
 Final: Wednesday, 5/11 at 9pm

Paper (40 points). You will be asked to write a short paper (3-5 pages) that explores how cognitive development is described in the popular press. You will choose a popular press article from a list that I will provide and evaluate how accurately this article describes an empirical study. We will discuss this assignment in class and you'll receive a handout with more details. Note that papers will be graded on both content AND writing form/style. You should also know that all papers will be submitted to SafeAssign, a plagiarism detecting software.

Students who want help with their writing can come to office hours or work with the Writing Center, and you should plan well in advance of the due date if you want help. The paper will be due on 4/22, through Blackboard, and any paper not received by 11:59pm on the due date will lose 2 points for each day they are late, unless you can provide a documented reason why you couldn't complete the assignment on time.

Extra Credit opportunities

Participate in real research! In the Psychology department, we believe that experiencing research firsthand helps students understand course material and research methods. UTEP has a vibrant research tradition, and you can help contribute to what we know about human behavior. You will receive 2 extra credit points for every hour of research that you participate in, up to 4 hours (8 points total). To learn more, see the document on *SONA System Policies*.

Alternative. If you are unable to participate, or don't feel comfortable, you can still receive extra credit and learn more about the research process. Instead of participating in a study, you can write a 2-page summary of a research article. In your summary, you should describe the research question, how it was tested, and what the authors concluded. You will receive up to 2 points for each paper you choose to write, up to 4 (8 points total). Note that these summary papers are an alternative to being a SONA participant, and you can only receive up to 8 total points of extra credit for research engagement.

Grading

Participation (15 opportunities, 12 required)	24 pts
Quizzes (11 opportunities, 8 required)	16 pts
Exams (2 midterms, 1 final, weights adjusted)	120 pts
Paper	40 pts
Total	200 pts

Extra Credit Opportunities

SONA participation/summary papers 8 pts

Your final grade will be based on total points across the semester

A: 180 +

B: 160- 179

C: 140- 159

D: 120- 139

F: 119 or below

Requirements & Expectations

Attendance

I expect you to attend class and to actively participate in discussions. By engaging in discussions with your classmates, you have the opportunity to explore the material more fully and to help me understand what you are interested in and/or confused by, and attending class regularly will make it easier for you not to fall behind. The only excused reasons to miss class will be family or health-related emergencies (including concern over COVID exposure). **Please stay home if you have been diagnosed with COVID-19 or are experiencing COVID-19 symptoms.** I will be recording lectures and will post the content to Blackboard, so you will have access to the course material. I also encourage you to reach out to classmates for notes or any other information that you may have missed- the class Help Board can be a great resource if you choose to use it.

Note: The use of recordings will enable you to have access to class lectures, group discussions, and so on in the event you miss a class meeting due to illness or other extenuating circumstance. Our use of such technology is governed by the Federal Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and UTEP's acceptable-use policy. A recording of class sessions will be kept and stored by UTEP, in accordance with FERPA and UTEP policies. Your instructor will not share the recordings of your class activities outside of course participants, which include your fellow students, teaching assistants, or graduate assistants, and any guest faculty or community-based learning partners with whom we may engage during a class session. **You may not share recordings outside of this course.** Doing so may result in disciplinary action.

Other expectations

Take notes. With posted lectures and slides available, you may be tempted to sit back and just listen, or to try to write down every word on the slides. Neither of these is the best way to learn! Take notes about the information NOT available in the text on the slide, and this will make it much easier for you to study for quizzes and exams.

Research suggests that many students learn less when using laptops or portable electronic devices than when using paper and pencil (Mueller & Oppenheimer, 2014) and that use of laptops can be distracting for nearby classmates (Sana, Weston, & Cepeda, 2013). I will leave the decision of whether or not to take notes on laptops or other devices up to individual students, and I understand that some students may have a specific reason why they need to take notes in this format. However, in light of the research, students choosing to use laptops or other screens will be asked to sit on one side of the classroom. I also ask that you please **refrain from looking at irrelevant websites and apps** on either your computer or phone. It's surprisingly easy to tell when some is paying attention vs. shopping online and distracting when things are happening on screens around you, and so out of respect for your classmates, please wait until after class to check your email/Twitter/TikTok, etc.

Keep up with readings. All readings should be done before the associated class. Lectures and readings will have some, but not complete overlap, and it will be easier to understand lectures if you have already read the chapters and especially the papers that we'll be discussing. It will be very difficult to catch up on all the reading if you wait until the day before an exam, so help yourself by doing it as we go.

Engage with your classmates. This course will be a lot more fun if you share your thoughts and ask questions. In addition to actively participating in class, I recommend forming study groups where you can share notes and prepare for exams together.

Show consideration in all communication. Whether you are communicating online or in-person, you are expected to show the same level of respect for others' views. Sometimes, that is especially challenging in writing, but across any platform, the guiding principles should be kindness and understanding.

- Always consider audience. This is a college-level course; therefore all communication should reflect polite consideration of others' ideas.
- Respect and courtesy much be provided to classmates and to the instructor at all times. No harassment or inappropriate postings or comments will be tolerated.
- When reacting to someone else's message, address the ideas, not the person.
- Neither Blackboard nor the classroom are public venues; all comments should be considered private and confidential. Whatever is posted in these online spaces is intended for classmates and instructors only. Please do not copy documents and paste them to a publicly accessible website, blog, or other space.
- Please turn off or silence your phone during class.

What you can expect from me.

- I will be professional and respectful in all interactions with students.
- I will respond to communication promptly. Emails will be answered within 2 business days (messages sent over weekends and holidays may not be answered as quickly).
- Grading will be prompt and transparent.
- I will be available during office hours or alternative times to discuss course materials, assignments, or any concerns you have about the class.
- I will solicit and incorporate student feedback at least once during the semester to try to make the class more enjoyable and useful for you.

Academic Integrity

I hope this goes without saying, but academic misconduct will not be tolerated. Your work should be your own, and if you are using another author's ideas, you should provide citations in your papers and posts. If I suspect any type of plagiarism, I am required to report the case immediately, with no exceptions.

Academic dishonesty is prohibited and is considered a violation of the UTEP Handbook of Operating Procedures. It includes, but is not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, and collusion. Cheating may involve copying from or providing information to another student, possessing unauthorized materials during a test, or falsifying research data on laboratory reports. Plagiarism occurs when someone intentionally or knowingly represents the words or ideas of another as

ones' own. Collusion involves collaborating with another person to commit any academically dishonest act. Any act of academic dishonesty attempted by a UTEP student is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. All suspected violations of academic integrity at The University of Texas at El Paso must be reported to the [Office of Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution \(OSCCR\)](#) for possible disciplinary action. To learn more, please visit [HOOP: Student Conduct and Discipline](#).

Technology requirements

Course content will be available through Blackboard. Ensure your UTEP e-mail account is working and that you have access to the Web and a stable web browser. Mozilla Firefox and Google Chrome are the most supported browsers for Blackboard; other browsers may cause complications with the system. When having technical difficulties, update your browser, clear your cache, or try switching to another browser. You may need to play videos (through Blackboard and on the web), so make sure that your computer hardware and software are up-to-date and able to access all parts of the course.

If you encounter technical difficulties beyond your scope of troubleshooting, please contact the [Help Desk](#).

Other important information

Due dates & late work

I know you're busy and that this is a complicated time. But, I urge you to complete work as early as possible. Because you have a lot of flexibility on dropping assignments and when to do them, I do not plan to accept late work, except under extraordinary circumstances, and documentation may be requested. If you have a family or health emergency, I will work with you to give you the best possible chance to succeed, but please contact me as early as possible if a situation arises.

If you have technical difficulties that prevent you from uploading or submitting work, please take a screenshot and send it to me.

Drop Policy

If you determine that you are unable to complete the course successfully, please let me know and then contact the [Registrar's Office](#) to initiate the drop process. If you do not, you are at risk of receiving an "F" for the course.

Accommodations Policy

The University is committed to providing reasonable accommodations and auxiliary services to students, staff, faculty, job applicants, applicants for admissions, and other beneficiaries of University programs, services and activities with documented disabilities in order to provide them with equal opportunities to participate in programs, services, and activities in compliance with sections 503 and 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 and the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act (ADAAA) of 2008. Reasonable accommodations will be made unless it is determined that doing so would cause undue hardship on the University. Students requesting an accommodation based on a disability must register with the [UTEP Center for Accommodations and Support Services](#) (CASS). Contact the Center for Accommodations and Support Services at 915-747-5148, or email them at cass@utep.edu, or apply for accommodations online via the [CASS portal](#).

If you have a disability and need classroom accommodations, please contact The Center for Accommodations and Support Services (CASS) at (915) 747-5148, or by email to cass@utep.edu, or visit their office located in UTEP Union East, Room 106. For additional information, please visit the CASS website at <https://www.utep.edu/student-affairs/cass/>. If you choose, I also encourage you to reach out to me if there are ways that I can support you and help you take advantage of the resources and accommodations.

COVID-19 Precautions

Please stay home if you have been diagnosed with COVID-19 or are experiencing COVID-19 symptoms. If you are feeling unwell, please let me know as soon as possible, so that we can work on appropriate accommodations. If you have tested positive for COVID-19, you are encouraged to report your results to covidaction@utep.edu, so that the Dean of Students Office can provide you with support and help with communication with your professors. The Student Health Center is equipped to provide COVID 19 testing.

The Center for Disease Control and Prevention recommends that people in areas of substantial or high COVID-19 transmission wear face masks when indoors in groups of people. The best way that Miners can take care of Miners is to get the vaccine. If you still need the vaccine, it is widely available in the El Paso area, and will be available at no charge on campus during the first week of classes. For more information about the current rates, testing, and vaccinations, please visit epstrong.org

Other important resources

UTEP offers a variety of services to support your learning and well-being. Please take advantage of any of them that you think might help you!

Technology Resources

- [Help Desk](#): Students experiencing technological challenges (email, Blackboard, software, etc.) can submit a ticket to the UTEP Helpdesk for assistance. Contact the Helpdesk via phone, email, chat, website, or in person if on campus.

Academic Resources

- [UTEP Library](#): Access a wide range of resources including online, full-text access to thousands of journals and eBooks plus reference service and librarian assistance for enrolled students.
- [University Writing Center \(UWC\)](#): Submit papers here for assistance with writing style and formatting, ask a tutor for help and explore other writing resources.
- [RefWorks](#): A bibliographic citation tool; check out the RefWorks tutorial and Fact Sheet and Quick-Start Guide.

Individual Resources

- [Military Student Success Center](#): Assists personnel in any branch of service to reach their educational goals.
- [Center for Accommodations and Support Services](#): Assists students with ADA-related accommodations for coursework, housing, and internships.
- [Counseling and Psychological Services](#): Provides a variety of counseling services including individual, couples, and group sessions as well as career and disability assessments.

Course Schedule

Every attempt will be made to follow the guidelines and plans in this syllabus as much as possible. However, I reserve the right to make changes (e.g., the schedule of topics) if needed.

Date	Topics	Reading/Assignments DUE
<i>Unit 1: Theories & approaches to studying cognitive development</i>		
W 1/19	<i>What will happen in this class?</i>	
M 1/24	<i>Key issues in cognitive development</i>	Ch.1, pp. 1-16 Check-in questionnaire
W 1/26	<i>Piaget's theory of development I</i>	Ch. 2., pp. 20-34 Quiz 1 (before class)
F 1/28		Discussion Post 1
M 1/31	<i>Piaget's theory II</i>	Ch. 2, pp. 34-49
W 2/2	<i>Socio-cultural theories I</i>	Ch. 4 Quiz 2
F 2/4		Discussion Post 2
M 2/7	<i>Socio-cultural theories II</i>	Bronfenbrenner, 1994
W 2/9	<i>Information processing approaches</i>	Ch. 3, pp. 50-58, 64-71 Quiz 3
F 2/11		Discussion Post 3
M 2/14	<i>Dynamic systems & neuro-constructivism</i>	Karmiloff-Smith, 2006
W 2/16	<i>Comparing theories</i> **Discussion day**	Quiz 4
M 2/21	Exam 1	

Unit 2: Building blocks of cognition		
W 2/23	<i>Perceptual development: Vision</i>	Ch. 5, pp. 99-116
F 2/25		Discussion Post 4
M 2/28	<i>Perceptual development: Hearing</i>	Ch. 5, pp. 117-130;
W 3/2	<i>Language: Sounds & words</i>	Ch 6., pp. 131-151 Ferguson & Lew-Williams, 2016 Quiz 5
F 3/4		Discussion Post 5
M 3/7	<i>Language: Grammar & communication</i>	Ch 6., 151-163 Pyers, 2012
W 3/9	<i>Frameworks for studying memory</i>	Ch. 7, pp. 164-177 Quiz 6
F 3/11		Discussion Post 6
M 3/14	Spring break	
W 3/16	Spring break	
M 3/21	<i>Memory processes & changes</i>	Ch. 7, pp. 178-196
W 3/23	<i>Concepts & representations</i>	Ch. 8, pp. 197-208 Quiz 7
F 3/25		Discussion Post 7
M 3/28	<i>Children's early concepts</i>	Ch. 8, pp. 208-224
W 3/30	<i>Developmental science in the popular press</i> **Discussion day**	Lewkowicz & Hansen-Tift, 2012 Quiz 8
M 4/4	Exam 2	
Unit 3: Topics of children's thinking		
W 4/6	<i>Social cognition: Self & others</i>	Ch. 9, pp. 225-249
F 4/8		Discussion Post 8
M 4/11	<i>Social cognition: Learning from others</i>	Warneken & Tomasello, 2006
W 4/13	<i>Problem solving</i>	Ch. 10, pp. 250-268 Quiz 9
F 4/15		Discussion Post 9
M 4/18	<i>Reasoning</i>	Ch. 10, pp. 268-280
W 4/20	<i>Academic skills: math</i>	Ch. 11, pp. 281-296 Quiz 10
F 4/22		Discussion Post 10 PAPER DUE
M 4/25	<i>Academic skills: reading & writing</i>	Ch. 11, pp. 297-312
W 4/27	<i>What did we learn about children's thinking?</i> **Discussion day**	Ch 12 Horowitz, 2000 Quiz 11
M 5/2	Exam review	
W 5/4	Final Exam	DUE by 9pm on 5/11