

PS241 – Developmental Psychology Syllabus

COURSE INFORMATION

Course number & section: CAS PS241 A1

Course term: Summer 2021 (May 24th – June 30th)

Course days & times: Mon & Wed, 9:00AM – 12:30PM

Course location: CAS 116 (in person) or Zoom (remote)

Office hours: Mon & Wed, 12:30PM – 1:30PM (or by appointment) via Zoom

Instructor: Meredith Pecukonis, M.A.

Email: mpecukon@bu.edu

Lecture Zoom link:

<https://bostonu.zoom.us/j/92784873448?pwd=MGRPWjBrNlcvRHdOQmRXRVlUc25JUT09>

Office Hours Zoom Link:

<https://bostonu.zoom.us/j/98996671336?pwd=N243S2xrUy93MENFcTd2YURmTmxpQT09>

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course will focus on human development from conception through adolescence. We will discuss age-related changes that humans experience during this period, along with relevant theoretical explanations. While the primary focus on this course is on “typical” development, we will briefly discuss how developmental norms vary depending on one’s biology, life experiences, and culture. Throughout this semester, we will examine the following broad questions about child development:

How do children develop in the physical, cognitive, language, and socio-emotional domains? This course is organized by topic, covering these four major domains of development. We will begin the semester by discussing themes and methods, biological foundations of development, prenatal development and infancy, and then will examine theories, methods, and research findings in each of these domains.

What are the central themes and controversies in the field of developmental psychology? We will critically analyze the theoretical and empirical roots of core controversies about child development such as nature vs. nurture and developmental continuity vs. discontinuity. We will consider the role of developmental processes in child outcomes and the ways in which past experiences influence the child’s current functioning.

How do researchers measure the constructs they have identified as important in children’s development? In reviewing the findings of relevant research studies, we will analyze the methods that researchers have adopted in their assessment of child development and consider whether these methods are valid and ethical. We will also consider the limitations of these studies, and discuss how future research might address these limitations.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

This course will address the Hub Learning Outcomes of *Social Inquiry 1* and *Critical Thinking*. By the end of the course, students will be able to:

1. Apply major theories of child development (e.g., ecological systems theory, social learning theory, sociocultural theory, attachment theory) and empirical research to describe the

influences that parents, peers, schools, neighborhoods, society, culture, and biology have on children's development. (Hub Learning Outcome: Social Inquiry 1)

2. Differentiate universal and culturally-specific aspects of child development, and characterize gene-environment interactions in child development. (Hub Learning Outcome: Social Inquiry 1)

3. Deconstruct one's own arguments and peers' arguments about key controversies in the field of developmental psychology, and apply findings from child development research to educational, clinical, and policy settings. (Hub Learning Outcome: Critical Thinking)

4. Critically evaluate strengths and weaknesses of developmental methods and research design, differentiate intuitive and folk beliefs about child development from empirically-supported knowledge, and assess generalizability of experimental data. (Hub Learning Outcome: Critical Thinking)

5. Analyze competing theoretical interpretations of classic child development studies and evaluate scientific claims about neural, cognitive, and social processes underlying child development. (Hub Learning Outcome: Critical Thinking)

LfA ATTENDANCE & LECTURE RECORDINGS

For this course, we will use BU's *Learn from Anywhere* (LfA) model, meaning that you can (1) attend lectures synchronously in-person, (2) attend lectures remotely and synchronously via Zoom, or (3) watch lecture recordings asynchronously on your own time. Lectures will be recorded and posted on Blackboard within 48 hours of the original lecture time. Lecture recordings will be accessible to *all students registered for this course* via their password-protected Blackboard account. Students should not share lecture recordings with anyone who is not registered for PS241. Furthermore, students do not have permission to post lecture recordings on social media or other public platforms. Students have the right to opt-out of being part of the lecture recordings – in such cases, students should contact me ASAP. All powerpoint slides and notes will be posted online ahead of time.

If you are planning to come in person, please remember to reserve a seat on BU's InClassLfA app here: <https://wwwapp.bumc.bu.edu/roomscheduling/Authentication/Login>.

You can read more about BU's LfA model here:

<https://www.bu.edu/provost/students/undergraduate/covid-19-resources-for-undergraduate-students/>.

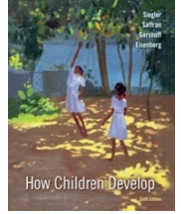
ONLINE PLATFORMS

Zoom: Lectures will be held in person and live-streamed via Zoom. Lectures will also be recorded via Zoom and posted later on Blackboard. Office hours will be conducted in person and via Zoom. Zoom links are provided above.

Blackboard: I have created a page for our course on the Blackboard Online Platform (<http://learn.bu.edu>). You should familiarize yourself with our course page, as this is where I will be posting all announcements, lecture recordings, powerpoints, discussion readings, homework assignments, and grades. ***Make it a habit to check our course page everyday!***

TEXTBOOK & DISCUSSION READINGS

Siegler, Saffran, Eisenberg, & Gershoff. (2020). *How Children Develop*. ISBN: 1319184561. Either the 5th or 6th edition of the textbook is fine – I will be using the 6th edition. Copies of both editions are available for free through the BU library. Please note that additional discussion readings will be assigned throughout the course and posted on our course's Blackboard page under the "Discussion Readings" tab. ***Material from assigned readings will appear on the exams.***



EVALUATION & GRADE BREAKDOWN

Your final grade in this course will be determined by three components: weekly discussion board posts, homework assignments, and a third component in which you can choose one of two tracks – the exam track or the project track. These components are described in more detail below.

% of Final Grade	Component
75%	3 exams <u>OR</u> project
15%	3 homework assignments
10%	5 weekly discussion board posts

First component: HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENTS

There will be 3 homework assignments (5% per assignment for a total of 15%). More information about each of these assignments will be posted on Blackboard under the "Homework Assignments" tab. Assignments should be uploaded in .doc/.docx format.

Homework assignment due dates: All homework assignments will be due on Fridays! Assignments should be turned in by 11:59PM ET on the due dates specified below.

- Homework assignment 1 – Friday 6/4
- Homework assignment 2 – Friday 6/11
- Homework assignment 3 – Friday 6/25

Late homework assignments: You are expected to turn homework assignments in on time. Extensions on homework assignments may be given in the case of unavoidable circumstances – severe illness/medical emergencies, family emergencies, and compulsory civic/university duties. ***If you need an extension, it is your responsibility to notify me of such circumstances as soon as possible, ideally before the date that the homework is due!***

Second component: WEEKLY DISCUSSION BOARD POSTS

Every week, you will be responsible for completing 2 assigned readings and posting on our Blackboard course discussion board. There will be 5 discussion boards (2% per discussion board for a total of 10%). Assigned readings will be posted on Blackboard under the "Discussion Readings" tab. Discussion board threads will be posted on Blackboard under the "Discussion Board" tab – this is also where you will make your discussion board posts. These discussion readings will complement what we talk about in lecture and will help you learn more about the types of studies that are currently being conducted in the field of developmental psychology.

Content of discussion board posts: For each discussion board, I will provide a couple of questions to help guide the discussion. In your discussion board posts, you should make sure that you answer these questions. You can also talk about how the information in the readings relates to lecture material, current events, and/or personal experiences. **To get full credit (2 points), you must create a post (1 point) and respond to a classmate's post (1 point).**

Late discussion board posts: Discussion boards will close on **Sunday evenings at 11:59pm ET**. You should have plenty of time to complete the assigned readings and discussion board posts each week. To receive full credit, please make sure to make your discussion board posts before this deadline.

Third component: YOUR CHOICE!

I recognize that not all students learn or engage with course material in the same way, and therefore I believe that students should have a choice in how they would like to be evaluated in a course. Therefore, for the third component of your grade, you are able to select one of two "tracks" in this course. You can select track 1, which is the more "traditional" exam track in which 75% of your grade will be determined by your scores across 3 exams. Or, you can select track 2, which is a "project" track in which 75% of your grade will be determined by your score on a final project.

Track 1: EXAMS

There will be 3 exams (25% per exam for a total of 75%). All exams will be multiple choice, non-cumulative, and closed-book.

Exam dates: On the date of the exam, you will have 12 hours to complete the exam online via Blackboard. I will provide specific instructions on how to access the exams at a later date.

- Exam 1 – Wednesday 6/2
- Exam 2 – Monday 6/14
- Exam 3 – Wednesday 6/30

Make-up exams: You are expected to take exams on the dates that they are scheduled. Make-up exams can be given in the case of unavoidable circumstances – severe illness/medical emergencies, family emergencies, and compulsory civic/university duties.

If you need to miss an exam, it is your responsibility to notify me of such circumstances as soon as possible, ideally before the date of that exam. Make-up exams should be taken within one week of the original exam date.

Track 2: PROJECT

The guidelines for this track are intentionally vague because I want you to decide what will best support your learning and engagement with course material. This project could be a review paper, a study proposal, a podcast, a video, or some other creative project. You will need to submit a project proposal (25%) to me for approval before completing your final project (50%). **I highly encourage you to come talk to me about your project idea during office hours.** Grading rubrics for the project proposal and final project are posted on Blackboard.

Project Proposal: You must write up a project proposal and submit it via Blackboard by 11:59PM ET on Wednesday 6/2. This proposal will make up **25%** of your project grade.

Final Project: Your final project must be submitted via Blackboard by 11:59PM ET on **Wednesday 6/30**. The final project will make up the remaining **50%** of your project grade.

EXTRA CREDIT & FINAL GRADES

I *may* provide opportunities for extra credit throughout the semester – any extra credit opportunities will be announced during lecture and posted on Blackboard.

At the end of the semester, grades will be assigned as follows:

A	94-100%
A-	90-93%
B+	87-89%
B	84-86%
B-	80-83%
C+	77-79%
C	74-76%
C-	70-73%
D	60-69%
F	<60%

OFFICE HOURS & EMAIL

I highly encourage each of you to meet with me before or after lecture or during my office hours. The purpose of office hours is to talk to me about course content, your learning needs, or your interests and life outside of the classroom. I am also available to talk to you about professional development topics (career paths, research experience, graduate school, etc). I am also accessible via email (mpecukon@bu.edu). I will do my best to respond to all emails within 48 hours. Please note that I may be slower to reply to emails that are sent over the weekend.

ACADEMIC CONDUCT

It is your responsibility to be familiar with the CAS Academic Conduct Code (<http://www.bu.edu/academics/policies/academic-conduct-code/>) – seriously, please take a couple of minutes to read this! It is my responsibility to report any cases of suspected academic misconduct to the Dean's Office. Therefore, cases of suspected academic misconduct will be referred to the Dean's Office – no warnings. The Dean's Office judges that academic misconduct has occurred, the assignment or exam in question will receive a grade of zero.

ACCOMMODATIONS

If you are a student with a documented disability and have already received accommodations from the university, please send me your letter as soon as possible so that I can make sure that I am providing you with the appropriate accommodations. If you are a student who does not have a documented disability but think that you may benefit from accommodations, I encourage you to contact the Office for Disability & Access Services at (617) 353-3658 or access@bu.edu as soon as possible to coordinate accommodation requests.

CLASSROOM EXPECTATIONS

- Remember that learning is an active, internally-driven process – you get out of it what you put into it. I will provide opportunities for activities and discussion during class time. These discussions will be much more enjoyable if you participate!

- That being said, this course may foster discussion of sensitive topics. Be respectful and empathetic when interacting with your classmates, but also treat yourself with compassion. Recognize moments when you need to “lean in” or “step back” from the conversation.
- I strive to promote diversity, equity, and inclusion in the classroom. That being said, my commitment to this does not make me immune to bias and discrimination. I encourage anyone who experiences or observes unfair or hostile treatment on the basis of identity to speak out for justice and support, within the moment of the incident or after the incident has passed. The university is also in the process of setting up an anonymous reporting system, which I will share with you all once it is available.
- Please reach out to me if you have any questions or problems related to this course, academics, or life more broadly. It is a difficult time to be juggling all the responsibilities of young adulthood in the middle of a pandemic! Do not be afraid to seek help from me and/or your classmates so that we can support you.

ON CAMPUS RESOURCES

- BU libraries: [BU Libraries | Boston University](#)
- Writing center: [The CAS Writing Center | Writing Program \(bu.edu\)](#)
- Center for career development: [Center for Career Development \(bu.edu\)](#)
- Academic advising: [Boston University Undergraduate Advising | Undergraduate Advising & Student Success \(bu.edu\)](#)
- Educational resource center (peer tutoring, writing assistance, conversation groups, skill building): [Educational Resource Center \(bu.edu\)](#)
- Disability & access services: [Disability & Access Services \(bu.edu\)](#)
- Newbury center for first generation students: [Newbury Center](#)
- Marsh chapel (interdenominational): [Marsh Chapel | Boston University \(bu.edu\)](#)
- Student health services (behavioral medicine): [Behavioral Medicine | Student Health Services \(bu.edu\)](#)
- Student employment office: [Student Employment Office \(bu.edu\)](#)
- Undergraduate research opportunities program: [Undergraduate Research Opportunities Program \(bu.edu\)](#)
- IT help: [IT Help Center : TechWeb : Boston University \(bu.edu\)](#)

LECTURE SCHEDULE

This is a tentative lecture schedule. We may take more or less time on each topic, and I reserve the right to add or remove topics throughout the semester. Any changes made to the course schedule will be announced during lecture and posted in an announcement on Blackboard.

Week	Date	Topics covered in lecture	Textbook chapters to read
Week 1	Mon 5/24	Methods & Themes in Developmental Psychology Prenatal Development	Chapter 1 Chapter 2
	Wed 5/26	Brain Development and Behavioral Genetics Perception and Motor Development in Infancy	Chapter 3 Chapter 5
Week 2	Mon 5/31	<i>Memorial Day – No Classes</i>	

	Wed 6/2	Track 1: Exam 1 Track 2: Project proposal due	
	Fri 6/4	<i>Substitute Monday Classes</i> Cognitive Development	Chapter 4
Week 3	Mon 6/7	Language Development	Chapter 6
	Wed 6/9	Conceptual Development Moral Development	Chapter 7 Chapter 14
Week 4	Mon 6/14	Track 1: Exam 2	
	Wed 6/16	Social Development Peer Relationships	Chapter 9 Chapter 13
Week 5	Mon 6/21	Emotional Development Attachment	Chapter 10 Chapter 11
	Wed 6/23	Gender Development	Chapter 15
Week 6	Mon 6/28	Class choice (topic TBD) – more information about this available on Blackboard	
	Wed 6/30	Track 1: Exam 3 Track 2: Final project due!	

OTHER IMPORTANT DATES

- Fri 5/28 – last day to add/drop/audit (and last day for tuition refunds!)
- Fri 6/4 – Homework 1 due
- Fri 6/11 – Homework 2 due
- Wed 6/16 – last day to drop with a “W”
- Fri 6/25 – Homework 3 due
- Every Sunday at 11:59PM ET – weekly discussion board posts due