

This is not a current syllabus. Use this Winter'15 syllabus to get an idea of course content for:

Cognitive Science 380: Special Topics in Developmental Psychology
Winter 2015

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The seminar topic for this year is cognitive development during the preschool years. We will examine a number of realms in which preschoolers are described as undergoing cognitive change, among them: perception, attention, memory, categorization, and reasoning. We will also review children's emerging "theories of mind." We will anchor our reading of current literature in two theories--those of Piaget and Vygotsky.

We will also ground our discussions in observational experiences--these derived from weekly observations you will make at the Northfield Day Care Center. You will be introduced to observation procedures the first week of class. Each student will be assigned to a weekly observation period (60 minutes), during which observation and interaction with children will take place.

I have several goals for this course. One is to have you develop the skills necessary to read and critique articles in the primary literature. As you will see, several of the readings for the course are journal articles or book chapters, designed for an audience of developmental psychologists. I hope by course's end you feel comfortable in the literature, and are able to evaluate the arguments and the empirical designs used by developmental psychologists. A second goal is for us to have lively discussions. This goal demands that all of us come to class regularly, having both completed the reading and having thought about the reading. Finally, I hope through the observations you will do that you will have the chance to apply theory to real-world occurrences.

Course requirements are designed to implement the course goals. First is weekly attendance at your observation sessions. I'll ask you each class to report on your observations. A second course requirement is a final paper. More details on this later, but it may take the form of either: 1) a literature review on some topic relevant to the course; 2) a research proposal for a study you would conduct if you had the time and other resources; 3) an empirical report of an observational study you design and carry out. The paper is worth 25% of your final grade. I assume each of you will have read and become familiar with the booklet "Academic Honesty in the Writing of College Papers," available from the Associate Dean of the College in the preparation of this paper.

Each seminar participant will be responsible for leading two discussions (either in teams of two or three—we'll discuss this on the first days of class). Each team will be responsible for doing background reading and leading discussion on the assigned topic. For each presentation, the team will prepare a written outline of their plan for the class period, bibliography of other sources consulted (besides the class readings). Each presentation will count for 20% of the course grade (so 40% total). Presentations will be evaluated on the team's preparation, organization, ability to confine the discussion to the time allotted and general quality of the presentation, as

well as the quality of the outline and bibliography handed in at the beginning of class

On days when you are *not* leading seminar, you still have an obligation to come to class prepared to discuss. I expect each seminar member to attend regularly, (absences only in extreme circumstances), to participate actively in discussions, and to complete reading assignments prior to the discussion. A seminar depends vitally on the commitment, effort, and enthusiasm of all the participants. In addition, seminar meetings are only as lively and interesting as all members make them. To encourage and assess your fulfillment of this course requirement, I will ask you to generate one (or more) questions for discussion on the reading. These questions will be assessed on a 10-point scale by the presenters (who will report their ratings independently to me), and by me. My ratings will also reflect the quality of your participation for a particular class session. 30% of your course grade will come from the average ratings over the course of the semester.

There are no midterm or final examinations in this seminar. To recap, final grades will be given according to the following weights: Final papers, 25%, Class presentation 40% (total), class questions and participation (30%). The final 5% of your grade will be based on your attendance at observation sessions.

This seminar has a textbook—it's one I wrote based on my previous experiences teaching this and other cognitive developmental seminars. I've been asked by the publisher to work on a revision, so I particularly invite your feedback during the term. The book is entitled, *Cognitive Development: Infancy Through Adolescence*, and I can honestly say it was written with the able Carleton student in mind! On the pages that follow, the book is referred to by the acronym, CDITA.

I'm excited about the seminar, and hope you will be, too. Office hours will be announced shortly, and I invite you to make use of them to discuss course material, or other topics of mutual interest.

Date Topic and Assignments

- Mon 1/5 Overview and organizational issues
Film: Childhood: In the Land of the Giants
- Wed 1/7 Observing children
Meeting with Sarah Kaul, Director, Northfield Day Care Center
Read: CDITA, Ch. 1, Ch. 2 (start)
- Mon 1/12 Observations begin
A review of Piagetian and Vygotskian theories
Read CDITA, ch. 2 (finish)
- Wed 1/14 Other descriptions of preschool cognition
Read: R. Gelman (1979); Bjorklund & Green (1992) J. Flavell (1992)
- Mon 1/19 Pretense and play in cognitive development
Read: Lillard, Lerner, Hopkins, Dore, Smith & Palmquist (2013)
- Wed 1/21 A day off! (Think of it as minimal “comp time” for your observations!)
Get started on reading for next Monday
- Mon 1/26 Perceptual processes in preschoolers
Read: CDITA, ch. 6 (up through p. 177)
- Wed 1/28 Attention in preschoolers
CDITA, ch. 6 (finish)
- Mon 2/2 Memorial development I.
Read: CDITA, ch. 7 (up through p. 223)
- Wed 2/4 Memorial development II.
Read: Principe, Cherson, DiPuppo
& Schindewolf (2012); Waterman & Blades (2013)
- Mon 2/9 MT BREAK (ok, take the day off. You’re welcome).
- Wed 2/11 Conceptual development
Read: CDITA, ch. 7 (finish)

- Mon 2/16 Reasoning and thinking processes
Read: CDITA, ch. 8 (up through p. 256)
Proposals for Final Projects Due
- Wed 2/18 Planning and goal setting in preschoolers
Read: Attance, (2008), Benigno, Byrd, McNamara,
Berg, & Farrar (2011)
- Mon 2/23 Egocentrism and the appearance/reality distinction
Read: Moll, Meltzoff, Merzsch, & Tomasello (2013); Deak (2006)
- Wed 2/25 A day off! (Think of it as minimal “comp time” for your observations!)
Get started on reading for next Monday
- Mon 3/2 Preschoolers’ theories of mind
Read: CDITA, ch. 8 (finish)
Read: Lillard (1993)
- Wed 3/4 Transitioning to kindergarten: Numeracy & literacy
Read: CDITA ch. 11 (pp. 355-369); Ramani & Siegler (2011);
Sheridan, Knoche, Kupzyk, Edwards, & Marvin (2011)
- Fri 3/6 Observations end
- Mon 3/9 Talking to practioners: How preschool programs foster cognitive and social
development (guest speakers)
Final papers due
- Wed 3/11 Wrap up /brief presentations of final projects

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