

SAN DIEGO STATE UNIVERSITY  
DEVELOPMENTAL PSYCHOLOGY (PSY 230)  
COURSE SYLLABUS  
FALL 2008

TIME: Tuesdays, 4:00 pm – 6:40 pm

LOCATION: AL 105

INSTRUCTOR: Dr. Sara J Unsworth

CONTACT: (619) 594-1327 E-mail: [unsworth@sciences.sdsu.edu](mailto:unsworth@sciences.sdsu.edu)

OFFICE HOURS: Tuesdays, 2:00 pm – 3:30 pm in LS 24B

PREREQUISITE: PSY 101 Introductory Psychology

TEACHING ASSISTANT: Ana Dowell EMAIL: [anadowell@gmail.com](mailto:anadowell@gmail.com)

DESCRIPTION:

In PSY 230 (Developmental Psychology), we will learn about psychological development of normal individuals from conception through childhood, adolescence, and maturity, with an emphasis on interdependence of various periods of the individual's life. We will explore the various theories and methods used to study psychological development, as well as the advantages and disadvantages associated with each. We will also examine the ways in which these theories and methodologies influence what we think "normal" and "development" is supposed to look like.

Required Textbook:

Kail, R.V., & Cavanaugh, J.C. (2004). *Human development: A life-span view* (4<sup>th</sup> ed.). Thomson/Wadsworth.

\* Other readings are required for specific classes. These (very short!) readings will be made available to you via Blackboard. The schedule of readings appears in the Class Schedule below.

Over the course of the semester, you will learn to:

1. Define development by describing what is changing and the nature of that change.
2. Identify the biological and sociocultural factors that influence psychological development.
3. Identify the metaphors and assumptions that underlie developmental theories and describe ways in which these assumptions affect the study of development.
4. Compare and contrast theoretical perspectives by listing advantages and disadvantages associated with each perspective.
5. List and describe different methods used to study development.
6. Examine the validity of conclusions drawn from developmental studies.
7. Contextualize the study of development by connecting developmental research to personal interests and to community issues and current events.
8. Design a study by:
  - a) Developing hypotheses
  - b) Operationalizing hypotheses
  - c) Choosing methods that are appropriate for testing specific research questions and hypotheses.
  - d) Articulating conclusions that can be drawn depending on research outcomes.

## **Assignments:**

Midterm exam – 20% of final grade

Final exam – 25% of final grade

Two short research proposals – 40% of grade

Homework and in-class assignments – 15% of final grade

Each exam will consist of multiple choice, true-false, and problem solving questions. We will have a review session one week before each exam.

Each research proposal will be 4 pages long. The first proposal will be worth 15% of the final grade and the second proposal will be worth 25% of the final grade. In each paper, you will propose a research project you would like to conduct to better understand human development. Each proposal will include the following:

- a brief background, including a review of some previous research, relevant theory, and a statement about why the project is important
- a clear statement of the research question and hypotheses
- an outline of the methods that will be used to test the hypotheses (i.e., what will you do to begin answering your question?)
- possible confounds (i.e., might there be alternative explanations for any findings you would obtain?)

\*more information about expectations for these proposals, including guidelines for the structure of the paper, will be provided in class

The homework assignments and in-class activities will be distributed in class and are designed to help you prepare for writing the research proposals.

Active participation in class is strongly encouraged and will provide a more enjoyable learning environment for everyone. I welcome your questions and encourage you to pose them without hesitation when you need more information, a different explanation, a better example, or clarification.

You are encouraged to stop by during my office hours to talk about any questions, problems, or suggestions you may have concerning the course. If you want to meet with me and find the scheduled hours are not convenient, please feel free to schedule an appointment.

As a courtesy to your fellow students and teachers, please turn off cell phones during class and exams.

## **Make-ups:**

If you expect to miss a scheduled exam or quiz, you must inform the instructor well in advance so that a make-up exam or quiz can be arranged. If you unexpectedly miss an exam or in-class quiz, you must notify me as soon as possible. Only documented emergencies will be excused. A make-up exam or in-class quiz may be different from the scheduled exam or quiz in content and format.

Grading Guidelines				
Minimum%	Grade		Minimum%	Grade
94%	A		77%	C+
90%	A-		74%	C
87%	B+		70%	C-
84%	B		60%	D
80%	B-		0%	F

A grade of "WU" for "withdrawal unauthorized" (formerly "U") indicates that you enrolled in a course, did not officially withdraw from the course, but failed to complete course requirements. For purposes of GPA computation, this grade is equivalent to an "F". If you attend a portion of a course and then, after receiving a failing grade, stop attending without officially withdrawing, you will receive a final grade of "F" rather than "WU".

A grade of "I" for "incomplete authorized" is only given when a minor portion of required courseware has not been completed and evaluated in the prescribed time period due to unforeseen, but fully justified, reasons. It is your responsibility to bring pertinent information to the instructor and to reach an agreement on the means by which the remaining course requirements will be satisfied. An incomplete shall not be assigned when the only way you could make up the work would be to attend a major portion of the class when it is offered next.

### **Cheating – Academic Misconduct:**

Academic misconduct includes the following examples as well as any other similar conduct which is aimed at falsely representing a student's academic performance: cheating, plagiarizing, unauthorized collaborating on course work, stealing course examinations or materials, falsifying records or data, or intentionally assisting another individual in any of the above.

Academic misconduct will not be tolerated. Students who cheat will receive an "F" for the course grade and the Psychology Department's Undergraduate Coordinator and SDSU's Judicial Coordinator will be notified. The Judicial Coordinator will conduct an investigation, and depending on the outcome, the student may be expelled, suspended, or placed on probation.

For more information on SDSU's policies and procedures regarding academic misconduct visit the following site: [Academic Misconduct](#).

## CLASS SCHEDULE

September 2 <sup>nd</sup>	<b>Introduction to Studying Human Development: An overview</b>
September 9 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Chapter 1: The Study of Human Development</b> <b>Extra Reading:</b> Wang, Q. (2004). The emergence of cultural self-constructs: Autobiographical memory and self-description in European American and Chinese children. <i>Developmental Psychology</i> , 40, 3-15.
September 16 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Chapter 2: Biological Foundations</b>
September 23 <sup>rd</sup>	<b>*Homework due: Find a research article related to your interests and summarize it in a paragraph (details made available on Sept 9<sup>th</sup>)</b>
September 30 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Chapter 3: Tools for Exploring the World</b>
October 7 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Chapter 4: The Emergence of Thought and Language</b>
October 14 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Chapters 5: Entering the Social World</b> <b>*Paper #1 due</b>
October 21 <sup>st</sup>	<b>Chapter 6: Off to School</b> <b>Extra Reading:</b> Wheeler, E. A., Ampadu, L. M., & Wangari, E. (2002). Lifespan development revisited: African-centered spirituality throughout the life cycle. <i>Journal of Adult Development</i> , 9, 71-78. <b>Midterm Exam Review Session</b>
October 28 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Chapter 8: Rites of Passage</b> <b>*Midterm Exam</b>
November 4 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Chapter 10: Becoming an Adult</b>
November 11 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Chapter 11: Being with Others</b> <b>Veterans Day – NO CLASS (Chapter 11 will be taken up on Nov 18<sup>th</sup>)</b>
November 18 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Chapter 13: Making it in Midlife</b>
November 25 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Chapter 14: Late Adulthood</b> <b>Extra Reading:</b> Colcombe, S., & Kramer, A. F. (2003). Fitness effects on the cognitive function of older adults: A meta-analytic study. <i>Psychological Science</i> , 14, 125-130.
December 2 <sup>nd</sup>	<b>Chapter 15: Social Aspects of Later Life</b> <b>*Final Paper Due</b>
December 9 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Chapter 16: The Final Passage</b> <b>Final Exam Review Session</b>
December 16 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Final Exam 4-6 pm in AL 105</b>