

**PSY 250 Life-Span Development**  
**Fall 2008**

Professor Jane Tyler Ward, PhD  
Curtis Hall 121

Office Hours: M - F 9:00 – 10:00, T-Th 11:00 – 12:00, other times by appointment

Telephone extension: x-3632

e-mail address: [Jane@cedarcrest.edu](mailto:Jane@cedarcrest.edu)

Text: Belsky, J. (2007) *Experiencing the lifespan*. New York: Worth Publishers.

Course Description: This course explores human development from conception through the later years and death. Course content will cover normal physical, cognitive and psychosocial development during each stage of life.

Prerequisite: PSY 100

The **general goals and objectives** of this course are to help the student:

- Learn and gain mastery over the basic facts and research findings, terminology, principles, and theories important in the various areas of life-span developmental psychology.
- Develop understanding, skills, and techniques for analyzing human behavior using a scientific approach.
- Gain a basic understanding of the interaction between genetic and environmental influences on human development.
- Gain a basic understanding of physical, cognitive and social development across the life-span development.
- Gain a basic understanding of family, play, work, and death and dying as they apply to life-span development, and find ways to apply psychological findings to everyday life.

**Specific course outcomes and measures:**

The student will:

1. demonstrate learning and evaluation of theories and research in life-span development

measure: students will take six multiple-choice exams covering theories and research in life-span development.

2. demonstrate an ability to apply developmental principles to case studies of individuals at different stages of development

measure: students will be given four case examples and asked the following questions: How old is the individual; what stage of cognitive development; what stage of psychosocial development; what is the primary developmental challenge this person faces.

### **Grading policy:**

Each test is worth 100 points. Your percentage score is converted into a point score. Your final course grade will be based on averaging the total points earned from the four exams. The final grade scale is:

A	93.0 – 100 points
A minus	90.0 – 92.9
B plus	86.7 – 89.9
B	83.4 – 86.6
B minus	80.0 – 83.3
C plus	76.7 – 79.9
C	73.0 – 76.6
C minus	70.0 – 72.9
D plus	67.0 – 69.9
D	66.9 – 60.0
F	below 60%

### **Examination and Extra Credit Policies:**

1. You will be given a test booklet and a scantron form for each test. You may write on the test booklet, but you must bring a #2 pencil to use on the scantron form. The Scantron grading machine is sensitive to erasures and if you do not erase completely, the machine will sometimes count the wrong answer. Erasures are the responsibility of the student. Zero credit will be given for mistaken erasures.
2. Makeup exams: There are no opportunities to make up an individual exam. I will only use the 5 highest exam grades to calculate your final grade. It is to your advantage to take all of the exams.
3. Extra credit: There will be opportunities during the semester for extra credit projects. All extra credit must be done and handed in by 12/03/07.

**Attendance Policy:** Attendance is very important. I keep excellent records and expect you to let me know when you are unable to attend class. If you miss 6 or more classes, your final grade will drop by ½ grade. If you miss 9 or more classes, your final grade will drop by one grade. Legitimate reasons for missing class (illness, sports, emergencies) are counted differently, so please let me know of your absence before class, if possible.

**Academic Policies:** We will all adhere to the College Honor Philosophy. Specifically, you are to do your own work on exams. You will sign your name to the honor pledge on all exams, after you have completed the exam. Please see the College Honor Philosophy as it relates to academic settings for specific information about reporting.

The College Classroom Protocol states that each student has the right to a positive learning environment free of extraneous interruptions and distractions and inconsiderate or uncivil behavior. Some examples of inconsiderate behavior include talking when the professor or other students are talking, leaving class early, coming into class late, and disrespectful behavior to another student in the class. Students who are consistently inconsiderate will be warned, and may have grade consequences for their behavior.

A student with a documented disability on file with the Academic Advising Center should discuss any special accommodations with me within the first two weeks of class. I am happy to make reasonable accommodations, or assist the Advising Center in making the best possible accommodations.

### **The Study of Lifespan Development**

Developmental psychology is a relatively new area of study. Until the 19<sup>th</sup> century, children were treated as if they were miniature adults. With the underpinnings of Darwinism theories relating infancy and childhood as a period of helplessness and dependency on parents, and the advent of G. Stanley Hall's theories in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century (he coined the terms "adolescence" in 1904, and "senescence" in 1922), humans began to be seen as developing over a number of years. At first, developmental psychology was primarily a descriptive, normative discipline. For example, Arnold Gesell's work (books spanned 1929-1954) provided the field with useful information about the expected sequence for, and normative time of, the emergence of numerous physical and mental developments in infants and children. Later, theories were put forth by psychologists such as Jean Piaget and Erik Erikson to explain, not just describe, developmental progressions. These theories generated hypotheses that could be researched and modified, and thus the area of developmental psychology became an important sub-discipline in psychology. In the 1970s, a "lifespan" perspective of development emphasized a concern for an active organism changing across life (as a consequence of having to confront new "developmental tasks".) From this perspective, the potential for developmental change is seen to be present across all of life.

### **Course Outline for PSY 250**

#### **Date and Subject**

#### **Assigned Reading**

**8/25 - 8/29**

#### **PART I: Foundations**

Introduction to the course: The people and the field  
Theories  
Nature and Nurture  
Research Methods (Video)

Ch. 1

**9/1- 9/5**

**9/1: LABOR DAY HOLIDAY - NO CLASS**

Prenatal development: fertilization  
Germinal, embryonic, fetal stages  
Trimesters  
Teratogens and genetic counseling  
Infertility  
Birth

Ch. 2

**9/8 - 9/12**

**9/8: TEST #1 Ch. 1 & 2**

**PART II: Infancy**

Brain growth and development: transient exuberance &  
pruning in the brain  
communication: crying  
infant states and self-soothing  
Sensory motor development - Piaget  
Language Development

Ch. 3

**9/15-9/19**

Finish Ch. 3  
The importance of secure attachment  
Mary Ainsworth's strange situation and attachment styles  
Effects of poverty on the developing child  
Childcare and attachment  
Erikson: Autonomy vs. Shame and Doubt  
Temperament  
Childhood: growth and major skill milestones

Ch. 4

**9/22-9/26**

**9/22: TEST #2 Ch. 3 & 4**

**PART III: Childhood**

Cognitive development:  
Piaget: Preoperational stage  
Concrete Operational stage  
Vygotsky: scaffolding, ZPD  
Information Processing Perspective (IPP)

Ch. 5

**9/29-10/3**

Finish Ch. 5  
Self-understanding, self-awareness, self-esteem Ch. 6  
Prosocial behavior and altruism  
Aggression  
Shame vs. Guilt  
Relationships, friendship and play  
Rejected children and bullying

**10/6 -10/10**

Finish Ch. 6 Ch. 6  
  
"Home" and parenting styles Ch. 7  
Discipline and child abuse  
Effects of divorce on children  
Measuring intelligence (IQ) and multiple intelligences

**10/13 -10/17**

**10/13: FALL BREAK - NO CLASS**

Measuring intelligence (IQ) and multiple intelligences Ch. 7

**10/17: TEST #4 Ch. 5, 6, 7**

**10/20-10/24**

**PART IV: Adolescence and Emerging Adulthood**

Adolescence: puberty, hormones Ch. 8  
Body image issues  
Eating disorders  
Sexuality

**10/27 -10/31**

Finish Ch. 8  
Piaget and Formal Operational thought  
Kohlberg and adolescent moral thinking  
Risk-taking behavior

Emerging adulthood (Italy, Sweden, United States) Ch. 9  
The social clock and being off-time  
Erikson: Identity vs. Role confusion  
Intimacy vs. Isolation

**11/3 -11/7**

College/career Ch. 10  
Finding love  
Finding a mate  
Adult attachment styles  
Relationships and roles  
Marriage and the marital pathway  
Sternberg's triangular theory of love

**11/10-11/14**

**11/10: Test #4 (Ch. 8, 9, 10)**

**PART V: Early and Middle Adulthood**

Couple communication and happiness Ch. 11  
Divorce  
Parenthood  
Careers

Midlife: The Big Five, Erikson and Generativity vs. Stagnation Ch. 12  
Selective Optimization  
Grandparenthood  
Relationships with adult children and others  
Menopause

**11/17 -11/21**

Chapter 12 continued Ch. 12

**11/21: TEST #5 Ch. 11 & 12**

**PART VI: Later Life**

Later life Ch. 13  
Life expectancy  
Young-old & old-old  
Memory and IPP  
Emotional development  
Retirement and transitions  
Widowhood; mourning

**11/24 -11/28**

Chapter 13 continued

Ch. 13

**11/26 and 11/28 THANKSGIVING BREAK - NO CLASSES**

**12/1-12/5**

Successful aging  
Activities of Daily Living issues  
Healthy aging  
Physical changes: vision, hearing  
Motor performance  
Dementia and Alzheimer's Disease  
Elder Care

Ch. 14

**12/8 Test #6: Chapters 13, 14, 15**