

# PSYC 403: Infant and Child Development

## Course Syllabus

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**Required Text:** Berk, L.E. (2011). *Infants and Children* (7th ed). Allyn & Bacon.

### **Course Description:**

This course provides a chronologically organized overview of child development from the prenatal period through early adulthood. Major theoretical approaches to the study of child development will be discussed and applied to the study of the domains of physical, cognitive, and social-emotional development. The relationship between the individual and environment will be stressed, with important considerations to ecological influences that play a role in children's development such as families, communities, schools, and culture. Students will also apply critical thinking skills to current issues related to infant and child development through class discussion, readings, and raising their own child online (myvirtualchild.com).

### **Course Objectives:**

- Students will learn the major theories of child development across three broad developmental domains: infancy/toddlerhood, early childhood, and middle childhood.
- Students will learn the scientific methods used to study child development.
- Students will understand physical changes in body and brain and factors important for healthy growth.
- Students will understand cognitive changes from Piagetian, Vygotskian, and Information Processing perspectives and the factors important for healthy growth.
- Students will understand social and emotional changes and the factors important for healthy growth

### **Course requirements:**

- Complete all assigned readings prior to class, actively participate in class discussion and complete all assignments
- Take 4 non-cumulative exams
- Observe a 2-4 year old child and write a short reflection paper related to the observation (due 3/6/13)
- "Raise" your own child online via <http://www.myvirtualchild.com> complete questions about your child's development and write a short reflection paper related to this experience (due 5/13/13)

**Attendance:** Attendance is strongly recommended. There will always be new information covered in class that is not in the readings and may appear on tests. Please plan to arrive on time. Attendance will be taken at each class. ***Students must stop by the teaching assistant in order to be marked present. If you are not in class before 8:10, the doors will be closed and you will be marked as absent. This policy also pertains to anyone who decides to leave class early for any reason other than a physical emergency.*** For students who attend 90% of classes or more, extra credit will be awarded at the end of the semester.

**Blackboard:** <https://bbweb.towson.edu> Syllabus, lecture outlines and additional materials from class will be available on the course website.

**Academic Integrity:** Students at the Towson University are required to follow the Student Academic Integrity Policy. It is your responsibility to be aware of this code and to follow it. You need to know what constitutes cheating, academic dishonesty and plagiarism. Please review the information on the code at this website:  
<http://www.towson.edu/provost/resources/studentacademic.asp>

### **Class Policies:**

**\*\*\*Please turn off cell phones and electronic equipment before class, no texting, emailing, etc\*\*\***

- \* Exhibit appropriate behaviors out of respect for those who are there to learn and refrain from disruptive behaviors
- \* **Laptops will not be permitted**, unless requested in writing through disability support services
- \* Turn assignment in by due date.
- \* Clear desk during an exam and refrain from wearing hats.

**Exams.** There will be 4 non-cumulative exams. Each exam will be worth a total of 100 points and will be a combination of multiple choice and short answers questions and will cover content in the textbook, class lectures, and discussions. If class is canceled for whatever reason, the test will be given the next class meeting. During the class period when a corrected exam is returned to you, you must return it to me **before** leaving the classroom that day. **If you do not, you will be given a score of zero for that exam. Make-up exams will be given in essay format and ONLY with written documentation from the hospital, police, funeral home, etc.**

**Observation of a 2-4 year old child:** Since much of what we know about children is learned through observation, this assignment is designed to give you the opportunity to see examples of what you learned in real life. Using the domains of development: physical, cognitive, language and social-emotional, you will observe a child between the ages of 2 and 4 years old at the TU Child Care Center. Before you begin your observation, you will need to: 1) register at the TU Child Care Center for specific times – sign up EARLY because other classes in the University use this center for observations as well and there are limited spaces, and 2) read the trio of chapters on early childhood (Chapters 8-10). During this observation, you will do nothing but observe (and take notes). You must be free to be in the background and cannot be responsible for children during the observation. For **a minimum of 3 hours** (see general guidelines) try to write down what your child is doing – write down speech (if you understand it); describe movements and behaviors of the child. You will NOT be graded on these summaries – but you will receive either credit for completing the summaries on time or NO credit for not completing the questions on time. The total possible points you may earn is 100 with the following point values for summaries completed and on time: 6 summaries = 100 points, 5 summaries = 83.5 points; 4 summaries = 66.5 points; 3 summaries = 50 points; 2 summaries = 33.5; 1 summary = 16.5 points.

**1. Guidelines to observation summaries (approximately 1-2 page summaries)**

**a. General Details of Observation (1/2 hour observation): DUE: 2/11/13**

- Describe the general setting, the observed children's ages

**b. Physical Growth and Motor Development (1/2 hour observation): DUE: 2/18/13**

- Describe the child's physical appearance; the motor development of the child you observed (refer to gross and fine motor milestone chart); observe and list specific skills you observed with examples (balance and control of gross body movements-running, jumping, and fine motor movements-handedness, drawing, printing, etc.

**c. Cognitive Development (1/2 hour observation): DUE 2/25/13**

- Observe child's play (make believe play) and describe specific examples of cognitive development through the play activities you observed in the child; Observe limitations in thought (Piaget) and effective social interaction to promote cognitive development; Describe cognitive abilities such as: attention, memory, planning and problem solving – include evidence of theory of mind you observed in the child.

**d. Language Development (1/2 hour observation): DUE 3/4/13**

- Describe evidence of language development in the child as far as is possible, given that you may not have understood much of what s/he said. List specific examples; observe and describe unique words and inaccuracies in language; describe any private speech you observed with the child. Give examples.

**e. Social Development (1/2 hour observation): DUE 3/11/13**

- Describe characteristic patterns of friendship you observed in the child; describe gender typed behavior, interactional styles, and patterns of aggression

**f. Emotional Development (1/2 hour observation): DUE 3/25/13**

- Observe child's ability to understand and express emotion; include self-conscious emotions, empathy, sympathy; Describe the attachment style that relates to the observed self-regulation behavior in the child

**2. Reflection paper, observation notes and observation documentation:** You are required to complete a short paper reflection (approximately 2-4 pages) on the experience of observing your child. Reflection papers are due NO LATER THAN the last day **April 22, 2013**. You **WILL NOT RECEIVE ANY CREDIT FOR THE OBSERVATION summaries** until you have submitted **the reflection paper, notes of observations (s), and TU CHILD CARE signed timesheet** – and each day these are late, one completed summary will be deducted from the total completed. Papers **MUST** be submitted via blackboard - Papers may **NOT** be submitted via e-mail.

**My Virtual Child (VC) Assignment:** My Virtual Child is an interactive web-based simulation that allows you to raise a child from birth to age 18 and monitor the effects of your parenting decisions over time. This website lets you apply the key concepts you are learning in class. And just like in real life, certain unplanned events will be presented to you.

**1. General guidelines to answer questions:** You will be required to complete 6 assignments with questions about your child throughout the course of the semester and write a short paper reflecting on the experience of raising your child across the semester. Answers should address every part of the question, describe the child's behavior and provide 1 or 2 supporting examples. In addition, wherever possible, you should relate your descriptions and explanations of the child's behavior to the concepts, theories and research covered in class or in the book. The questions are available on Blackboard and due dates are posted both on Blackboard and in this syllabus. You will NOT be graded on these summaries – but you will receive either credit for completing the summaries on time or NO credit for not completing the questions on time. The total possible points you may earn is 100 with the following point values for summaries completed and on time: 6 summaries = 100 points, 5 summaries = 83.5 points; 4 summaries = 66.5 points; 3 summaries = 50 points; 2 summaries = 33.5; 1 summary = 16.5 points.

**2. Reflection paper:** At the end of the semester, you are required to complete a short paper reflection (approximately 2-4 pages) on the experience of raising your child throughout the semester. Reflection papers are due NO LATER THAN the last day of class (**May 13, 2013**). You **WILL NOT RECEIVE ANY CREDIT FOR THE MVC** assignments completed until you have submitted the reflection paper – and each day the paper is late, one completed assignment will be deducted from the total completed. Papers **MUST** be submitted via blackboard - Papers may **NOT** be submitted via e-mail.

**Writing Format for reflection paper:** All written assignments must be computer-processed, double-spaced, 12-point size font with one (1) inch margins, and reflect the American Psychological Association (APA) criteria for grammar, spelling, mechanics, organization, page numbering, citation, and referencing. Unclean or carelessly done works will not be accepted. All writing work will be graded on accuracy of content, innovation, quality and correctness of grammar, spelling, mechanics, punctuation, and organization. **Many students do not realize the seriousness of plagiarism. Writing about complex material is difficult, and often it seems that the author has said it so well that your own words will be inadequate. Plagiarism, however, can result in a "0" for the assignment, being dropped from the class, or dismissal from school.**

**Evaluation and Grading:** Your final grade will be based on your performance on the 4 exams (400 points), virtual child questions and reflection paper (100 points), observation reflection (10 points), and class attendance with participation. **The total possible points you may earn is 600 with the following point values for each grade: A: 564-600 points, A-: 540-563, B+: 522-539 points, B: 504-521 points, B-: 480-503 points, C+: 450-479 points, C: 420-449 points, D+: 390-419 points, D: 360-389 points, F: 359 or less.**

**Prerequisite for Infant and Child Development (PSYC 403):** You may remain in this course **only** if you have passed Human Development (PSYC 203 or its equivalent) with at least a grade of "C" (2.00 GPA) in that course. If this is not the case, it is your responsibility to drop the course immediately. **Please present a transcript (either official or unofficial) to me by the second course meeting so that I can verify that you have successfully completed the course prerequisites.** An unofficial transcript may be printed by going to online services on the Towson University website. The trail is as follows: **Self Service > Student Center > Transcript: View Unofficial Transcript** (This is found in the dropdown bar next to current class schedule). From there you should be able to print a copy of your unofficial transcript.

**Repeating a course:** Towson University policy states that a student may not repeat a course more than once without specific prior permission from the Academic Standards Committee (ASC). If you have taken this course twice before and have not received written permission from the ASC to take this course a third time, you should not be registered in this course - please consult Enrollment Services Office about the procedure for petitioning the ASC.

**Infant and Child Development (PSYC 403): Course Outline and Assignments**

NOTE: All dates are tentative and may be subject to change as circumstances dictate.

DATE	WEEK	CHAPTER	SUBJECT COVERED
1/28	1	Introduction	Syllabus, Class Overview, and Expectations
1/30	1	Ch. 1	History and Theories and Research Methods
2/ 4	2	Ch. 1	
2/ 6	2	Ch. 2	Biological Foundations of Development
2/11	3	Ch. 2	Environmental Foundations of Development <b>OBS 1: General Description</b>
2/13	3	Ch. 3	Prenatal Development
2/18	4	Ch. 3	<b>OBS 2: Physical Development</b>
2/20	4	Ch. 4	Birth and the Newborn Baby
2/25	5	Ch. 4	<b>OBS 3: Cognitive Development</b>
<b>2/27</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>First Exam</b>	<b>Chapters 1 - 4</b>
3/ 4	6	Ch. 5	Infancy – Physical Development <b>OBS 4: Language Development</b>
3/ 6	6	Ch. 5	
3/11	7	Ch. 6	Infancy – Cognitive Development <b>OBS 5: Social Development</b>
3/13	7	Ch. 6	<b>MVC 1: Assignment DUE</b>
3/25	8	Ch. 7	Infancy – Emotional / Social Development <b>OBS 6: Emotional Development</b>
3/27	8	Ch. 7	<b>MVC 2: Assignment DUE</b>
<b>4/ 1</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>Second Exam</b>	<b>Chapter 5 - 7</b>
4/ 3	9	Ch. 8	Early Childhood – Physical Development <b>OBSERVATION Reflection Paper DUE</b>
4/ 8	10	Ch. 8	<b>MVC 3: Assignment DUE</b>
4/10	10	Ch. 9	Early Childhood – Cognitive Development <i>(4/12: Last day to withdraw from course)</i>
4/15	11	Ch. 9	<b>MVC 4: Assignment DUE</b>
4/17	11	Ch. 10	Early Childhood – Emotional / Social Development
4/22	12	Ch. 10	
<b>4/24</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>Third Exam</b>	<b>Chapters 8-10</b>
4/29	13	Ch. 11	Middle Childhood – Physical Development
5/ 1	13	Ch. 12	Middle Childhood – Cognitive Development <b>MVC 5: Assignment DUE</b>
5/ 6	14	Ch. 12	
5/ 8	14	Ch. 13	Middle Childhood – Emotional/Social Development <b>MVC 6: Assignment DUE</b>
5/13	15	Ch. 13	<b>MY VIRTUAL CHILD Reflection Paper DUE</b>
<b>5/15</b>	<b>8-10am</b>		<b>FINAL EXAM – Chapters 11-13</b>

## What is a reflection paper?

Reflection papers and assignments are designed to reinforce what has been learned through lectures, discussions, and activities presented in class and in the readings. Most reflection papers are two-three pages in length. In addition, they are often about personal reactions and thoughts; they should not be done in collaboration with other students unless directed to do so by the instructor.

## How do I write an effective reflection paper?

Remember that the rules of writing apply to papers about your thoughts and feelings. Although you are writing about a personal experience, this does not allow you to use a free form of writing. Here are five steps to follow:

### 1. Focus your feelings

Before writing a reflection paper, the writer needs to stop and decide what it is that he or she going to write about. By establishing a theme, the writer will be able to write in a **clear** and **concise** manner.

### 2. Be organized

Being organized will also allow the writer to write in a **clear**, **concise**, and **cogent** manner.

- i. **Make a point**--State what you have established as your theme and the pertinent information that surrounds the theme.
- ii. **Divide your paper into paragraphs**--Give each major point its own space so that the reader will be able to understand and conceptualize the different components of your theme.
- iii. **Use topic sentences in paragraphs**--These sentences should correspond with your major points and draw the attention of the reader.

**\*\* A reflection paper is not a random free-flow of ideas. It needs to grab the interest of the reader and present ideas in a clear, concise, and cogent manner.**

### 3. Develop observations and feelings

Observations and feelings are an essential component of a reflection paper; however, in order for these components to be properly conveyed by the writer, they must be developed.

- Identify specific aspects or components of the situation that has been observed. One way to do this is by asking the five basic questions.
  - i. **Who** observed the situation?
  - ii. From **What** perspective was the observation made and **What** was being observed?
  - iii. **When** did the observation take place?
  - iv. **Why** was the particular situation being observed?
  - v. **Where** did the observation take place?

**\*\* After asking these questions, state what it is that you have learned. This will give relevance to the observation and your feelings, as well as, help the reader better understand your point of view.**

### 4. Review your work at the sentence level

- **Use good sentence structure**--Remember the Mnemonic Device K.I.S.S==> **Keep It Simple Stupid**: Do not pack your sentences full of ideas but, keep them focused.
- **Avoid sentence fragments**--Write complete sentences that have a subject and verb.
- **Avoid fused sentences**--Two sentences that have been fused together into one sentence.
- **Choose language which expresses your meaning**--Again remember K.I.S.S., simplicity brings clarity. The writer does not need to use language that does not fit within the setting.

### 5. Remember these tips

- Relate ideas and link the information together from the writer's personal experience.
- Relate relevant information from classroom learning to the experience.

**\*\* Use key phrases, such as "for example," "as a result of," "another idea that supports my view is," "an opposite view is," and "a different perspective is," are all good transitional phrases that signal the introduction of specifics as well as shifts in the argument.**