HDE 200A: Infancy & Early Childhood

Fall 2013

Class Time: Wednesday, 4:10-8:00 p.m.

Classroom: Wellman 27 (or 2338 Hart)

Instructor: Zhe Chen, Ph.D.
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Office Hours: Wednesday 1-3 p.m.
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Course Goal & Description:
The goals of this course are for students to learn the major theories, research methods, and findings of early child development in biological, cognitive, and social/emotional development. We will focus on a specific topic or research area in each class. The representative articles will be around the central themes in early child development and serve as examples illustrating how various methods and approaches can be adopted to address theoretical and practical issues.

Class Format:
The class format will consist of outside readings, in-class lectures, student presentations, and group discussions. For each week, students will read about 8 journal articles or chapters. At the beginning of each class session, the instructor will provide a brief overview of the major issues associated with the topic of that class. Two students will then be responsible for leading the discussion. Each student discussion leader will generate 3 or 4 questions based on the 2 or 3 journal articles/chapters assigned before the class, present a hand-out of the questions, and lead the discussion. The questions should organize the discussion around the theoretical and methodological issues that the student leader sees as most relevant and important.

Reading:
The majority of readings are original journal articles from major journals in the field (e.g., Child Development and Developmental Psychology, and others such as Current Directions in Psychological Science and Psychological Science.

Topical Outline
Themes, issues & the nature of growth
Biological growth
Early perceptual-motor development
Imitation and memory
Nativism and core knowledge
Learning, reasoning, & problem solving
Language development 1 – Phonology and phonological rules
Language development 2 – Word learning and grammar
The self
Social cognition
Attachment and bonding
Parenting
Emotions and self-regulation
Temperament
Development of conscience and morality
Sociocultural contexts
Risk and resilience

Course Requirements:

A. Readings. Read all assigned readings before the class in which they are to be discussed.

B. Class participation. I encourage students to participate actively in class discussion. Students are expected to read all the assigned readings prior to class and to be prepared to discuss all of them intelligently.

C. Class presentations. Generate discussion questions before class; summarize and discuss assigned articles in class.

D. Reaction paper. A reaction paper is a personal evaluation of or reaction to an assigned article or set of papers (4-5 pages). You will need to complete only one of the three assigned reaction papers. At least one week prior to a paper’s due date, for two of these three topics, I will distribute the "directing questions" to constrain the domain of your responses. For the other, the students will need to formulate the issues based on the readings for that class, generate your own questions, and write the paper. An asterisk (*) in the reading list indicates that a reaction paper on that topic is due that day.

E. Research proposal. In a 12-15-page research proposal, you will address a specific issue in a particular domain of early child development. Your task is to identify a key issue in a specific area, explain why the issue is important, propose one or two experiments or studies that would allow you to address the issue, illustrate how your study would allow you to address it, make predictions about possible results, and draw conclusions based on your anticipated results. About 3 or 4 weeks before the end of the quarter, a topical guideline from which you may select a subject for your proposal will be distributed.

Evaluation & Grading:

Each student’s participation in class discussion will count for 10% of the final grade. Student presentations of journal articles and their overall performance as discussion leaders will count for a further 25%. The reaction paper will count for 20% of the final grade; the research proposal, the remaining 45%.

Determining course grade:

Class participation: 10%
Class presentations & discussions: 25%
Reaction paper: 20%
Research proposal: 45%

Grading system:
A = 90-100
B = 80-89
C = 70-79
D = 60-69
F = below 60

SYLLABUS

1. Oct. 2: Introduction

2. Oct. 9: Session I: Themes, issues and the nature of growth


Session II: Biological growth


3. Oct. 16: Session I: Early perceptual-motor development


**Session II: Imitation and memory**


**4. Oct. 23: Session I: Nativism and core knowledge (*)**


**Session II: Learning, reasoning, & problem solving**


5. Oct. 30: Session I: Language development 1 – Phonology and phonological rules


**Session II: Language development 2 – Word learning and grammar**


6. Nov. 6: Session I: The self


**Session II: Social cognition**

7. **Nov. 13: Session I: Attachment and bonding**


**Session II: Parenting (*)**


8. **Nov. 20: Session I: Emotions and self-regulation (*)**


**Session II: Temperament**


9. **Nov. 29: Session I: Development of conscience and morality**


**Session II: Sociocultural contexts**


10. Dec. 4: Session I: Risk and resilience


Session II: Summary and future directions