

# PSYCHOLOGY 320: ADVANCED CHILD DEVELOPMENT

## Course Syllabus

### Spring 2012

**Purpose of this course, in 19 words or less:** Help students deepen understanding of theories of developmental psychology, and build information literacy, while improving their public-speaking abilities.

**Instructor:** Dr. David A. Smith

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**Office Hours:** By appointment.

#### Required Texts:

Green, Michael, & Piel, John (2010) (2<sup>nd</sup> Ed.). *Theories of human development: A comparative approach*. Boston: Allyn & Bacon, publishers.

DelCampo, Diana, & DelCampo, Robert (2012). *Taking sides: Clashing views in childhood and society* (9<sup>th</sup> Ed.). McGraw-Hill, Boston.

#### Recommended Text:

American Psychological Association (2009). Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (6<sup>th</sup> Ed.). You do not need to purchase the publication manual, but you may want to consider doing so, especially if you are a psychology major.

#### Prerequisites:

A General Education Freshman Speaking (FS) course, as well as either PSYC-100 (Introduction to Psychology) or PSYC-220 (Child Development).

#### Course Objectives:

I intend that this course will be taken primarily by those considering pursuing a graduate degree in psychology or a related discipline (e.g., education, social work, school counseling) that is likely to involve work with children. With that in mind, I seek to provide a bridge between the background that a typical child-development course provides and the greatly increased expectations, with respect to content knowledge, self-expressive capabilities, and perhaps most importantly critical-thinking ability, which usually are found in courses at the graduate level. This course includes an emphasis upon paradigms (that is, philosophical and theoretical frameworks within which theories, laws, and generalizations, and the experiments performed in support of them, are formulated—Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, 10<sup>th</sup> Edition, 1997) within human development, and consideration of historical and contemporary writing and research about children. I hope that this course will provide students with a rigorous, thorough, stimulating, useful, and thought-provoking experience in those areas.

According to the SUNY Potsdam General Education Committee, the student learning outcomes for SI (Speaking Intensive) courses are as follows:

Students will:

- produce logical, orderly and coherent texts within common college-level written forms (assessed through the handouts that you produce for both the in-class presentations and the debates)

- demonstrate the ability to revise and improve text (assessed through my collection and evaluation of your draft/working notes for debates)
- demonstrate the ability to research a topic, develop an argument and organize supporting details (assessed through my evaluation of your actual spoken in-class presentations and debates)
- demonstrate proficiency in oral discourse (assessed through my evaluation of your actual spoken in-class presentations and debates)
- demonstrate the ability to evaluate an oral presentation according to established criteria (assessed through my listening to the quality of each non-presenting student's comments during the time of critique for each in-class presentation and debate).

### Course Format

For some of the time—particularly when we are discussing theories of human development—a lecture-and-discussion format will provide structure for this course. However, student presentations (explained in greater detail below), and student-led debates (also explained in greater detail below) on current topics from the *Taking sides: Clashing views in childhood and society* text, will lead to much discussion.

Please note two items. First, I expect that you will have lots of questions. So please ask questions. Second, I encourage you to make an appointment to meet with me if you would like to do so.

**A note regarding plagiarism or cheating:** Plagiarism or cheating will result in the offending person receiving a grade of 0.0 for this course.

### Grading Policy:

There will be 125 points available throughout the course, broken down as follows: test (25 pt.), in-class presentation (25 pt.), in-class debates (two debates, at 25 pt. each), and attendance/participation (25 pt.).

The following table illustrates how a student's range of possible points earned will translate into that student's final grade:

Percent of points earned	Final Grade
90-100	4.0
87-89	3.7
83-86	3.3
80-82	3.0
77-79	2.7
73-76	2.3
70-72	2.0
67-69	1.7
63-66	1.3
60-62	1.0
below 60	0.0

### Test (25 points):

Your understanding of, and ability to integrate and evaluate, theories and research related to child development will be assessed via one take-home essay test. Your response will need to be returned in typed, double-spaced format, and will be required to conform to standards described in the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (6<sup>th</sup> edition). Both the content and format of your response will be evaluated.

## In-class presentation (25 points):

Students will either pair up and work jointly, or work by themselves, in preparing and delivering their presentations. (If you pair up, try to find someone who is as serious as you are about doing an excellent job on the in-class presentation.) The student or students should conduct a literature-review project whose purpose is to discover recent research results in an area of the students' own choosing. I reserve the right to approve speech topics in order to ensure that they pertain to child or adolescent development. I suggest that each student read a minimum of five to seven journal articles or other "refereed" not-for-profit references, and if it makes sense for your topic, consider using at least some current-events sources (including a reputable newspaper or news magazine, but specifically excluding dot-com Internet sources, other than news sources such as nytimes.com or cnn.com) on a topic of your choice (subject to instructor approval—primarily to ensure that you're choosing a topic that is neither too broad nor too narrow). As a possible supplement to your research, consider interviewing someone who is a professional in a child-development-related area if you want to do so. In other words, the world of edited knowledge (the word "edited" was chosen because not all sources of knowledge are equally credit-worthy or credible) is your oyster.

**For pairs of presenters**, research will culminate in an in-class presentation of 30 to 40 minutes in length (essentially taking all of **two entire class days**, when subsequent question-and-discussion time is factored in). **Individual presenters'** speeches will take a total of 15 to 20 minutes in length (essentially taking all of **one entire class day**, when subsequent question-and-discussion time is factored in). Important: Each presenter (or pair of presenters) must provide copies, for everyone in the class, of at least two pages: an outline page, and a list of references cited (as opposed to a bibliography, which is a list of suggested readings, and which in this case is optional). The required handout must be prepared according to standards found in the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (6<sup>th</sup> edition). Feel free to include other materials in your handout as you deem appropriate.

If you would like me to take care of photocopying your materials for you, at Psychology Department expense, please get those materials to me **at least three business days** in advance of the date on which they will be needed in class.

Each speech will be judged according to the following six criteria: clarity of purpose, substantive accuracy, overall clarity and style of presentation, use of lecturing aids, handling of questions, and use of time. Please note: At the close of each speech, the class must be given the opportunity to ask questions of the presenters. Time spent answering questions and discussing each presentation does not count against the above-mentioned time limits. In fact, I fully expect and hope that we will devote substantial time to discussing each presentation.

**Be sure to cite verbally the references that you use, in the context of your speech, each time you refer to one of your resources. Why? That way, people in your audience who may be interested in extending your research on their own will have the ability to do so.**

## In-class debates (25 points each):

An important goal of the debate component of this course is the development of both critical-thinking skills and verbal communication ability. We will be using the *Taking sides* text as a springboard for the

debate portion of this course. For the debate assignment two groups of students (preferably with two students per group) will sign themselves up to present on the same topic and on the same class day. The range of possible topics is composed of all articles that are included in the *Taking sides* text. Students should sign up for particular topics on the basis of an interest in studying those topics in some depth. Then, each pair of students who are scheduled for debate on a given topic and day must prepare persuasive information concerning **BOTH** sides (i.e., both YES and NO) of the debate topic. As a starting point in their debate preparation, students can use citations (references, suggested readings, related readings) that may be found at the end of a given topic chapter within the *Taking sides* text. However, students' preparation for debate (for both the YES and NO sides) must go beyond just the material given in the *Taking sides* text. Some assistance with finding such information will be provided by a librarian, Ms. Carol Franck, who will have met with our class prior to the kick-off of the scheduled debates.

The order of debate topics will be announced beforehand. **Each student who is not debating on any given day will be responsible for having read the pertinent readings in the *Taking sides* text prior to class, in order to be at least reasonably well informed on the topic, and thus more able to contribute meaningfully during the class-discussion time that will follow each debate.**

Each pair of debaters will present a handout, prepared according to *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (6<sup>th</sup> edition) standards, for each class member, which will contain an outline of the debaters' key points (both pro and con), as well as a list of references that were cited anywhere in the debaters' preparation for either the pro or the con perspective.

A determination as to who will argue pro and who will argue con will be made, at the beginning of the class period, by coin flip, a toss of a die, or some other similar method. The pro side will speak first.

Please note: The debaters will *not* be permitted to read prepared speeches. A written text may be referred to, or an occasional quote may be read to the class. However, debaters must present their arguments orally, not reading extensively verbatim, and in a coherent and logical fashion. All members of each debate team must participate equally.

Here is the order of events for each debate:

1. To begin the debate, the pro (YES) team will be allowed 5 – 7 minutes' time for opening statements on the topic.
2. Then the con (NO) side will be allowed 5 – 7 minutes for opening statements.
3. Then, both sides will have 3 minutes to confer and prepare their rebuttals.
4. Next, the con side will rebut, within a maximum of 3 minutes' time.
5. Finally, the pro side will rebut, with a 3-minute time limit.

Class discussion will follow the approximately-20-minute-long debate period and should last for about 20 – 25 minutes. A few minutes' worth of in-class verbal critique of each debate team will wrap things up for the day.

Evaluation of debate teams' verbal debating will take place on a 20-point scale and will be based upon the following criteria: quality of their opening statement (i.e., the degree to which they gave a logical and coherent presentation of their points of view), their effective response to their opponents' points during rebuttal, their overall organization, their adherence to well-established standards of critical thinking (e.g., staying on task, avoiding logical fallacies such as *ad hominem* arguments, etc.), generally choosing and using

high-quality resources properly and well throughout the debate, overall level of enthusiasm and use of time, quality of debate outline, and quality of references list. Additionally, evaluation of each debate team's personal preparatory notes (once those notes are turned in to me, at the end of that day's class period) will be based upon a five-point scale, and will be made in terms of evidence of the debate team's preparation for **both sides** of the debate.

One task in particular for debaters to handle is to update the *Taking sides* textbook's research by finding the latest, most recent references and research. The *Taking sides* text makes lots of claims but provides in-text citations of research studies as support for only some of those claims. (I have found that some articles do a better job of substantiating claims than do other articles.) So in preparation for debates, flesh out the cited studies and others and see where the evidence really lies and what it shows. Essentially, with its use of references the *Taking sides* text just whets the reader's whistle; it doesn't really slake the reader's thirst. The inconsistent inclusion of references in the *Taking sides* book is a rather serious problem and a bad example for psychology students. Nonetheless, I thought that the book had enough positive things to offer (mainly several good clashes between opposing viewpoints on salient topics in child development) to make it worth our time to read and use.

Two questions for each of us to ask, as we read the *Taking sides* chapters, are:

1. Are the debaters (in the book) even talking about the same topic, or are they "talking past each other"?
2. Is a synthesis of the two perspectives—i.e., a point of view that combines the best components of both the YES and NO arguments—available or possible?

Participation in class discussion, by each non-debating student each day, will be one of the criteria used to determine that student's 25-point attendance-and-participation grade for the course.

## Attendance and participation (25 points):

The attendance-and-participation component of your grade will be based upon the frequency of your attendance and the consistency and quality of your contributions to in-class discussion. **The highest possible standard is that you are in class, on time, and actively participating, each day.** The two criteria of attendance and discussion are related, because obviously one cannot discuss something in class if one is not actually in class. Both the quality (value) and quantity (frequency) of your contributions to discussion are important. Why? We all need frequent repetitions in order to develop the skills involved in thinking on our feet (just as, for example, repetitive practice of a correct technique can help an athlete improve a particular skill). But what and how one practices are as important as how often one practices. I will form an evaluation of each person's total number of points earned in this area at the end of the semester. I recommend that you be at class several minutes early on the day when you are scheduled for an in-class presentation or debate. I will expect that any student who has to miss a class will inform me.

Please note: When we discuss theories from the Green and Piel (2010) textbook, questions around which we can focus may include, but are not limited to, the following: (1) What do you see as the fundamental tenets of the theory? (2) How does the theory relate to, or provide contrast with, other theories in its area? (3) What are its strengths? (4) What are its weaknesses? (5) How well does the theory explain, or account for, observed phenomena? (6) What is your overall appraisal of the theory?

The expected course schedule follows.

Week 1 (week of Monday 1/23/12)

- Tue Attendance, discussion of syllabus; handing out of debate-topic-preference surveys; discussion of criteria for in-class-presentation assignment and debate assignment
- Thu Students turn in their filled-out preference surveys for the various topics included in the *Taking sides* text; conclude discussion of in-class-presentation and debate assignments; whence cometh developmental psychology? (discussion of a brief history of the discipline) (Green & Piel Chapters 1 & 2)

Week 2 (week of Monday 1/30/12)

- Tue Announcement of assignment of topics and dates for debates, based upon debate-topic-preference surveys; Piaget DVD; discussion of Piaget's theory from the constructivist paradigm (Green & Piel Chapter 10)
- Thu Continuing discussion of Piaget's theory (Green & Piel Chapter 10)

Week 3 (week of Monday 2/06/12)

- Tue Discussion of Kohlberg's theory of moral development from the constructivist paradigm (Green & Piel Chapter 11)
- Thu Conclude discussion of Kohlberg's theory; begin discussion (roughly halfway through today's class) of behavioristic theories (including both classical and operant conditioning) from the exogenous paradigm (Green & Piel Chapter 7)

Week 4 (week of Monday 2/13/12)

- Tue First half of today's class: continuing discussion of behavioristic theories (Green & Piel Chapter 7); second half of class time: discussion of Freud's theory from the endogenous paradigm (Green & Piel Chapter 3). *[In order to help spread out your work load, I suggest that you begin preparing now for your debates and in-class presentation. Why? Over the next 10 weeks or so, each student will be involved in two debates and will also give one in-class presentation.]*
- Thu Meet with Ms. Carol Franck, at the Crumb Library, regarding research techniques and opportunities that are available for both in-class presentations and debates (meet in the library's main lobby and move to a classroom)

Week 5 (week of Monday 2/20/12)

- Tue Continuing discussion of Freud's theory (Green & Piel Chapter 3)
- Thu Discussion of Erik Erikson's theory from the endogenous paradigm (Green & Piel Chapter 4)

Week 6 (week of Monday 2/27/12)

- Tue Continuing discussion of Erikson's theory (Green & Piel Chapter 4); also late today perhaps begin discussion of Mary D. Salter Ainsworth's infant-attachment theory from the endogenous paradigm (Green & Piel Chapter 6)
- Thu Continuing discussion of Mary D. Salter Ainsworth's infant-attachment theory (Green & Piel Chapter 6)

Week 7 (week of Monday 3/05/12)

- Tue Debate #1 on Topic #1 (Issue \_\_); **hand out Test; due in 1 week for all but debaters for #1, #2, and #3;** after Debate #1 begin discussion of Green & Piel Chapter 13 concerning the compatibility of theories

Thu Debate #2 on Topic #2 (Issue \_\_ ); after Debate #2 continue discussion of Green & Piel Chapter 13 concerning the compatibility of theories

## Week of Monday 3/12/12: SPRING RECESS

Week 8 (week of Monday 3/19/12)

Tue Debate #3 on Topic #3 (Issue \_\_ ); begin discussing debate topic #9 (Issue \_\_ ); **Test due today for all but #1, #2, and #3**

Thu Conclude discussion of debate topic #9; discuss debate topic #10 (Issue \_\_ )

Week 9 (week of Monday 3/26/12)

Tue Debate #4 on Topic #4 (Issue \_\_ ); begin discussing debate topic #11; **Test due today for #1, #2, and #3**

Thu Debate #5 on Topic #5 (Issue \_\_ ); conclude discussing debate topic #11 (Issue \_\_ )

Week 10 (week of Monday 4/02/12)

Tue Debate #6 on Topic #6 (Issue \_\_ ); begin discussing debate topic #12; **return test with comments**

Thu Debate #7 on Topic #7 (Issue \_\_ ); conclude discussing debate topic #12

Week 11 (week of Monday 4/09/12)

Tue [No class: April Recess]

Thu Debate #8 on Topic #8 (Issue \_\_ )

Week 12 (week of Monday 4/16/12)

Tue In-class presentations #1 and #2

Thu In-class presentations #3 and #4

Week 13 (week of Monday 4/23/12)

Tue In-class presentations #5 and #6

Thu In-class presentations #7 and #8

Week 14 (week of Monday 4/30/12)

Tue In-class presentations #9 and #10

Thu In-class presentations #11 and #12

Week 15 (week of Monday 5/07/12)

Tue In-class presentations #13 and #14

Thu In-class presentations #15 and #16

Finals Week (Tuesday 5/15/12, 12:30 p.m. – 2:30 p.m.): In-class presentations #17 and #18; course evaluation