

PSY 325 CHILD PSYCHOLOGY

Fall 2025

Tuesdays & Fridays 10:00am-11:20am

FMH Room 407

Dr. Kelly Conover, PhD, LCSW

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Office hours: Thursdays 11:30-12:30pm by appointment

PREREQUISITES: PSY 210

COURSE DESCRIPTION: This course will examine the normative development of children from conception through adolescence. Research, theories and current events will be used to support the topics discussed in this course. Topics covered in this course include physical, social, and emotional development, influences on development, and child and adolescent therapy modalities.

COURSE GOALS AND LEARNING OUTCOMES: The purpose of this course is to provide students with an understanding of how children develop from conception through adolescence. This course is designed to be a collaborative learning process by which students will engage in class discussions, group work, and assignments. The primary goal of this course is to encourage and support students as they develop an understanding of the material discussed in class and how it can be applied to the real world. At the conclusion of this course, students should be able to:

- Identify and compare major theories of child development
- Describe developmental milestones across infancy, childhood and adolescence
- Be able to think critically about developmental theories and concepts and how they apply to social and cultural norms
- Identify influences on child development
- Apply knowledge of theories and other concepts to topics such as parenting, education and mental health.
- Gain a basic understanding of mental health issues affecting children and adolescence and therapeutic modalities.

BOOKS/READINGS:

Lifespan Development (Free via Openstax)

<https://openstax.org/details/books/lifespan-development>

Additional readings available on Canvas

EXPECTATIONS

Readings

It is expected that all students will do the assigned readings **before** the Chapter Reflections are written and before the date that the chapter will be discussed in class. Students are encouraged to bring any thoughts or questions about the readings to class and share during class discussions.

Chapter Reflections

It is expected that all Chapter Reflections will be completed and submitted by their due date. Weeks with assigned Chapter Reflections will be marked with an * on the syllabus.

Attendance and Participation

Attendance is required. Material presented and discussed in class is necessary for completing course assignments and the midterm and final exams.

It is expected that all students will make an effort to participate and be present during class. Cell phones should be put away during class. Laptops, tablets, etc should only be used during class for class purposes. Chronic use of devices during class will result in deduction of participation points. Completing the assigned readings and bringing questions and thoughts about the readings to class will make participation easier.

To receive full credit for attendance/participation, students must 1) not miss more than 3 classes, 2) arrive on time 3) stay for the whole class and (4) participate to the best of their ability.

Canvas

An electronic version of this syllabus, grades, announcements, and additional required readings will be communicated via Canvas. You are responsible for logging in frequently to check for any updates.

Communication

It is expected that any student who is having difficulty with the course material will communicate this to me during office hours or via email to obtain support. If you are concerned about your grade, please do not wait until the end of the semester to talk to me about it. I will check my email at least twice during the weekday before 6pm. I will occasionally check email after 6pm and over the weekend, but anything urgent that you need to communicate with me should be done during the week prior to 6pm. Please allow 24 hours for a response although I do my best to respond within a shorter time frame.

AI Usage

This course expects students to work without artificial intelligence (AI) assistance in order to better develop their skills in this content area. As such, AI usage to write papers is not permitted throughout this course under any circumstance.

Academic Dishonesty

Academic Integrity is the cornerstone of higher education and is central to the ideals of this course and the university. Cheating is strictly prohibited and devalues the degree that you are working on. As a member of the NJIT community, it is your responsibility to protect your educational investment by knowing and following the academic code of integrity policy that is found at: <http://www5.njit.edu/policies/sites/policies/files/academic-integrity-code.pdf>.

Please note that it is my professional obligation and responsibility to report any academic misconduct to the Dean of Students Office. Any student found in violation of the code by cheating, plagiarizing or using any online software inappropriately will result in disciplinary action. This may include a failing grade of F, and/or suspension or dismissal from the university. If you have any questions about the code of Academic Integrity, please contact the Dean of Students Office at dos@njit.edu

Accessibility/Accommodations/Counseling Services

If you anticipate any issues related to the format or materials of this course, or if you would like to discuss any accommodations that might be helpful, please contact me at the start of the semester. If you have a documented disability, or if you think you might have a disability, you should also be in touch with the Office of Accessibility Resources and Services (OARS), either to request an official accommodation or to discuss requesting one. More information about OARS is available here: <https://www.njit.edu/accessibility/>. The Center for Counseling and Psychological Services (C-CAPS) provides a number of confidential resources for any student interested in seeking help with personal issues, emotional concerns, or stress. Visit <https://www.njit.edu/counseling/> to learn more.

ASSIGNMENTS

Foundation Paper (due 9/9 by 10am)

- 2 pages minimum, double-spaced, 12 pt Times New Roman font
- Please include only your name at the top of the paper. Points will be deducted for papers shorter than 2 pages.
- Submit via Canvas

There is no correct answer to the questions below. Please do not include anything that you are uncomfortable sharing. The purpose of this paper is to get you to start reflecting on child development and one of the best ways to do that is to think about our own development.

1. Think about yourself at ages 5, 10 and 16 (approximately). Reflect on something that you remember about yourself from each of these time periods.
2. Please write a paper that includes the following:
 - a. At *each* of these approximate ages (5, 10, and 16), what is one experience that stands out to you the most? The experiences can be brief moments. You do not need to go into detail about the experience you are describing, just give a brief description.
 - b. What do you think contributed to the memory of *each* experience? (why do you think that you remember each of these experiences?)
 - c. Discuss how *each* of these experiences shaped/influenced your development? (ex. your capacity to think, understand yourself, the world, or other people, ability to manage your emotions, or relationships with family and friends).

Chapter Reflections (Due dates for each chapter reflection are listed below)

Chapters with assigned reflections are marked with an * on the syllabus (you do not need to write a reflection for the week that your group is presenting)

- 1 page minimum, double-spaced, 12 pt Times New Roman font
- Please include only your name at the top of the paper. Points will be deducted for papers shorter than 1 page.
- Submit via Canvas

Please read the chapter before writing the Reflection Paper.

The purpose of these reflections is to deepen your understanding of how the course content applies to real life.

Please address the following questions in your reflection:

1. What is one thing in this chapter that is the most interesting to you and why?
2. How does the topic of this chapter or a concept in this chapter relate to observations of yourself, young family members, children you babysit, etc? **OR** how does the information in this chapter enhance your understanding of children and their development?

Group Presentation

See Canvas for more specific instructions and grading rubric

Your group should choose a topic from the syllabus that you want to present on. In the reading for that week, identify a concept (idea/theory) that is of interest to your group and relevant to your major.

Please email me your slides at least 2 days before your presentation so I can provide brief feedback.

Group Presentation (15 min):

1. Describe/define the concept
2. Research this concept to expand on the information provided in the chapter reading
3. Create a 15 min presentation and discussion of this concept, including:
 - additional information (outside resources) that you found in your research
 - questions for the class
 - how this concept relates to real world experiences

Midterm and Final Exams

These exams are not cumulative and only cover what is covered during the first half (midterm) and second half (final) of the course. The exam format will include multiple choice and short answer questions. The goal of these exams is not for you to memorize concepts that we've discussed in class but to be able to apply them and think critically about them. There will be an exam review in the class prior to each of the exams.

Extra Credit

Extra credit opportunities will be offered during some classes.

PERFORMANCE EVALUATION:

1. Foundation Paper (10%)
2. Reflection Papers (20%)
3. Group Presentation (20%)
4. Midterm Paper (20%)
5. Final Exam (20%)
6. Class Participation/Attendance (10%)

Grading Scale

PERCENT	LETTER GRADE
91-100	A
87-90	B+
80-86	B
76-79	C+
70-77	C
60-69	D
< 60	F

Reflection Paper Chapters and Due Dates

All papers are due by 11:59pm on the date listed below

Chapter	Due Date
Chapter 6	10/5
Chapter 7	10/19
Chapter 8	10/26
Chapter 10	11/9
Steinberg, Chapter 2	11/16

CLASS CALENDAR AND READINGS

	WEEK	TOPIC	DATE	READINGS
Introduction	Week 1	Introduction to the course Introduction to Child Development	September 2 September 4	Chapter 1
Influences on Development	Week 2	Child Experiences Attachment	September 9 September 11	Foundation Paper Due McLeod, 2025 (on Canvas)
Prenatal and Birth - 3 years old	Week 3	Prenatal Development Physical Development	September 16 September 18	Chapter 2 Chapter 3
	Week 4	Cognitive Development and Moral Development Social and Emotional Development	September 23 September 25	Chapter 4
Ages 3-6	Week 5	Physical Development No Class: Independent Assignment	September 30 October 2	Chapter 5
	Week 6	Cognitive Development and Moral Development Social and Emotional Development	October 7 October 9	Chapter 6*
Midterm	Week 7	<i>Midterm Review</i> MIDTERM	October 14 October 16	
Ages 7-12	Week 8	Physical Development Cognitive Development and Moral Development	October 21 October 23	Chapter 7*

	Week 9	Social and Emotional Development	October 28 October 30	Chapter 8*
Ages 12-18	Week 10	Physical Development Cognitive Development and Moral Development	November 4 November 6	Chapter 9
	Week 11	Social and Emotional Development	November 11 November 13	Chapter 10*
Adolescence: Development of Self	Week 12	Peer Relationships Gender and Identity Development	November 18 November 20	Steinberg, Chapter 2 (on Canvas)*
Clinical	Week 13	Mental Health Disorders NO CLASS	November 25 November 27	
Practice	Week 14	Child and Adolescent Therapy	December 2 December 4	
Course Wrap up	Week 15	Application of course content <i>Final Review</i>	December 9 December 11	
	Week 16	FINAL	TBD	