



## EDUC-PSYC-SOC 430 Human Development in Culture

### Course Syllabus Spring Semester 2023

**Instructor:** Filippo M. Sposini, PhD (he/him)

**Credits:** 3

**Contact Hours:** 45

**Prerequisites:** None

**Class Meeting Days & Time:** Tuesdays and Thursdays, 5:45pm - 7:15pm

**Office Hours:** By Appointment using [Calendly](#)

**Course Type:** Standard Course

**Course Fee:** NONE

#### Course Description

This course provides students with an overview of main approaches in human development. Students are introduced to psychological and anthropological theories about childhood and the role of culture. The course content reflects the fact that “culture” means different things to different people and is conceptualized at many different levels of organization, from the national and supra-national (e.g, Asian vs. Western) to home, family, and local community. The readings cover different areas within the psychological sciences, including developmental, educational, social, and cognitive psychology. Implications and limitations of such studies will be amply discussed in class. While learning about theories and methods, students will *use* contemporary research tools for analyzing scientific publications about childhood and human development.

#### Learning Outcomes

By the end of the course, students will be able to:

- *Identify* some of the main approaches used by scholars for studying cognitive and emotional development;
- *Recognize* methodologies employed by social scientists interested in childhood and adolescence;
- *Use* research tools for carrying out a literature analysis, particularly PubMed and PsycNet;
- *Examine* the structure, content, and goal of research articles about human behavior;
- *Carry out* a comparison between research articles, highlighting differences and similarities.

#### Course Materials

Book chapters and articles.

#### Assessment

10%	Attendance
2%	Office Hours
8%	Course Journal
20%	Weekly Quizzes
5%	Topics for Research
10%	Analysis of Literature
10%	Close Examination
10%	Draft of the Final Paper
25%	Final Paper

## Grading

Students are reminded that it is their responsibility to note the dates of exams and other assignments. No alternative exam dates will be offered and professors are not required to give partial credit for any late work (they do so at their discretion: the Institute's default policy is no extensions and a zero for any work turned in late). Students who book travel when they have an exam or other assessment will have to change their plans or accept a zero. Letter grades for student work are based on the following percentage scale:

Letter Grade Range	Numerical Score Equivalent	Student Performance
A A-	93% - 100% 90% - 92%	Exceptional Excellent
B+ B B-	87% - 89% 83% - 86% 80% - 82%	Superior
C+ C C-	77% - 79% 73% - 76% 70% - 72%	Satisfactory
D+ D D-	67% - 69% 63% - 66% 60% - 62%	Low Pass
F	59% or less	Fail (no credit)

## Course Requirements

Assignments will follow an incremental approach simulating a scientific investigation. Using research platforms and scientific papers, you will play the role of a social scientist. Once you have identified a topic interest, you will learn how to conduct a literature review, how to examine peer-review publications, and to critically evaluate their differences and similarities. Grades are based on the following criteria.

### *Attendance (10%)*

Attendance is an important part of this course. You have two "sick days," per Institute policy. As long as you are at all the other meetings, you will receive the full 10% for this part of your grade. There are no make-ups offered for attendance.

### *Office Hours (2%)*

Getting to know your professor makes you more comfortable with that person and therefore more likely to ask for help. It also might help for you to ask questions about the various assignments or discuss a paper idea. In this course, you get 2% of your grade for coming one time before Week 9 to office hours. Please come to see Filippo during office hours or reserve a slot via Calendly.

### *Course Journal (8%)*

Students will keep a digital Course Journal which they will use as a personal space to reflect on course material and ideas. At the end of each class, students will be given a question to answer in their course journal. Entries on your course journal will be graded twice throughout the semester, i.e., before the mid-semester break (Week 7) and at the end of the course (Week 12). Each of these checks is worth 4% of your grade, for a total of 8%.

### *Weekly Quizzes (20%)*

Students will be assigned one short quiz every week which will be due before class time. The quiz will be on Moodle and it is not timed. Students can take the quiz as many times as they like, with the recorded grade being

the highest grade they receive. There will be a combination of *technical, methodological, and content questions*. The content questions will help students zoom in on the most important ideas of the readings. The technical questions will help students learn the class's policies and administrative procedures. The methodological questions will test on skills that will pop up every week, like finding an author's argument and assessing sources.

#### *Two Topics for Research (5%)*

By week 4, students will submit a short paper describing two topics related to human development that they find particularly interesting. A detailed prompt will be available on Moodle.

#### *Analysis of Current Literature (10%)*

Building on the previous assignment, by Week 6 students will carry out an analysis of current literature focused on a topic of their choice. A detailed prompt will be available on Moodle.

#### *Close Examination (10%)*

By week 8, students will select two of the four research articles included in their Literature Review. For each paper, students will carry out a close examination. A detailed prompt will be available on Moodle.

#### *Draft of the Final Paper (10%)*

Due by week 10. As the final stage of their learning process, students will submit a rough draft of their final paper focused on differences and similarities. A detailed prompt will be available on Moodle.

#### *Final Paper (25%)*

Due by the end of week 12. Having selected a research topic, performed a literature review, and a close analysis of scientific articles, students will finally carry out a comparison between the two research articles they chose to analyze. A detailed prompt will be available on Moodle.

### **Extension & Submitting Late Work**

Work submitted after the deadline will receive a grade of zero, not partial credit. Each student is allowed one extension of 24 hours over the entire semester. This can be used for any assignment but the final project. Students need to email the instructor before the deadline and inform the instructor of their use of the extension. Any work submitted after the 24-hour extension will be marked zero.

As for all policies, exceptions can be made by the Director for students with special accommodations or in case of medical emergencies, etc.

### **Attendance & Lateness Policy**

Class attendance (in person or through live connection) is mandatory. All students are allowed 2 "sick days" (i.e. unexcused absences), which do not need to be justified. It is the student's responsibility to keep them in case of real necessity. i.e., sickness or any other unforeseen inconvenience that may prevent students from being in class. More than 2 absences will affect your final grade by 2% per absence. Excessive unexcused absences (8 or more) may result in a failing grade or disciplinary action. Three late arrivals to or early departures from class will count as an unexcused absence. It is the student's responsibility to be aware of the number of absences or late arrivals for each course, and to ask the instructor when in doubt.

If students miss class, they are responsible for obtaining class notes from other students and/or for meeting the professor during office hours. Any work missed in class because of an excused absence may be made up within one week of the return to the class. Any work missed that was a quiz or other test must be made up outside of class time and will, in the interest of intellectual honesty, be a slightly different test than the one given in class.

Additional absences relating to illness may be approved by the Director but only if a medical certification is provided. Except in the case of medical emergencies, absences are not accepted when tests are scheduled; tests cannot be made up. Furthermore, scheduled times and dates indicated for exams, quizzes, oral presentations, and any other graded assignments cannot be changed for any reason. Even if more sections of the same class are activated, students may only take exams during the scheduled times and dates for the section they are enrolled in.

### **Academic Integrity**

All forms of cheating (i.e., copying during exam either from a fellow student or making unauthorized use of notes) and plagiarism (i.e., presenting the ideas or words of another person for academic evaluation without acknowledging the source) will be handled according to the Institute Academic Policy, which can be found in the

Umbra Institute Academic Policies and Conduct Guidelines.

### **Classroom Policy**

Students are expected to follow the policy of the Institute and demonstrate the appropriate respect for the historical premises that the school occupies. Please note that cell phones must be set on silent mode before the beginning of each class. Computers and other electronic devices cannot be used during class lectures and discussions for anything other than note-taking, unless there has been a specific academic accommodation.

### **Laptop/Smartphone Policy**

I as an instructor and as a person am dependent on both my computer and my telephone. That said: An ever-increasing body of research shows that open laptops and telephones in the classroom create distraction (both visual and auditory) for those using them and those around them. You can type faster than you can write, and as a result you end up processing less when you're simply typing notes. For this reason, I have a physical notebook policy: I ask you to leave your computers in your bags and phones in your pockets and use a regular notebook. There are three exceptions: 1) if you have an accommodation related to your vision; 2) if you make an office hours appointment with me to discuss the use of a computer; 3) if we have an in-class tutorial about online research tools.

## Schedule of Topics, Readings, and Assignments

### WEEK 1

#### **Introduction to Human Development**

Meeting 1 (Tuesday, January 24th) *Welcome to the Course: Making Sense of Human Development*

Readings:

Optional - Siegler, R. S., DeLoache, J. S., & Eisenberg, N. (2011). *How Children Develop*. London: Worth Publishers. (Chapter 1).

Meeting 2 (Thursday January 26th) *Developmental Psychology: Problems and Approaches*

Readings:

Butterworth, G., & Harris, M. (2014). *Principles of Developmental Psychology*. London: Erlbaum Associates. (Chapters 1).

Lamb, M. E., & Bornstein, M. H. (Eds.). (2011). *Social and Personality Development: An Advanced Textbook*. London: Routledge. (Chapter 1).

Shute, R. H., & Slee, P. T. (Eds.). (2015). *Child Development: Theories and Critical Perspectives*. London: Routledge. (Chapter 1).

### WEEK 2

#### **Science, Behavior, and Human Development**

Meeting 1 (Tuesday January 31st) *Building a Science of Child Development: Behaviorism*

Readings:

Shute, R. H., & Slee, P. T. (Eds.). (2015). *Child Development: Theories and Critical Perspectives*. London: Routledge. (Chapter 6).

Meeting 2 (Thursday February 2nd) *Conditioning Applied: Watson and Skinner*

Readings:

Beck, H. P., Levinson, S., & Irons, G. (2009). Finding little Albert: A journey to John B. Watson's infant laboratory. *American Psychologist*, 64(7), 605–614.

Bigelow, K. M., & Morris, E. K. (2001). John B. Watson's advice on child rearing: Some historical context. *Behavioral Development Bulletin*, 10(1), 26–30.

Gewirtz, J. L., & Peláez-Nogueras, M. (1992). B. F. Skinner's legacy in human infant behavior and development. *American Psychologist*, 47(11), 1411–1422

### WEEK 3

#### **Psychoanalysis and Development**

Meeting 1 (Tuesday February 7th) *Sigmund Freud: Observations and Theories*

Readings:

Miller, P. H. (2002). *Theories of Developmental Psychology* London: Worth Publishers. (Chapter 3).

Meeting 2 (Thursday February 9th) *Psychoanalytic Approaches + Brainstorming on Research Topics*

Readings:

Hopkins, B., Barr, R. G., Michael, G. F., & Rochat, P. (Eds.). (2005). *The Cambridge Encyclopedia of Child Development*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. (Psychoanalytic Theories).

Shute, R. H., & Slee, P. T. (Eds.). (2015). *Child Development: Theories and Critical Perspectives*. London: Routledge. (Chapter 5)

#### WEEK 4

### Language and Development

Meeting 1 (Tuesday February 14th) *Lev Vygotsky: Language and Culture*

Readings:

Miller, P. H. (2002). *Theories of Developmental Psychology* London: Worth Publishers. (Chapter 4)

Meeting 2 (Thursday February 16th) *Socio-Cultural Approaches + Feedback on Research Topics*

Readings:

Shute, R. H., & Slee, P. T. (Eds.). (2015). *Child Development: Theories and Critical Perspectives*. London: Routledge. (Chapter 7)

Esteban-Guitart, M. (2018). The biosocial foundation of the early Vygotsky: Educational psychology before the zone of proximal development. *History of Psychology* 21(4), 384–401.

Assignments:

Turn in Research Topics on Moodle (due February 16th by midnight).

#### WEEK 5

### Methods in Developmental Science

Meeting 1 (Tuesday February 21st) *Methods in Behavioral Sciences*

Readings:

Hopkins, B., Barr, R. G., Michael, G. F., & Rochat, P. (Eds.). (2005). *The Cambridge Encyclopedia of Child Development*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. (Methods in Child Development Research)

Meeting 2 (Thursday February 23rd) *Tools for Literature Review, PsycNet and PubMed*

Readings:

Barker, Meg (2014). Doing a literature review. In: Vossler, Andreas and Moller, Naomi eds. *The Counselling and Psychotherapy Research Handbook*. London: Sage, pp. 61–73.

#### WEEK 6

### Thought and Cognition

Meeting 1 (Tuesday February 28th) *Jean Piaget's Stages of Development*

Readings:

Miller, P. H. (2002). *Theories of Developmental Psychology* London: Worth Publishers. (Chapter 2)

Meeting 2 (Thursday March 2nd) *Jean Piaget's Experiments and Legacy + Questions on PsycInfo and PubMed*

Readings:

Mueller, U., Carpendale, J., & Smith, L. (Eds.). (2009). *The Cambridge Companion to Piaget*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. (Chapter 8 and Chapter 18)

Assignments:

Turn in Analysis of Current Literature on Moodle (due March 3rd at midnight).

## **Semester Break**

### WEEK 7

#### **Social Learning Theory**

Meeting 1 (Tuesday March 14th) *Albert Bandura and Social Learning Theory*

Readings:

Bandura, A. (2006). Autobiography. M. G. Lindzey & W. M. Runyan (Eds.), *A History of Psychology in Autobiography* (Vol. IX). Washington, D.C.: American Psychological Association.

Gauthier, J., & Latham, G. (2022). Albert Bandura (1925–2021). *Canadian Psychology / Psychologie canadienne*, 63(1), 161–162.

Meeting 2 (Thursday March 16th) *Media and Aggression + Feedback of Literature Analysis*

Readings:

Bandura, A., Ross, D., & Ross, S. A. (1961). Transmission of aggression through imitation of aggressive models. *The Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology*, 63(3), 575–582.

Bandura, A. (1965). Influence of models' reinforcement contingencies on the acquisition of imitative responses. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 1(6), 589–595.

APA (2013). Violence in the media: Psychologists study potential harmful effects. Accessed December 20th, 2022. [Link](#)

Assignments:

Turn in Course Journal Entries on Moodle (due March 17th at midnight).

### WEEK 8

#### **Biology and Development**

Meeting 1 (Tuesday March 21st) *Biological Approaches to Human Development*

Readings:

Shute, R. H., & Slee, P. T. (Eds.). (2015). *Child Development: Theories and Critical Perspectives*. London: Routledge. (Chapter 2).

Meeting 2 (Tuesday March 23rd) *Scientific Publishing and Writing + How to Examine a Research Article*

Readings:

Öchsner, A. (2013). *Introduction to Scientific Publishing: Backgrounds, Concepts, Strategies*. Berlin: Springer. (Chapter 7).

Raff, J. (2014, June 18). How to Read and Understand a Scientific Paper. Retrieved December 22, 2022, from [Huffington Post](#) website.

Pain, E. (2016). How to (seriously) read a scientific paper. Retrieved December 22, 2022, from [Science](#) website.

Assignments:

Turn in Close Examination assignment on Moodle (due March 25th at midnight).

**WEEK 9**

**Attachment**

Meeting 1 (Tuesday March 28th) *Attachment Theory*

Readings:

Bowlby, J. (1951). *Maternal Care and Mental Health*. Geneva: World Health Organization.

Harlow, H. F. (1958). The nature of love. *American Psychologist*, 13(12), 673–685.

Flaherty, S. C., & Sadler, L. S. (2011). A Review of Attachment Theory in the Context of Adolescent Parenting. *Journal of Pediatric HealthCare*, 25(2).

Meeting 2 (Thursday March 30th) *Attachment in Non-Western Cultures + Questions on Close Examination*

Readings:

Burman, E. (2013). *Deconstructing Developmental Psychology*. London: Routledge. (Chapter 7).

Vicedo, M. (2017). Putting attachment in its place: Disciplinary and cultural contexts. *European Journal of Developmental Psychology* 14(6), 684-699.

**WEEK 10**

**Longitudinal Studies**

Meeting 1 (Tuesday April 4th) *Harvard Grant Study: Longitudinal Investigations*

Readings:

Shenk, J. W. (2009). What makes us happy? *The Atlantic*.

Vaillant, G. E. (1979). Natural History of Male Psychologic Health. *New England Journal of Medicine*, 301(23), 1249–1254.

Meeting 2 (Thursday April 6th) *Writing Your Final Paper*

Readings:

Scholz, F. (2022). Writing and publishing a scientific paper. *ChemTexts*, 8(8), 1-7.

Gewin, V. (2018). How to write a first-class paper. *Nature*, 555(7694), 129–130.

Assignments:

Turn in the First Draft of your Final Paper on Moodle (due April 7th at midnight).

**WEEK 11**

**Maria Montessori and Pedagogy**

Meeting 1 (Tuesday April 11th) *Maria Montessori: Background and Principles*

Readings:



Moretti, E. (2021). *The Best Weapon for Peace : Maria Montessori, Education, and Children's Rights*. University of Wisconsin Press. (Introduction and Chapter 1).

Meeting 2 (Thursday April 13th) *Montessori Schools and Legacy + Questions on First Draft*

Readings:

O'Donnell, M. (2007). *Maria Montessori*. London: Bloomsbury Publishing. (Chapter 4).

Moretti, E. (2021). *The Best Weapon for Peace : Maria Montessori, Education, and Children's Rights*. University of Wisconsin Press. (Conclusions).

#### WEEK 12

### Critical Approaches

Meeting 1 (Tuesday April 18th) *Critical Approaches in Development Psychology*

Readings:

Burman, E. (2020). *Developments: Child, Image, and Nations*. London: Routledge (Chapter 1 and Chapter 7).

Meeting 2 (Thursday April 20th) *Making Sense of Human Development in Culture: A Recap*

Readings:

Lamb, M. E., & Bornstein, M. H. (Eds.). (2011). *Social and Personality Development: An Advanced Textbook*. London: Routledge. (Chapter 3).

Burman, E. (2013). *Deconstructing Developmental Psychology*. London: Routledge. (Chapter 6).

#### WEEK 13

### Final Exams and Special Academic Events Week

#### Assignments:

Turn in Final Paper through Moodle (due April 21st at midnight).

Turn in Course Journal entries on Moodle (due April 21st at midnight).