

August 28, 2021

**Psychology 304
Child Development**

Instructor

Name: Melanie Dirks, PhD

E-mail: melanie.dirks@mcgill.ca

Teaching Assistants

Name: Kristina Drudik

Name: Karla Tarin

Name: Katya Santucci

Name: Ally Zikic

Course email: psyc304.mcgill@gmail.com

Prerequisites

The prerequisites for this class are two of Psyc 211, Psyc 212, Psyc 213, and Psyc 215. You may take the class without the pre-requisites, but you may find it to be more challenging/more work than will students with the relevant background in psychology.

Meetings and Format

This class will be taught remotely. In-class tests will occur online, but must be taken during class time on the specified date (see section on Assessment below). Currently, the final exam is scheduled to take place in person.

Below is a detailed description of how the course will be taught.

- (1) *Course Videos.* Each week, videos of the instructor teaching topics in child development will be posted to my courses. Videos vary in length, depending on the topic. Typically, they will not be longer than 1 hour (approximate length of each video is posted in the course schedule so you can plan accordingly). On average, approximately 2 hours and 15 minutes of video content will be posted each week (note that some weeks will go longer but other weeks are shorter). All videos for a given week will be posted no later than noon (EST) on Monday each week. When possible, videos may be posted earlier so that you can watch in advance if it fits better with your schedule.
- (2) *Question and Answer Sessions with the Instructor.* Prof. Dirks will be available on zoom to answer your questions about the material at the following times each week, unless otherwise noted:

Wednesdays from 10:00 am to 11:30 am (Group format).

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Thursdays from 4:00 pm to 6:00 pm (Individual format. A waiting room will be enabled and students can meet with Prof. Dirks one-on-one on a first come, first served basis).

Note that this schedule was set up based on student attendance during these sessions last year, as well as student feedback about what would be most useful. Additional sessions may be added if there is demand for them.

- (3) *Question and Answer Sessions with the Teaching Assistants.* Online sessions with each of the teaching assistants will be scheduled in the first two weeks of class and times will be posted to mycourses.

Computing Requirements

This class requires regular access to a reliable Internet connection and a computer. It will be difficult to do the online assessments on a tablet or a phone (I definitely could not do it). Lectures will be posted to mycourses, and in-class tests will be delivered over my courses. The professor and TAs will hold online sessions over zoom. You do not need a web camera or a microphone for this course (you can participate in the online sessions using the chat function).

If you anticipate having any issues with the computing requirements for this course, please contact me (melanie.dirks@mcgill.ca) as soon as possible.

Course Description and Learning Objectives

This course is an introduction to theory and research in child development. We will cover the development of perception, motor skills, cognition, language, emotions, and social cognition and behaviors, from infancy through adolescence. The development of interpersonal relationships, as well as the influence of relationships on children's development, will also be discussed.

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

- (1) Understand the use of the scientific method to answer questions about children's development.
- (2) Understand what develops and when. In each of the domains studied, students should be able to describe key abilities and skills and know by what age they reach adult-like levels.
- (3) Understand how nature and nurture work together to shape children's development.
- (4) Understand major research paradigms and methodological approaches used to address developmental questions during infancy, childhood, and adolescence.
- (5) Discuss the implications of developmental science for everyday lives. Describe how a scientific understanding of children's development can inform education, parenting, and policy-making to promote children's well-being.

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Recommended Reading

The textbook for this course is:

Siegler, Saffran, Graham, DeLoache, Eisenberg, & Gershoff
How Children Develop
6th Canadian edition

Note that the textbook is recommended. You may find it helpful to see the material I cover in class described in a different way, and you may be interested in reading beyond what I cover in the episodes. The textbook is not required, and I will not ask test questions that require you to have read the textbook. Please note that I am not able to enable the quiz function in Launchpad.

Assessments

(1) Participation (5%)

I appreciate how hard it is to stay engaged with courses taught remotely. For this reason, we have sprinkled brief assignments throughout the course to help you connect with the material in different ways. These assignments are worth 1% each. There are 8 available, so you can skip three without penalty. A schedule of participation assignments can be found at the end of this syllabus, as well as in the assignments folder. You can find a description of each assignment in the document called Participation Assignments in the Assignments Folder.

(2) Online Tests (50%)

During the course, there will be two online tests, each worth 25%. Tests will begin at the start of our scheduled class time on Friday (10:05 am). It is expected that the tests will consist of both multiple-choice and short-answer questions. It may be necessary to use entirely multiple-choice questions. You will have 1 hour and 20 minutes to complete each test.

Online Test 1: Friday October 8; Covers Week 1 to Week 5 inclusive

Online Test 2: Friday November 19; Covers Week 6 to Week 11 inclusive

(3) Final exam. (45%)

The final exam will be scheduled by the university and is currently set to be in person. The final exam will be cumulative and will cover all material from Week 1 to Week 14 inclusive. It is expected that the final will consist of both multiple-choice and short-answer questions. It may be necessary to use multiple-choice questions in whole. Detailed information about the final exam will be provided closer to the date. The final exam will take you about 3 hours to complete.

Extra Credit. You can receive up to 2% bonus credit (which will be added to your final grade) for participating in psychological research through the Participant Pool. To receive the 2% credit, you must complete 2 hours of participation (2 x 1 hour experiments, 4 x 30 minute experiments). If you prefer, you can submit 2 written reports based on journal articles provided by the

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administrator of the Participant Pool.

Final letter grades will be assigned according to the following scheme.

A	A-	B+	B	B-	C+	C	D	F
100-85	84-80	79-75	74-70	69-65	64-60	59-55	54-50	49-0

We will calculate your final grade four different ways and you will receive the highest grade that results.

- (1) Participation (5%) + Test 1 (25%) + Test 2 (25%) + Final Exam (45%) + 2% Extra Credit
- (2) Participation (5%) + Test 1 (25%) + Final Exam (70%) + 2% Extra Credit
- (3) Participation (5%) + Test 2 (25%) + Final Exam (70%) + 2% Extra Credit
- (4) Participation (5%) + Final Exam (95%) + 2% Extra Credit

Note that grades will not be rounded to the next grade level. For example, to earn a grade of A, the final calculated score must be 85.00 or higher. Grades are calculated using SPSS statistical software. Note that there may be slight discrepancies between numerical scores as viewed on my courses and actual numeric scores due to differences in rounding. The correct scores are the ones calculated by course personnel.

In the event of circumstances beyond the instructor's control, the evaluation scheme as set out in this syllabus might require change.

Test and Exam Procedures

- (1) *Online tests.* Online tests will be administered on mycourses. They will open at 10:05 on the scheduled test day and close at 11:25. Students will have 1 hour and 20 minutes to complete each test.
- (2) *Final exam.* Currently, the final exam is set to be in person and will be scheduled by the university. More information will be provided as it becomes available.

Rescheduling and makeups.

(a) Participation assignments

The goal of the participation assignments is to encourage regular engagement with the material (in addition, I will use some of the assignments to set up later episodes). For this reason, extensions are not available. Remember that you can miss 3 participation assignments without penalty. I recommend doing the early assignments so that you have flexibility in the event that something unexpected comes up.

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(b) In-class tests

To be fair to everyone in the course, we cannot reschedule in-class tests. If you miss an in-class test, we will add the percentage to the weight of the final exam. Note that we will calculate your final grade both with and without your test scores, and you will receive the highest grade. Thus, if you receive a higher grade on the final exam than on one or both of the tests, we won't count your test score(s).

You do not need to provide documentation to miss an in-class test. Please send an email to the course email (psyc304.mcgill@gmail.com) with MISSING TEST in subject line BEFORE the start of the test. This way, we'll know that the missing test is not the result of a technical error.

(c) Final exam

The final exam will be scheduled by the university and requests for deferrals must be made through service point.

Use of notes and course materials during assessments. The in-class tests are designed such that they could be taken closed book. We cannot enforce this during online assessments, and you are free to use any material presented in the course, including course videos and your own notes. You may not refer to the textbook during assessments, nor to any other material (e.g., other websites). There is no need for you to use these materials, and it may lead to incorrect answers. Note that the estimated times to complete the tests are based on the assumption that you are taking the test closed book. If you need to review material (e.g., rewatch videos) it will take longer and you may not have enough time.

Note that the final exam is scheduled to take place in person, and if it occurs in person, it will be closed book.

Collaboration during assessments. Assessments should reflect your independent work. You may not work with other individuals during the assessments. This includes, but is not limited to: talking about test questions and answers with other students, sharing your answers or reading the answers of others, posting test questions for other people to read, being present in chat rooms or on Facebook pages in which others are discussing the test questions.

Test and Exam Review

(a) Participation assignments. When an assignment is not given 1%; the grader will leave feedback. If you think an error was made, you can ask Prof. Dirks to review your assignment. Please review the feedback you received very carefully before requesting a regrade. Keep in mind that you can miss three assignments without penalty. Requests must be made within two weeks of receiving the feedback.

(b) In class tests. If you notice an adding error on your in-class test, please email the course website and we will make the correction.

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For multiple-choice questions, you will see which questions you answered incorrectly. To preserve the integrity of the assessments, the correct answer will not be indicated. You can find out the correct answer by reviewing your materials, or by coming to one of the scheduled TA sessions that will occur after each in-class test.

You will receive feedback documenting where points were deducted on short answer questions. If you think that a grader made an error, you can make a request for a regrade to Prof. Dirks. In your request, you must make clear where you think the error is, making reference to the feedback that you received. Prof. Dirks will regrade all of the short answer questions, and the result may be a score that is higher or lower than the one you originally received. Note that she will regrade using the same rubric that the graders used. Requests to regrade will be accepted for two weeks from the date that feedback is made available.

- (c) *Final exam.* If you notice an adding error on your final exam, please email the course website and we will make the correction. Requests to regrade the final exam must be made through Service Point. Regrades will be done using the same rubric as originally provided by the graders.

Other Issues

Getting in touch with us. We are always happy to hear from you and to answer any questions you have about the course or the material presented. The best way to get in touch will depend on what your questions is about.

- (1) *Questions about material presented in videos.* One of the challenges of presenting pre-recorded videos is that students don't have the chance to ask questions while I lecture, which helps me to figure out where people are having trouble. If you have questions about material in the videos, you can:
 - (a) Ask Prof. Dirks during her regular online sessions.
 - (b) Ask a TA during their regular online sessions.
 - (c) E-mail the course website: psyc304.mcgill@gmail.com.
- (2) *Questions about procedural issues.* If you have a question about a procedural issue (e.g., when are the in class tests? What will be on the in class tests? What material are you covering this week?) please be sure that you have reviewed the syllabus, announcements on my courses, emails from Prof. Dirks, and the documentation provided in the course administration folder, including the FAQ document, before contacting us. Answers to these questions can nearly always be found in one of these places. If you don't hear back in 48 hours, it might be because the answer is available in the materials provided.

Sensitivity and Respect. At times during this course, we will have a scientific discussion about sensitive topics. For example, we will talk about the effects of social deprivation and neglect on development. Other topics include corporal punishment (i.e., spanking) and the effect of poverty/socioeconomic status on child development. Please always be mindful that many people

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in the class will have personal experience with the topics being discussed. If any of the course material, or the way that I am presenting it, makes you uncomfortable or upset, please reach out to me at melanie.dirks@mcgill.ca.

Plagiarism/cheating. McGill University values academic integrity. Therefore, all students must understand the meaning and consequence of cheating, plagiarism, and other academic offences under the Code of Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures (see www.mcgill.ca/students/srr/hones/ for more information). Cases of suspected cheating will be reported to the Disciplinary Officer for your faculty and may result in a score of 0 on the exam or paper, failure of the course, or suspension or expulsion from the university. Note that both working with other students during assessments and disseminating test questions to other individuals constitute cheating and will be reported. Being present in a Facebook group or other forum where test questions are being discussed – even if you do not post yourself – may also constitute cheating.

Video recordings. Videos will be made available for viewing in mycourses. Please note that recordings will be available for streaming only. It is not possible to enable downloading of the lectures due to the inclusion of copyrighted materials. You may not download or disseminate these videos in anyway (e.g., posting them to websites, emailing to others). I will follow up on incidents of this nature. Note that I will post an audio-only version of the recordings for students who are having difficulty streaming the videos.

Copyright. All material presented is the property of the instructor or the respective copyright holders. All instructor-generated course materials, including but not limited to videos, lecture slides, transcripts of lectures, notes, summaries, syllabi, and exam questions, are legally protected and may not be reproduced or distributed without explicit permission of the instructor. Examples of illegal distribution include distribution of the course videos in any way, the posting of any course materials, including personal transcriptions of lectures, on note-sharing websites, the selling of lecture notes to other students, and the reproduction of exam questions. Infringements of copyright can be subject to follow up by the University under the Code of Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures.

Written work. In accord with McGill University's Charter of Students' Rights, students in this course have the right to submit in English or in French any written work that is to be graded.

Course Schedule

(Please note that time estimates are approximate)

Week	Starting	Topic	Episodes
1	Aug 30	Introduction Visual Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (1) Welcome to the Jungle (Gym): Introduction to the Study of Child Development (45 minutes) (2) The First Time Ever I Saw Your Face: Development of Acuity and Face Perception (36 minutes) (3) Just in Time: Critical Periods and Visual Development (23 minutes)
2	Sept 6	Motor Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (1) The Reflex (na na na na): Theories of Motor Development (30 minutes) (2) I Can't Stand Up for Falling Down: Learning to Walk (51 minutes) (3) Walk It, Talk It: Links Between Motor Development and Other Skills (17 minutes)
3	Sept 13	Learning About the Physical World	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (1) They Can't Take That Away from Me: Piaget's Theory of Cognitive Development and Object Permanence (64 minutes) (2) Crash Into Me: What Do Infants Know About Solid Objects? (11 minutes) (3) One Thing Leads to Another: Infants'

			<p>Understanding of Cause (53 minutes)</p> <p>(4) Carnival of the Animals: Infants' Understanding of Categories (30 minutes)</p>
4	Sept 20	Social Cognition	<p>(1) Wrecking Ball: What are Social Agents? (14 minutes)</p> <p>(2) Where is My Mind?: Understanding Others Perceptions, Goals, and Desires (63 minutes)</p> <p>(3) That's the Way It Is: Understanding of False Beliefs (60 minutes)</p>
5	Sept 27	Language	<p>(1) Alphabet St.: Developmental Milestones from Gestures to First Words (39 minutes)</p> <p>(2) More than Words: Development of Use of Grammar and Syntax (18 minutes)</p> <p>(3) Pattern Recognition: How Do Children Learn Language (32 minutes)</p> <p>(4) Just Once: Word Learning (23 minutes)</p> <p>(5) Talk to Me: The Interpersonal Context of Language Learning (38 minutes)</p> <p>(6) Speak Like a Child: Critical Periods and Language Learning (19 minutes)</p>
6	Oct 4	In Class Test 1 The Bleeding Edge: Work from Developmental Psychology Labs in Canada	<p>(1) Prof. Mark Sabbagh on the Role of Experience in the Development of Theory of Mind (TBD)</p>

7	Oct 11	Fall Break, No Episodes This Week	
8	Oct 18	Executive Functioning Education and Children's Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (1) Self Control: What is Executive Functioning? (21 minutes) (2) Wait for It: Age-Related Changes in Executive Functioning (16 minutes) (3) I Don't Wanna Wait: Individual Differences in Executive Functioning (37 minutes) (4) My Future: Preschool and Children's Development (69 minutes)
9	Oct 25	Attachment Temperament	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (1) Baby Love: Bonding between Infants and Caregivers (29 minutes) (2) Mother and Child Reunion: Attachment Styles and the Strange Situation (41 minutes) (3) I'm So Lonesome I Could Cry: The Importance of Social Interaction for Healthy Development (21 minutes) (4) I've Gotta Be Me: Models of Temperament (30 minutes) (5) Wildflowers: Goodness of Fit (19 minutes)
10	Nov 1	Emotional Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (1) Feeling Good: Development of Emotional Experience from Infancy through Early Childhood (43 minutes)

			<p>(2) Heaven Knows I'm Miserable Now: Emotional Experience During Adolescence (12 minutes)</p> <p>(3) You Need to Calm Down: Development of Emotion Regulation (26 minutes)</p> <p>(4) When I See You Smile: Development of Emotion Recognition (54 minutes)</p>
11	Nov 8	Moral Development and Prosociality	<p>(1) Do You Really Want to Hurt Me: Piaget's Theory of Morality and the Role of Intentions (35 minutes)</p> <p>(2) Is It Wicked Not to Care: Social Domain Theory (22 minutes)</p> <p>(3) Treat People with Kindness: The Early Development of Prosocial Behavior (66 minutes)</p>
12	Nov 15	In Class Test 2 The Bleeding Edge: Work from Developmental Psychology Labs in Canada Education	<p>(1) Dr. Michele Morningstar on the Development of Recognition of Emotional Prosody (TBD)</p> <p>(2) Lego House: The Role of Play in Children's Development (34 minutes)</p>
13	Nov 22	Growing Up in a Family: Parent-Child and Sibling Relationships	<p>(1) I'll be There for You: Parenting and Children's Development (58 minutes)</p> <p>(2) I Hate You but I Love You: Conflict and Warmth in Sibling Relationships (45 minutes)</p>

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			(3) Should I Stay or Should I Go?: Intervening to Improve Sibling Relationships (25 minutes)
14	Nov 29	Growing Up in a Community: Peer Relationships Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (1) With a Little Help from my Friends: Understanding and Measuring Children’s Relationships with Peers (TBD) (2) We’re Going to Be Friends: Do Peer Relationships Matter and Can We Make Them Better? (TBD) (3) Sweeter than Fiction: Mythbusting in Child Development (TBD) (4) Thunder Road: Lightning Round with Profs. Kristen Dunfield and Melanie Dirks (TBD, will be posted on Monday Dec 6) (5) Don’t You (Forget about the Scientific Study of Child Development): Conclusions (TBD)

Note that this schedule is intended as a guideline. Topics covered may be changed due to circumstances beyond the instructor’s control. Any changes that would affect the in-class tests or final exam will be announced at least two weeks before the assessment.

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Participation Assignment Schedule

Week (Starting)	Assignment Due Date	Assignment
1 (Aug 30)	NA	NA
2 (Sept 7)	NA	NA
3 (Sept 13)	Fri Sept 17	Sweeter than Fiction
4 (Sept 20)	Fri Sept 24	Crying Lightning: Theory of Mind
5 (Sept 27)	Fri Oct 1	What I Like About [Child Development]?
6 (Oct 4)	NA	NA (<i>Note In Class Test 1 is Fri Oct 8 at 10:05 am</i>)
7 (Oct 11)	NA	NA
8 (Oct 18)	NA	NA
9 (Oct 25)	Fri Oct 29	Baby What A Big Surprise
10 (Nov 1)	Fri Nov 5	Lightning Crashes: Emotion Recognition
11 (Nov 8)	Fri Nov 12	Thunder Road I: Prosocial Behavior and Morality
12 (Nov 15)	NA	NA (<i>Note In Class Test 2 is Friday November 19 at 10:05 am</i>)
13 (Nov 22)	Fri Nov 26	Where Do We Go from Here?
14 (Nov 29)	Fri Dec 3	Thunder Road II: Peer Relationships

All participation assignments are due by Friday at 5 pm of the scheduled week. Assignments submitted late will not count. Detailed instructions for each assignment can be found in the Assignments folder on mycourses.