

Psychology 5100, Infant Attention and Cognition – Syllabus, Fall 2006

MWF 2:30 - 3:20 p.m., Psychology 243

Call number 97-341

Instructor: Dr. Janet Frick

Office: 241 Psychology

Phone: 542-6790

Email: jfrick@uga.edu

Office Hours: by appointment

This syllabus is a general plan for the course; deviations may be necessary

General Course Information

Course Description

Psychology 5100 is a seminar course on current topics in psychology. This course is taught as a split-level graduate / undergraduate course, and is geared toward advanced undergraduate students who are interested in experiencing a discussion-based course that will prepare them for graduate school. A high level of reading, writing, and class participation is expected.

This particular course will undertake a broad examination of the literature on the development of attention and cognition in human infants. A major focus of the course will be the special challenges and opportunities presented for the study of the early development of human cognition in a nonverbal organism with somewhat limited neural function and social development. The goal of this course is to introduce students to the empirical and theoretical literatures on the development of attention and cognition in early infancy, and for each student to be conversant in both the classic studies, and current topics in the field. Students are not required to have completed PSYC 4220 (Developmental Psychology) in order to take this course, but a basic understanding of developmental and/or cognitive principles is assumed, as is the ability to read and interpret primary research literature (e.g., journal articles). This is not a “passive”, sit-back-and-take-notes kind of class either; students will be expected to read and contribute to class discussions regularly.

Prerequisites

PSYC 1101 (introductory psychology) is the only official prerequisite, but it is **strongly** recommended that students have completed (and passed) PSYC 2980 prior to taking this course. This will greatly enhance your ability to read the texts and journal articles, and to write appropriate reaction papers.

Required Texts

Infant Development: The Essential Readings (2000), edited by Darwin Muir and Alan Slater, Blackwell Publishing, ISBN: 0631217479

Introduction to Infant Development (2002), Edited by Alan Slater and Michael Lewis. Oxford University Press, ISBN: 0198506465. Additional readings may be assigned, and will be available via CD-Rom, Webct, online, or at the library.

Class Requirements

Students are expected to attend all classes, read all assigned materials and complete all assignments *prior* to class. Bring all current readings with you to class. Class participation is 10% of your grade. Thorough and timely completion of assignments is expected, and all assignments are due at the **beginning** of class on the day they are due. Late assignments will be docked 25% of the grade if turned in on the day they are due, 50% of the grade if turned in the next day, and will not be accepted more than 1 day late except under very unusual circumstances, which must be approved by the instructor.

Exams

Two exams will assess your knowledge of and critical thinking about the core material from the course. These exams will consist of short-answer and essay questions. The first exam will be given in late September (probably the 22nd, but date to be determined) and the second exam will be given prior to the beginning of oral

presentations, which will begin sometime in early to mid-November (depending on the final enrollment of the class). Each exam is worth 25% of your grade. There will be no final exam during the final exam period.

Research Paper

A research paper (9-12 pages, plus references) is required on some topic directly related to infant attention and cognition. Topics must be approved by the instructor. Detailed guidelines for the paper will be distributed later in class. The paper is due on or before November 20, although preliminary drafts will be required earlier in the semester. You will present your research to class during one of the final class periods in November and December. Dates for oral presentations will be assigned randomly. The paper and presentation are worth 30% of your grade; 20% from the paper and 10% from the presentation.

Small papers

Small reaction papers will be assigned occasionally during the semester. These are worth 10% of your grade. These are 1-2 page papers which will involve synthesis and application of the material we have covered, but will not require any additional research, beyond assigned class readings. Drafts of the term paper will be included in this category. Grading for these paper drafts will be based on the quality of the paper turned in, and progress made since the last draft..

Grading

Your grade will be determined as follows:

Exam 1	25%	_____
Exam 2	25%	_____
Research Paper (20) and Oral Presentation (10)	30%	_____
Small papers (10) and Class participation (10)	20%	_____
	Total:	_____

Grading is based on the following percentage scale:

A	93.00 - 100.00	C+	78.00 - 79.999
A-	90.00 - 92.999	C	73.00 - 77.999
B+	88.00 - 89.999	C-	70.00 - 72.999
B	83.00 - 87.999	D+	68.00 - 69.999
B-	80.00 - 82.999	D	60.00 - 67.999
		F	0 - 59.999

Borderline grades are not automatically rounded up. Decisions about “curving” are made on a case-by-case basis at the end of the semester. The factors I will take into consideration in assigning a grade in borderline cases include attendance, quality of class participation, and whether assignments have been turned in on time. Instructor decisions on grades are FINAL, and grades will **not** be changed except in cases of clerical error. Please do not contact me at the end of the semester and ask me to change your grade.

Course Policies

Students with disabilities should see me as soon as possible, and provide a letter from the UGA Disability Services Office describing what special accommodations you might require. I will be happy to work with you in any way you need.

A grade of “incomplete” is not an option except in extremely rare circumstances, and must be approved by the instructor. It is not an option if you are failing the course (see the Undergraduate Bulletin).

A student may withdraw from the class prior to the midpoint of the semester (October 9), but you are only

guaranteed a grade of “W” if you are passing the course (see the Undergraduate Bulletin).

Assignments are due at the beginning of the class period in which they are due. *Do not email* assignments to Dr. Frick using regular email; you may only use the assignments tool in webct (if available) or the webct email (this will be demonstrated in class). This provides a verifiable method of determining whether assignments have been turned in or not. You have to be sure to “attach” the paper, and you are responsible for making sure you do this correctly. Late assignments may be turned in for 24 hours for no more than half-credit; more than 24 hours after the due date, late assignments will not be accepted unless there are extreme extenuating circumstances (which must be approved by the instructor).

Attendance and preparation for class are expected. You are responsible for all class content and announcements whether you are present or not. It is important that you complete reading assignments before coming to class because lectures, discussions, and activities assume you are already familiar with the material. I may give unannounced pop quizzes if I feel students are not completing the readings prior to coming to class. Attendance will be taken on a random basis throughout the semester. The UGA Academic Affairs policy on attendance is available online. Poor attendance will greatly reduce your likelihood of a borderline grade being “bumped” up, and it may result in your grade being lowered (in cases of students who miss more than 10% of class meetings).

It is expected that students will read the books thoroughly. There is not time in class to cover everything discussed in the book; class periods will be used to highlight important topics and go into more depth on difficult concepts, as well as having discussions, watching video clips, etc. Lectures will also cover some material not covered directly in the book. The exams will have questions from all course material, which includes the entire assigned textbook, all lecture and lab presentations, articles read, films, guest speakers, etc.

Professional behavior is expected, including demonstrating courtesy and respect for the instructor and for other students during class. This includes turning off cell phones, not reading the newspaper during class, etc. All academic work must meet the standards contained in “A Culture of Honesty” (available online). Students are responsible for informing themselves about those standards before performing any academic work. Cheating and plagiarism will not be tolerated; these will be discussed in more detail. But for starters, unless you are specifically instructed to work in groups on an assignment, you are to turn in homework assignments or papers that reflect your own work and thinking. You should not work with a partner and turn in what is essentially the same assignment as someone else. You are welcome to discuss ideas with classmates, but the process of writing and creating whatever you turn in should be done on your own. Plagiarism can occur when students take phrases or passages from books, articles, or the internet, and use them in their own papers without proper documentation. You need to take ideas and put them in your own words, and not just “string together” passages that other people have written, and then present it as your own thinking. Plagiarism can also occur when students turn in passages that are nearly equivalent to what someone else has written, with only a few words changed here or there. You don’t have to commit “word for word” copying to plagiarize – you can also plagiarize if you turn in something that is “thought for thought” the same as someone else. The minimum penalty for violating the academic honesty policy will be a grade of “0” on the affected assignment and an automatic lowering of the final course grade one full letter grade; further penalties could include a note on your transcript, failing the class, or expulsion from the university.

Decisions about grades are made carefully, and are final at the end of the semester. Please do not contact the instructor about a grade change unless there has been a clerical error which you can document. Requests to change final grades are a waste of your time as well as mine. I do not give “extra credit” or makeup assignments. Also, please note that any disputes about grades from earlier in the course must be resolved **before** “reading day” (in this case, before December 7). Once we arrive in the final exam period, your grade from earlier in the semester is set.

Tentative Lecture and Exam Schedule (subject to change if necessary)

Week	Date	Topic	Assignment or Reading
1	Aug 16-18	Introduction to Infant Studies	IID ch.1
2	Aug 21-25	Infant Research Methods	IID 2, IDER intro. Friday: Infant Lab Tour
3	Aug 28-Sep 1	Theoretical Issues	IDER 1-3
4	Sep 6-8	Fetal and Neural Development	IID 3, IDER 4
5	Sep 11-15	Sensation and Perception	IID 5, IDER 5
6	Sep 18-22	Visual Perception and Cognition	outside articles & EXAM 1
7	Sep 25-29	Infant “intelligence”	IID 6, IDER 9-10
8	Oct 2-6	Categorization and Physical Reasoning	IID 7-8; IDER 11-12
9	Oct 9-13	Individual Differences and Prediction	IDER 13 & outside articles
10	Oct 16-20	Speech Perception	IID 9; IDER 14-15
11	Oct 23-25	Attention and Social Development	IID 14; IDER 16-17
12	Oct 30-Nov 3	Applications of Infant Cognition Research	In-class discussions and debates (led by graduate students) on “real-life” applications of what we have learned about infant cognition and why it matters. Topics to be discussed include discipline methods, television / media, autism, and attention span. Outside readings chosen by grad students.
13	Nov 6-8	review and Exam 2	Exam 2
14	Nov 13-17	class presentations	You will be told how much time you have, and you should prepare a one-page handout for each student in the class summarizing your paper and providing key references. Attendance Required.
15	Nov 20	class presentations	Research Paper Due
16	Nov 27-Dec 1	class presentations	Attendance required
17	Dec 4-6	Finish presentations and conclude class	Attendance required