

The Hong Kong University of Science and Technology

UG Course Syllabus

Course title: Developmental Psychology

Course code: SOSC2990

Credits: 3

Pre-requisites: SOSC 1960 or SOSC 1980

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Course Description

This course introduces students to developmental theory and research across the lifespan and explores the interaction of heredity and environment from conception through death. In addition, the impact of sociocultural contexts (culture, gender, socioeconomic status, race, and ethnicity, etc.) on physical, cognitive, and psychosocial development will be considered throughout the semester. Students should complete the course with a deeper understanding of key theories, research methods, and research findings on human development.

Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs)

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

1. Demonstrate fundamental knowledge and comprehension of the major concepts, theoretical perspectives, empirical findings, and historical trends related to developmental psychology.
2. Describe how developmental theories and concepts can be applied in evaluating and solving human problems related to a variety of issues, for examples, parenting, education, close relationships, and mental health.
3. Identify specific socio-cultural contexts (e.g., culture, society, ethnicity, religion, gender, etc.), the ways these influence human growth and development, and how socially responsible behaviors can be informed by these factors.
4. Demonstrate scientific reasoning and problem-solving and describe common research methods within developmental psychology including longitudinal, cross-sectional, and cohort-sequential research.
5. Demonstrate competence in writing and in oral and interpersonal skills in activities and assignments related to lifespan development in context.

Assessment and Grading

This course will be assessed using criterion-referencing and grades will not be assigned using a curve. Detailed rubrics for each assignment are provided below, outlining the criteria used for evaluation.

Assessments:

Assessment Task	Contribution to Overall Course grade (%)	Due date
Class Participation	10%	28/11/2024
Exams		
Midterm	20%	8/10/2024
Final	30%	28/11/2024
Group Project		
Presentation	20%	21/11/2024
Take-home Kit	15%	4/12/2024
Peer review	5%	26/11/2024
Total	100%	

Mapping of Course ILOs to Assessment Tasks

Assessed Task	Mapped ILOs	Explanation
Class Participation	ILO1, ILO2, ILO3, ILO4, ILO5	This task assesses the ability to explain and apply fundamental knowledge and major concepts related to developmental psychology in real life (ILO1, ILO2), identify and evaluate related factors (ILO3), use research methods to write and present related topics (ILO4, ILO5).
Exams Midterm Final	ILO1, ILO2, ILO3, ILO4, ILO5	This task assesses the ability to explain and apply fundamental knowledge and major concepts related to developmental psychology in real life (ILO1, ILO2), identify and evaluate related factors (ILO3), use research methods to write and present related topics (ILO4, ILO5).
Group Project Presentation Take-home kit Peer review	ILO1, ILO2, ILO3, ILO4, ILO5	This task assesses the ability to explain and apply fundamental knowledge and major concepts related to developmental psychology in real life (ILO1, ILO2), identify and evaluate related factors (ILO3), use research methods to write and present related topics (ILO4, ILO5).

1. Class Participation (10%+ 3% bonus points)

- You are expected to attend every class. Class Participation is gained through **10** in-class activities (via Qualtrics) and group discussions (via Group activities). Each class

participation takes up **1%** to the final score.

- Additionally, class participation can also be earned through active in-class participation including answering questions and taking part in on-stage activities and demonstrations, for up to 3 (bonus) points.

2. Mid-term Quiz (20%) + Final Quiz (30%)

- Two exams will be administered to test your understanding of course materials. Exams are multiple-choice and True/False questions, and non-cumulative. Exams count for 20% (Mid-term) and 30% (Final) separately and cover all materials in lectures and required readings (the relevant chapters will appear on the last page of the lecture handouts).
- Supplementary readings are also listed in the lecture note but they will NOT be included in the exams. These readings are useful for a deeper understanding of the course contents.
- Midterm exam is scheduled on **Oct 8** and covers topics from **Chapter 1-4**. Final exam is scheduled on **Nov 28** and covers topics from **Chapter 5-11**.
- Arrive on time for the exams as no additional time will be given for students arriving late.
- No make-up exams will be given to students who are absent from the examination unless students can provide validated medical reasons. You should notify me (through email) about your absence by attaching your official medical certificate **within 24 hours** of the original exam date if you wish to arrange for a make-up exam. All make-up exams will **ONLY** be in the form of essays and oral questions.

3. Group Project: Presentation (20%) + Take-home kit (15%) + Peer review (5%)

- You are required to give a presentation in a group of 5 for 20 minutes (including a 5-minute Q&A) on a topic.
- Based on what you have learned in this course, you are expected to develop a psychoeducation project on ONE developmental psychology concept/theory (e.g., conservation task, egocentrism, object permanence, parenting styles, etc.). The purpose of this project is to promote developmental psychology by educating the public about theoretical concepts and apply what you have learned in lectures and textbook to real-life experiences.
- Groups will be formed during class time on **Sep 17**. You may find your groupmates in class and submit the group name list after class. For those who fail to form groups or are absent on **Sep 17**, we will assign a group for you.
- Your project's topic will be assigned in Week 6 (October 10).

Final Grade Descriptors:

Grades	Short Description	Elaboration on subject grading description
A	Excellent Performance	Demonstrates a comprehensive grasp of subject matter, expertise in problem-solving, and significant creativity in thinking. Exhibits a high capacity for scholarship and collaboration, going beyond core requirements to achieve learning goals.
B	Good Performance	Shows good knowledge and understanding of the main subject matter, competence in problem-solving, and the ability to analyze and evaluate issues. Displays high motivation to learn and the ability to work effectively with others.
C	Satisfactory Performance	Possesses adequate knowledge of core subject matter, competence in dealing with familiar problems, and some capacity for analysis and critical thinking. Shows persistence and effort to achieve broadly defined learning goals.
D	Marginal Pass	Has threshold knowledge of core subject matter, potential to achieve key professional skills, and the ability to make basic judgments. Benefits from the course and has the potential to develop in the discipline.
F	Fail	Demonstrates insufficient understanding of the subject matter and lacks the necessary problem-solving skills. Shows limited ability to think critically or analytically and exhibits minimal effort towards achieving learning goals. Does not meet the threshold requirements for professional practice or development in the discipline.

Course AI Policy

Restrict ways of using generative AI tools for assessment

Communication and Feedback

Assessment marks for individual assessed tasks will be communicated via Canvas within two weeks of submission. Feedback on assignments will include specific details of strengths and areas for improvement. Students who have further questions about the feedback including marks should consult the instructor within five working days after the feedback is received.

Required Texts and Materials

Berger, K.S. (2016). *Invitation to the life span*. (4th ed.) NY: Worth Publishers.

Robert Siegler et al. (2017). *How children develop* (5th ed.) NY: Worth Publishers.

Academic Integrity

Students are expected to adhere to the university's academic integrity policy. Students are expected to uphold HKUST's Academic Honor Code and to maintain the highest standards of academic integrity. The University has zero tolerance of academic misconduct. Please refer to [Academic Integrity | HKUST – Academic Registry](#) for the University's definition of plagiarism and ways to avoid cheating and plagiarism.

Some Notes

- Course communication platform – All lecture materials and announcements will be posted on CANVAS. Be sure to check CANVAS frequently for any updated news
- Interaction in class – I believe interactions (both verbal and non-verbal) between lecturer and students (and among students) are one of the key ingredients to an optimal learning experience. Your active participation in class discussion or activities will not only enhance your learning, but also motivate the teaching team to do better!
- Lecture slides – Lecture slides will be posted to CANVAS before each class, but the contents will be a bit different from the displayed slides as I hope to encourage you to take your own notes. Note-taking facilitates your reflection and assimilation of the lecture contents.
- Modifications to the Syllabus - I reserve the right to modify the syllabus in response to your needs and unforeseen circumstances. Any changes in the syllabus will be announced in class and posted as announcements on CANVAS. Please be aware that you are responsible for keeping up-to-date with all course announcements.
- Penalties – Score deduction applies to any assignments over the word limit. Details can be found in the assignment guidelines.
- Late submission – For any group assignment, the group leader will do the submission. Submissions received less than 5 hours after the deadline will not be penalized. No submissions will be accepted after 5pm HKT on the due date.
- Communication – Please expect that your emails will be responded to during weekdays 10am to 6pm HKT.
- Your feedback – Your opinions about the course are very valuable to help me improve the course. Feel free to drop by to talk to me. A course evaluation will also be held at the end of the course.

Teaching Schedule

Week	Date	Topic	Chapters
1	Sep 3	Introduction	Chapter 1
	Sep 5	Research in Lifespan Development & Theories of Development	Chapter 1
2	Sep 10	Genes and Prenatal Development	Chapter 2
	Sep 12	The First Two Years: Body and Mind	Chapter 3 & Supplemental Material
3	Sep 17		
4	Sep 19	The First Two Years: Psychosocial Development	Chapter 4
	Sep 24		
5	Sep 26	<i>The National Day (no class)</i>	
	Oct 1		
6	Oct 3	Review of Prenatal and Postnatal years	Chapters 1-4
	Oct 8	Midterm Exam (covers Chapters 1-4)	
7	Oct 10	Early Childhood: Brain and Body	Chapter 5
	Oct 15		
8	Oct 17	Early Childhood: Psychosocial Development	Chapter 6
	Oct 22		
9	Oct 24	Documentary + Group Discussion	Supplemental Material
	Oct 29	Middle childhood	Chapters 7 & 8
10	Oct 31	Adolescence, Emerging Adulthood	Chapters 9-11
	Nov 5	Group Project Clinic	
Nov 7			
11	Nov 12	Group Presentations	Supplemental Material
	Nov 14		
12	Nov 19		
	Nov 21		
13	Nov 26	Review of Developmental Life Span	Chapters 5-11
	Nov 28	Final Exam (covers Chapters 5-11)	

Important dates & Deadlines

Sep 17	Group formed
Oct 8	Midterm Exam
Oct 10	Group project topic assigned
Nov 11	Group presentation PPT
Nov 26	Peer evaluation
Nov 28	Final Exam
Dec 4	Take-home kit