Psyc 463:
Development of Social Behavior and Personality
Prerequisites: Psyc 101, 250, 210 or 215.

Course Organization

There is no textbook to be purchased for this course. Instead, I selected a group of research articles pertaining to the topics outlined in the above overview. The first third of these articles are currently available for download from Sakai (in a folder called "Required Readings"). The list of required readings is provided a the end of this syllabus, along with “read-by-dates”; the whole set will be made available soon.

a) Assigned readings:

Taken as a set these articles are intended to provide a comprehensive overview of perspectives, research designs, and statistical approaches currently used in research on human social development. These texts should be read by the “read by dates” specified in this syllabus. To orient your reading and animate class discussions, I will post 3 to 5 questions pertaining to a subset of texts on Sakai a few days in advance of the "read by date" (in a folder called "Study Questions/Essay Guides"). You may find that some texts, especially those that report empirical findings make for a difficult read, in part because of the use of sophisticated statistics. Because this is the direction our field is taking (increasing statistical sophistication) it is my duty to provide a broad-based understanding of what those statistics are intended to contribute to developmental science.

b) Class discussion and lectures:

You will find that most of the topics listed in the overview have two sections, one theoretical that lays out specific questions and perspectives to address them, and a second part that consists in the empirical investigations of those question. As stated above, the empirical pieces are more difficult to digest, so I will take care of those in my lectures. But I want the theoretical papers to be your responsibility to cover though systematic discussions in class, using leading questions I will post on Sakai for this purpose (or any other you may want to bring forth). For this to work for the collective benefit, you must make it your duty to read those texts (for which guiding questions will be posted on Sakai) by their due date, and come to class ready to share your thoughts. As stated below, I will grade this aspect of your participation to our class.

Evaluation

To do well in this class you should prepare yourself to read, reflect upon the different topics, discuss your views, and write about them. You will be evaluated on the following bases:

(1) Short essays on two of the topics listed below in the Calendar and Assignment section. I suggest 5 pages, double-spaced (Times 12) as a guideline. You can exceed this limit by half a page if the extensiveness of your coverage justifies it. You will find on Sakai in due time guidelines for writing these essays in the "Study Questions/Essay Guides" folder. I will not accept your essays by email; only in class on the due dates specified in this syllabus.
(2) Midterm and final exam exams will each cover the first and second half of the semester respectively, and the final is not cumulative. Both will include multiple-choice questions, matching questions, fill in the blanks, and short essay questions (3 to 6 lines on average).

(3) As stated above, your participation to class is important. Using the reading material as a basis, we will introduce each topic with a class discussion of how researchers cast their questions and how their different perspectives dictate the questions they formulate. Guideline questions for these discussions (not to the exclusion of your own) will be posted on Sakai at least one week ahead of time. On those introduction days, I will circulate a class roster onto which students who did contribute to discussion will appose a check mark next to heir name. Over the semester I will tally check marks to estimate overall grades on class participation. You will be evaluated on the following basis:

2 essays @ 20% each  
Midterm and Final @ 20% each  
Class participation: 20%

Honor Code:

“Plagiarism—using information from a written source without appropriate acknowledgement—is an honor code violation. Ideas or information in your written work and class presentations must be appropriately referenced, whether the original source is written or verbal. Five or more words taken verbatim from any source must be placed in quotation marks with the source appropriately referenced. If you have questions about any of these matters, ASK.” Each student is required to sign his/her name to the honor code pledge (i.e. “I hereby certify that during this examination I have neither given nor received aid.”) in order to receive a final grade.

Topics, Calendar, and Assignments

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<tr>
<th>WEEK</th>
<th>TOPIC</th>
<th>ASSIGNMENT</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jan. 8</td>
<td>Orientation: Content, organization &amp; evaluation</td>
<td>Syllabus</td>
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<td>Jan. 13</td>
<td>Class Discussion: What is development?</td>
<td>Guiding questions on Sakai</td>
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<td></td>
<td>· What is a critical period?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>· What do the genes do? What is temperament?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>· Does early experience predict later development?</td>
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1. Origin, Dimensions, and Functions of Temperament

|            | · Clinical, biological, developmental approaches |                               |
|            | · Temperament as regulation of reactivity   | Rothbart (2000)               |
|            | · How does temperament develop?             |                               |
|           | Effortful Control, and Executive function.  |                               |
## 2. The First Year of Life: The Challenge of Infancy; Organization and Function of Infant-Mother Attachment

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Reference</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jan. 27</td>
<td>Infant-mother interactions and regulation</td>
<td>Tronick (1989)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb. 5</td>
<td>Attachment disorganization</td>
<td>Lyons-Ruth (2008)</td>
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**Note:** sections 1 or 2 are possible topics

**For your First Essay: Due on February 26**

## 3. Child Characteristics and Parenting Styles in Child Development

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<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Reference</th>
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<tr>
<td>Mar. 3</td>
<td>Three models of G x E interaction</td>
<td>Lecture notes</td>
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**Mar. 5**

**Midterm Exam (Spring break, Friday 6)**

## 5. Empirical Verifications of the Differential Susceptibility Hypothesis

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<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Reference</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mar. 24-26</td>
<td>Testing the differential susceptibility to context hypothesis: Enhancing attachment security through intervention</td>
<td>Cassidy (2011)</td>
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**Note:** Section 4 & 5 is the topic of your Second Essay

**Due in class on April 9**
### 6. THE PRESCHOOL PEER GROUP AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Mar. 31- Apr. 7  The peer group social ecology  Lafreniere (1984)
. Emergence of sex segregation  Strayer (1984)
. Affiliative networks
. Social dominance
. Attraction to the high rank

### 7. SOCIAL ROLES IN CHILDHOOD AND EARLY ADOLESCENCE

Apr. 9  Sociometry: Popularity and rejection  Coie (1983)
Apr. 14-16  Peer-perceived popularity, likeability and social dominance  Parkurst (1998)
Apr. 23  Popularity, relational aggression, and social dominance orientation  Mayeux (2014)

**Apr 28 (Tuesday)**  FINAL EXAM: 8:00 AM (SAME CLASSROOM)

### REQUIRED READING

**JANUARY  15-22**


**JANUARY  27 – FEB 5**


FEBRUARY 10-12

FEBRUARY 17-MARCH 3

MARCH 17-26

MARCH 31-APRIL 7
Overview

This course is designed to provide an advanced introduction to research and perspectives on social development. A unifying question in the organization of the semester is: "How does the developmental process integrate the multiple factors that shape the organization of social behavior and life histories?" The last two decades of research on this question have been particularly exciting. Informed by a systemic understanding of living systems—instead of a strict mechanistic framework, researchers are now examining complex interactions among genes, neurological activity, behaviors, and environmental conditions as they unfold over time, and see this task as essential to a scientific understanding of how the developmental process works. It is thus my goal to sensitize my students to the heuristic value of a systems approach for studying social development, including its methods and statistical procedures. To do this I selected a few themes that have been central to recent research in social and personality development, namely, child temperament, infant-mother attachment, parenting styles, and peer relations during childhood and adolescence. Through the semester we will explore these themes as we study at some length theoretical and research articles from the recent and the not so recent, but historically relevant literature.

We begin our journey by asking the question: "What is temperament and how does it develop?" Temperament, that is, the set of dispositions the infant, the child, and the adolescent bring to their social world, has been a subject of intensive research in developmental psychology. A brief historical review will serve to introduce Mary Rothbart's widely accepted conception of temperament as consisting of two main aspects: reactivity (to stimuli) and regulation (of this reactivity). Her model further allows for a distinction between positive (approach, exuberance) and negative (anger, fear, sadness) reactivity. As Rothbart grounded her effort at defining temperament with reference to their neurological substrates she opened the way to research on processes (biological and behavioral) by which reactivity as expressed in emotions and behaviors is differentially regulated by different individuals. From her collaboration with Posner on the neurobiology of attention processes we also owe our current interest in executive function, its development, and correlated life histories.

Next we examine processes that lead to the formation of the first affective bond the infant forms with her mother. Here again we adopt a historical approach to appreciate how John Bowlby and Mary Ainsworth came to formulate their famous attachment theory, a theory that has enlightened research on social development since its inception (1969-1981)—and that in the recent context of a better integration of biological and behavioral processes in social development continues to inform current research even as it seeks to understand how early life
experiences get “under the skin” (i.e., at cellular/molecular level). We will touch lightly on this growing line of research in developmental psychobiology. Other factors beyond the quality of infant-mother attachment like parenting styles and the effects of chaotic family environments on child development have received a lot of attention in recent literature, so an introduction to this research is warranted. The purpose of these first three sections is to set the stage for examining how personal (temperament), relational (attachment), and contextual (family) factors interact over time to promote more or less stable individual differences in life-histories. Because the conduct of his research, unlike 20 years ago, is now informed by dynamic systems theory, it is indicated to preface it with a summary of the central premises that distinguish a systems approach from the mechanistic approach that preceded it.

The systems approach sets forth specific heuristics for understanding how personal and relational factors interact in their effects on the ongoing organization of social development. Its basic premise is that development generates a hierarchy of nested systems, with genetic activity as the lowest (most embedded) level, on to neural substrates, behaviors, and the structured and changing social environment to which the developing person is adapting. The further postulation of bidirectional relations (co-actions) among those nested systems implies that activity in any of them is contingent upon activity at other organismic levels, such that no specific level (as in mechanicism) can claim precedence in causation, not even the genetic; instead a systemic framework focuses on relational causation as is currently examined, for example, in mediation and moderation models of human development. The upshot of the systems approach is that development is probabilistic, not predetermined. A few articles will be used in class to exemplify. As you know from other classes, the role that genes play in development has been an important focus of research in developmental psychology. After Spring break, we will contrast and compare four different models, proposed in this line of research, of how G x E interactions take place. The most recent of these models called “differential biological sensitivity to context” is now receiving substantial empirical support and will occupy our attention in the following section using published articles with two purposes in mind: (1) explaining how a systems approach can be implemented in actual research, and (2) weighing the empirical evidence in favor or against the differential susceptibility to context hypothesis proposed by Belsky (1997-2013) and Boyce (2005-2013).

The sphere of influences on social development is greatly expanded with the rapid transitions to the preschool peer group and then to formal schooling. Thus, our final topic examines how the peer group, the formation of friendship and dominance relations, and the demands placed upon the child at school entry, emerge as new sets of factors capable of affecting the consolidation or reorganization of adaptive patterns established in the family. In the transition from the family to the peer group, individual differences in social adjustment, positive or negative, may undergo amplification or attenuation. In this context, we consider different proposals linking popularity, peer rejection, and individual differences in social competence. We begin with a descriptive analysis of the preschool ecology with the goal of capturing how the joint motives of making friends and acquiring social status develop and transact over this age range. Next we examine the psychometric approach to “popularity” and “rejection” that emphasizes “likeability” as the primary goal of young adolescents. This approach is finally contrasted to recent literature that recognizes the co-existence of these two needs in adolescent social development: securing friendship and acquiring social status.
Beyond the conceptual and empirical integration this course is intended to facilitate, attention will be given throughout the semester to the methods, research designs, data collection procedures, and the various analytical techniques used in developmental studies of social behavior.