

Psychology 512

Popularity, Friendship, & Peer Relations

Overview

Why are some children more popular than others? What effect does popularity have on children's emotional, behavioral, or academic functioning later in life? How do children select friends, and how can these friends contribute to psychological development? In what way do children and adolescents participate in romantic relationships? How are peer relationships different for children, teenagers, and college students? Who is most likely to be influenced by peers?

For the past several decades, psychologists have dedicated substantial effort toward understanding the ways in which children develop relationships among their peers and the effects of these interpersonal experiences on psychological adjustment. This active and growing area of psychological research has revealed numerous interesting findings about the many types of peer experiences that are important to children and the ways in which peers may be enlisted to help youth who are experiencing difficulties.

This course will discuss the manner in which psychological science has been used to examine these, and related questions about child and adolescent peer relationships. In other words, we will simultaneously learn about peer relations and about psychologists' approach to the scientific exploration of common social-psychological phenomena. Thus, students with and without prior experience in studying psychology will benefit from this course.

You Are the Expert!

This is a large class, but it works best when you all participate as much as possible. That's because you will have much to contribute to area of psychological research! After all, you experienced all of these peer relationships much more recently than I did! Your own experiences will offer you a firm basis on which to review and critique prior theories and empirical findings from this literature. In addition, we will review several depictions of peer experiences from the popular media to help us critique past work in this area and generate new hypotheses for future study.

Texts

There is no text for this class. All readings have been posted on the course Sakai site. With the money you save on textbooks, I hope all will choose to participate in our t-shirt exercise. The t-shirts usually are approximately \$7 each.

Project Popularity

A prior version of this course was awarded an innovative teaching grant to develop an interactive method for teaching psychological science. Through SurveyMonkey/Sakai, you will be able to learn about psychological science in a new, provocative way. Not only will we discuss past research findings on children's peer relationships, but we will also develop our own research hypotheses on this topic and test these hypotheses with the help of your classmates! Each student will be asked to complete questionnaires and participate in experimental procedures used in actual prior peer relations studies, so we can compare the responses from our class to the findings reported in the literature. Of course, your participation

in this part of the course will be completely anonymous, and you may be excused from Project Popularity if you would like. Using this new interactive teaching approach, students will be able to experience psychological research on children's peer relationships as an investigator, a reviewer, and a mock-study participant!

Course Requirements

Class attendance and participation will greatly enhance your experience in this course, thus it is expected that you will attend each class session. For each topic area, readings also have been assigned. The number of required readings has been kept to a minimum to help you keep up to the pace of the class. Additional readings also will be recommended for several topics as a resource to you, and to assist you with thought papers and the mini-research paper.

I use Sakai, so be sure to check it for announcements, resources to help you do well in class. You will submit all papers via Sakai as well. Also, be sure you check your UNC email daily – announcements/changes relevant to the class will be sent to your UNC account.

Your grade will be determined from classroom participation, your performance on 3 thought papers, a mini-research paper, a brief midterm and final. These are described below.

Critical thought papers

To help you process the readings and information conveyed in lectures, you will be asked to complete three thought papers, each no more than 2 pages (single spaced) in length, due on February 16, March 29, and April 5. Grades for each thought paper will be based on your knowledge of the topic (i.e., from readings and lectures), opinions and conclusions, and writing style. It will be important to synthesize the readings and demonstrate critical thinking, rather than simply reiterating material already discussed or exclusively sharing your own experiences. You will have an opportunity to earn up to 5 points on each thought paper, for a total of 15% of your final grade.

Midterm and Final

There will be a midterm and non-cumulative final to review your understanding of the material. These will be essay-format exams. The midterm and final each will count for 30% of your final grade.

Mini-Research Paper

A brief paper will account for 20% of your final grade. You may write the paper on any topic you would like – whether or not we have talked about your topic in class; however, it must be a well-referenced review of the literature in some area of child and adolescent *peer relationships*.

To make sure you are on the right track with our final paper assignment, you will be asked to submit a brief summary/outline of your paper topic for approval on March 8. Include a brief 1-2 paragraph description or bullet-pointed list of the major topics that will be covered included in your final paper, and a list of at least three references that will be included in your paper.

Your final paper should be approximately 8-10 double-spaced pages and should include at least 5 references from high quality, peer-reviewed psychology journals. At least two of your references should be from these journals. Some examples of excellent journals include *Development and Psychopathology*, *Child Development*, *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, *Journal of Clinical Child and Adolescent Psychology*, *Journal of Abnormal Child Psychology*, *Developmental Psychology*, *Merrill-Palmer Quarterly*, *Journal of Research on Adolescence*, and *Social Development*. The final paper is due on April 14 at 9:30am.

Be sure to check Sakai for two documents. One of these documents lists the actual grading criteria that will be used for this paper. The second document lists Helpful Hints for writing your paper effectively.

Project Popularity/Class Participation

Your participation in class will determine the remaining 5% of your final grade. If this class has a large enrollment, then we will be able to use your participation in Project Popularity as a proxy for your class participation grade, with one point assigned to the successful completion of each web module. If you would prefer not to participate in Project Popularity, you may complete a brief thought paper about an article related to course content. Please see me for more information about this option.

Digital Etiquette. When you stand in front of the class, it is painfully obvious when someone is taking notes on their laptop/phone and when they are using it for social media. I am sure there will be lots of things you learn in class that you can't wait to Tweet/Snapchat/Instagram immediately! But please do wait until class is over. Although you may be a good multi-tasker, the person looking at your screen over your shoulder may not be, and it can be disruptive to them.

Grading

You will have an opportunity to earn 30 points on the midterm and final =	60
You will have an opportunity to earn 5 points on each of the three thought papers =	15
You will have an opportunity to earn 20 points on your research paper =	20
You will earn 5 points for class participation and being a nice person =	<u>5</u>
Your final score will be calculated as a sum of all points earned =	100

(A = 100-94, A- = 93-90, B+ = 89-87, B = 86-84, B- = 83-80, C+ = 79-77, C = 76-74, C- = 73-70, D+ = 69-67, D = 66-65, F = 64-0)

How do I get a good grade in this class?

I want you all to get an A in this class, and I will be thrilled to have everyone do well! There is no need to force a distribution on your grades. So, how do you get a high grade?

1. *Take Good Notes!* Powerpoint is the devil! It creates the illusion of summarizing the course content for you, but this is not at all true. My slides offer reminders to *me* – helping me remember what I want us to discuss. But they do not cover all *you* need to know to do well on exams. In fact, if you attend every class, copy only what you see on the slides and commit it all to memory, you will probably do no better than a C. Instead, you will want to make sure that you are taking notes that summarize our general discussion. Research shows that taking

notes in your own words (not mine!) is most important to help you learn and later recall the material. To help you, I will offer a couple of resources for you.

- a. I will post an outline before each class with a list of questions/topic we will cover. It may be useful to take notes that help you answer each question on the outline.
 - b. At the end of each class, I will post the Powerpoint Slides. This will be useful to you so you don't need to worry about copying a complicated figure or list I post during class. But these slides will not be sufficient for you to use as your only study aid before an exam.
2. *Speak Up and Come By!* I want to get to know you, and I would love to hear your ideas! In a large class, it may be difficult to get to know everyone extremely well, but I want to try. Please set up times to come by and chat (you can even come by with a friend or two from our class if you want). Feel free to send me email, or simply stop by the front of the room at the start/end to class. I am rooting for every one of you, but it is harder to do so if I don't even know who you are!
 3. *Embrace our Differences!* Unfortunately, research in child development and clinical psychology focused on homogeneous groups for far too long. We are catching up on understanding how to think about diversity and peer relations. But our class may offer outstanding opportunities for understanding diversity in gender, ethnicity, race, gender identity, sexual orientation, ability, socioeconomic status/class, religion, national origin. I am hopeful that we will have lots of students in our class who represent all kinds of diversity and we will be able to learn together!

Uphold the honor code.

Academic integrity is at the heart of Carolina and we all are responsible for upholding the ideals of honor and integrity. The student-led Honor System is responsible for adjudicating any suspected violations of the Honor Code and all suspected instances of academic dishonesty will be reported to the honor system. Your full participation and observance of the Honor Code is expected, including reporting others to me.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Date	Topic	Readings	Assignments
1/12	Introduction: The many aspects of peer relations and why they matter		
1/14	What is Popularity? And how is it measured?	Techniques for assessing children's peer relations. In <i>Friends and Enemies: Peer Relations in Childhood</i> .	
Determinants of Popularity: Why are some children popular and others rejected?			
1/19	Individual Factors: Behavioral characteristics: Is popularity based on how children behave?	Characteristics of rejected children. In <i>Peer rejection: Developmental processes and intervention strategies</i> .	
1/21	NO CLASS		

1/26	Facial Appearance: Are good looking people more popular? Why	Physical appearance and attractiveness. In <i>Friendship and Peer relations in Children</i>	
1/28	Body Attractiveness: How does body shape relate to popularity?	Adolescent girls' and boys' weight-related health behaviors and cognitions: associations with reputation-and preference-based peer status.	
2/2	Intellectual Ability and Achievement: Are popular children smarter than their peers?		
2/4	Family/Parent Factors: do popular and rejected children come from different types of families?	Parents' relationships with their parents and peers: Influences on children's social development.	
2/9	Family/Parent Factors continued...		
Consequences of Popularity and Rejection: What effect does peer status have on later adjustment?			
2/11	Externalizing Symptoms and Peer Status Subtypes: Do rejected children become more aggressive over time?	Childhood peer rejection and aggression as predictors of adolescent girls' externalizing and health risk behaviors: A six year longitudinal study	
2/16	Internalizing Symptoms: Do rejected children become depressed over time?	Social information processing and children's social adjustment. <i>Children's peer relations: From development to intervention</i>	Thought #1 Paper Due: T-Shirt
2/18	Social Outcomes and Health-Risk Behaviors: are rejected children more likely to drop out of school or engage in illegal substance use/risky behavior?	Ethnici differences in associations among popularity, likeability, and trajectories of adolescents' alcohol use and frequency	
2/23	Catch Up		
2/25	MIDTERM		
3/1	Popularity and DNA: Can unpopularity kill you?	Does rejection hurt? An fMRI study of social exclusions	
3/3	Writing a Review Paper & Bullying and Victimization:	Forms and functions of adolescent peer	

	Different functions of similar behaviors	aggression associated with high levels of peer status.	
3/8	Bullying and Victimization continues...		Research Paper Outline Due
3/10	Bullying and Victimization: different behaviors across gender?		
3/15 & 3/17	SPRING BREAK		
Different Types of Relationships Among Peers			
3/22	Friendships	The company they keep: Friendships and their developmental significance	Screening Tonight!: Stand by Me, 7PM
3/24	Friendships continues...		
3/29	Peer Cliques and Crowds	Informal peer groups in middle childhood and adolescence. <i>Handbook of Peer Interactions, Relationships, and Groups</i>	Thought Paper #2 Due: Relationships
3/31	Guest Lecture and/or Screening: The Breakfast Club		
4/5	Homophily: Two peer influence processes	Beyond homophily: A decade of advances in understanding peer influence processes	Thought paper #3 Due: High School
4/7	Peer Influence Theories		
Peer Influence: How does it work and why is it so powerful?			
4/12	Peer Influence Theories (continues)		
4/14	Peer Influence, Continued	Adolescents misperceive and are influenced by high-status peers' health risk, deviant, and adaptive behavior	Min-Research Paper DUE
4/19	Catch Up		
4/21	Screening: Planet 12: The Secret Lives of 12 Year Olds		
4/26	Review for Final		
5/3, 8 am	FINAL		