

Master Syllabus
DEP 3053 Psychology of Human Development
Department of Psychology
Florida Atlantic University, Boca Raton, FL

Course Prerequisites and/or Corequisites (if any)

PSY 1012 General Psychology

Course Lecture-Lab-Credit and/or Contact Hours

Lecture Course, 3 credit hours

Includes Lab? ___ Yes X No

Lab Fee? ___ Yes X No

Special Facility or Equipment Needs

No specified facility or special equipment required; textbooks and other student materials to be specified by instructor.

Recommendations for Teaching Assistants

There is typically one TA for each section of the course.

Course Objectives

This course provides an introduction to the scientific study of human development across the lifespan. We discuss varied aspects of human development, including biological, emotional, cognitive, and social and personality facets. Throughout the course, the primary emphasis is upon basic theory and research, although some consideration is also given to practical implications (for example, for child-rearing and educational practices).

Course Outline of Topics (Sequence & specifics may vary by instructor)

- I. Understanding Development
 - A. Introduction to the study of development
 - B. Theories of development
 - C. Research methods in developmental psychology
- II. The Biological Bases of Development
 - A. Mechanisms of heredity
 - B. Prenatal development and birth
 - C. Physical and motor development
- III. Cognitive Development
 - A. Perceptual development
 - B. Cognitive development
 - C. Language development
 - D. Intelligence

- IV. Personality and Social Development
 - A. Self-concept, personality, and emotions
 - B. Gender development
 - C. Social relations
 - D. The family

Course Learning Objectives

Students will demonstrate an understanding of the following concepts through their performance on course examinations:

1. Research methods in developmental psychology, including:
 - a. the use of longitudinal and cross-sectional designs
 - b. the concept of ecological validity
2. The basic issues surrounding nativism/empiricism debate with respect to human development
3. The interactive nature of genetic/biologic and environmental factors over development
4. The major stages of prenatal development and factors that influence prenatal development
5. Basic facts about brain development (e.g., neurogenesis; synaptogenesis; differentiation; myelination; plasticity) across the lifespan
6. Development of the visual and auditory systems through infancy, including tasks used to assess perceptual development (e.g., habituation/dishabituation, preference for novelty)
7. Development of representational abilities in infancy
8. A basic understanding of the following theories as they relate to human development:
 - a. Piaget's theory of cognitive development
 - b. Vygotsky's sociocultural theory
 - c. Erikson's Psychosocial theory of development
 - d. Freud's Psychosexual theory of development
 - e. Bandura's social cognitive theory
 - f. Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory
 - g. Darwin's theory of evolution by natural selection
 - h. Skinner's theory of learning
9. Changes in basic information-processing abilities over childhood and old age (e.g., working memory, speed of processing, strategy development)
10. Age-related changes in memory from infancy through old age
11. Description of changes in language development over infancy and childhood and factors that influence language development (e.g., adults' use of child-directed speech)

12. The concept of critical (sensitive) periods, particularly with respect to language acquisition
13. Aspects of infants' temperament and how temperament influences social/personality development
14. Age changes in social cognition (e.g., theory of mind, perspective taking)
15. Factors that influence individual differences in intelligence (IQ) in childhood and old age
16. The heritability of intelligence and other psychological traits (e.g., personality)
17. Factors influencing the development of infant-mother attachment relationships
18. Factors that influence sex/gender differences in cognitive and social abilities
19. The relation between various styles of parenting and child outcomes
20. The influence of environmental variables (e.g., culture, socioeconomic status, family structure) on child outcomes
21. The development of peer relationships, including friendships and social status
22. Factors that influence longevity (e.g., caloric restriction, replication of telomeres)