What Will I Learn?

This course investigates the cognitive, social, and biological development of humans across the lifespan, from conception through late life. Credits as an “Applied” class for the psychology major or minor.

Prerequisite: Psyc 010.

By taking this course, students will learn how to:

1. Describe fundamental principles of developmental psychology, such as how nature and nurture interact and how biological processes contribute to changes in human behavior.
2. Evaluate claims about human behavior and change across the lifespan, in the context of the requirements and limitations of developmental methodologies.
3. Interpret human behavior according to scientific theories and scholarly research.

This course will not attempt to survey all of the major theories and aspects of development across the lifespan. Instead, we will take a question-based approach. For each stage of life we will focus in depth on a single question about development. The exploration of that topic will include the fundamental concepts of developmental theories, and training in critical thinking and research. Students will be able to apply these foundations to answer other questions about development on their own. The questions will be:

**Prenatal:** Must pregnant women completely abstain from caffeine and alcohol?

**Infancy:** Can we predict from infant behavior who will grow to be an introverted and/or anxious adult?

**Childhood:** How do children form their race and gender identities?

**Adolescence:** Why do so many mental illnesses emerge during adolescence?

**Adulthood:** Can we predict how our personality and intelligence will change as we age?

**Late Life:** What can be done about the dementia epidemic?

What Supplies Will I Need?

Readings and other course preparation activities will be posted to the course website; you will need a username and password to access copyrighted materials, which will be provided on the first day of class.

- [http://www.kblackwell.com/courses/Psyc100/index.html](http://www.kblackwell.com/courses/Psyc100/index.html).

Assignments will be turned in as hard copy, so you will need reliable printer access and paper/ink to print 40-50 pages over the semester for required assignments.

How Do I Get in Touch with My Professor?

Office: Science 300  
Office hours: Meetings by appointment  
Office phone: (336) 721-2811  
Email: katharine.blackwell@salem.edu

I used email for scheduling meetings or sharing one-way information only, and check emails primarily during standard business hours (9 – 5 weekdays).
How Will the Professor Decide What I Have Learned?

In-Class Engagement (20%; 1% per class meeting). Learning is an active process, and your presence and engagement during all class meetings are critical components of your learning. In-class activities are fundamental to the learning process, are dependent on the presence of your instructor and classmates, and cannot be “made up”. Engagement at each class meeting will be recorded; arriving late or leaving early/during class will reduce your engagement grade for that day. Missing out on the learning during class meetings adds up. For this reason, you will receive a 0 for engagement if you miss more than two weeks of class (i.e., if you miss 5 class meetings), regardless of your participation in class meetings you attend.

Course Preparation (20%; 1% each). Each class meeting will have a brief assignment designed to help you prepare for our class activity and discussion. These assignments will most often ask you to read an article or watch/listen to a video, and then answer a specific question. They are not summaries, and no more than half credit will be given for a summary that does not answer the question. These are preparation activities; once class has begun you can no longer prepare for it. Therefore, you cannot turn course preparation in late. If you will be absent from class, you may submit your preparation activity to my office before class begins.

Critical Period Public Service Announcement (15%). You will create a research-based “public service announcement” that communicates parenting advice about a critical period of development to a general audience. Your PSA must accurately convey the scientific credibility of your claims but be accessible to a general audience (high school education only), and must be engaging in a mixed visual-written format that could be encountered in the “real world” (e.g., subway advertisement, TV commercial, or social media infographic).

The PSA assignment will be composed of two pieces:

a) the PSA itself, which should explain the concept of critical periods and justify the advice you give to parents; and

b) annotations for at least three recent, peer-reviewed empirical research articles that support your ideas, following the guidelines provided on the course website

Your PSA must provide a recommendation for either consuming caffeine during pregnancy, or consuming alcohol during pregnancy. Two of your references will be the articles provided by the professor on that topic, as cited in Oster (2013); the third may be any scientific article that meets the requirements described on the course website.

Nature-Nurture Autobiography (20%). You will create an autobiography that explores the nature (genetic) and nurture (environmental) influences on your own development. This can either be an exploration of how you came to be who you are today, based on your genes and your early life environment (birth through puberty), or a prediction of what your future holds (at least 20 years in the future) based on your genes, your current self, and your anticipated future life experiences. Each autobiography will be composed of three pieces:

a) an audio-visual depiction of your central claim about how you did/will develop, such as a video, podcast, time capsule, or diorama;

b) a 2- to 4-page thesis that combines your life experiences, scientific references, and understanding of nature-nurture interactions to support your claim about your development; and

c) annotations for at least three recent, peer-reviewed empirical research articles that support your ideas, following the guidelines provided on the course website.
Interaction Analysis (23%). You will arrange an in-person 2-hour interaction with an individual, and use your observations and the current understanding of developmental psychology to explain how they came to be the way they are, and what is in their future.

The interaction will be composed of four pieces, due separately throughout the semester:

a) Proposal (2% of your final grade). The proposal should make a compelling case that your interaction will provide specific, useful observations that will provide you with insight into developmental psychology and build toward a successful final paper. It should identify who you will interact with, when and where the interaction will take place, what activities you will do or behaviors you will look for, and why you have chosen this person, time, place, and topic.

b) Field Notes (2% of your final grade). Your field notes should provide a detailed chronology of the events over your interaction. They should be written on the same day as your interaction to ensure your memories are accurate and your observations detailed. The field notes should present a complete account of your interaction, not just the events you think you will be including in your final analysis. Focus on describing the objective behaviors and reserve the interpretation for your analysis.

c) Reference Annotations (2% each; 8% of your final grade). You will find and describe four recent, peer-reviewed empirical research articles that support your ideas, following the guidelines provided on the course website.

d) Interaction Analysis (11% of your final grade). Your 5-7-page analysis should present a thesis about developmental psychology that is supported by your observations during your interaction and your scholarly references. The observations and scholarly background should be woven together, so that each point you want to make is supported by both observed behavior and science, each of which is described in sufficient detail for someone who wasn’t there or hasn’t read the article to understand what happened and your interpretation.

To protect the confidentiality of the person you observe, all names must be changed to a pseudonym. You may keep the relationship real (if you’re interacting with your grandmother, say it’s your grandmother) but the name must be altered. Middle names with no last name are a common choice.

Field notes will be graded as follows:

A (Achieved). Field notes are a thorough and detailed account of a full, two-hour interaction. Specific quotes and examples of behavior are provided that allow the reader to form a vivid picture of what was said and done, so that even someone who wasn’t present at the interaction could draw on those examples as evidence for claims about human behavior. The author will need to carefully select and condense descriptions to include in the eventual analysis, rather than expand on them.

B (Potential). A mixture of Achieved and Competent – some specific quotes, descriptions, and behaviors that could support claims, but also other places were more detail would be needed.

C (Competent). Field notes provide an outline of the main events of the interaction. Some specific quotes or examples of behavior are present that could be used to support a thesis, but would need to be fleshed out with more context or detail about what happened to be persuasive in supporting a claim. The notes function more as a reminder to the author about what ideas to bring up in the analysis rather than detailed supporting evidence for those ideas; or, the notes focus on a few selected, repeated examples rather than providing a broader view of the interaction.

D (Developing). Field notes are too brief and undetailed to support any claims about human development, and they may not serve as an aid to memory for the author. The lack of detail makes it difficult for the reader to get any sense of the interaction, and could have been written by a neutral stranger passing by (such as another mother in the park, being asked afterward about an unfamiliar child and nanny).
Skills Self-Assessment (2%). You will write a 2-page self-reflection assessing how you have developed skills from Appleby’s guide on “skills employers value”.

A self-assessment of the skills developed during this course will include the following four aspects, which are valued equally in determining your grade for the assignment:

- Demonstrating your conscientiousness and attention to detail by conforming to the formatting requirements: 12-point Times New Roman font, double-spaced, using 1-inch margins on all sides, with no more than 2 lines of header information (one line for a title, and one line for your name).
- Demonstrating your work ethic and self-management skills by completing the full assignment (2 pages in length, without “filler” content to reach the length requirement), and printing/stapling a hard copy far enough in advance that you arrive on time to submit it at the very start of class.
- Demonstrating self-awareness by providing an accurate and honest self-assessment of whether or how much you have developed skills in at least two of the categories identified by Appleby through your assignments and activities for this psychology course.
- Demonstrating evidence-based reasoning by referencing specific actions or activities you completed during the semester, or contrasting your actions at the start of the semester to the end of the semester, and stating how your actions support your skills self-assessment.

Appleby’s “How to Use Your College Education to Develop the Skills That Employers Value” is provided on the next page. The specific skills that this course and professor will attempt to instill are listed below; your mileage with developing these specific skills or related ones will vary.

Communication: present scientific information to a general audience in a primarily non-written format (autobiography, PSA); present scientific information with clear, organized, jargon-free writing (interaction analysis).

Critical Thinking and Research: analyze and interpret scientific information presented in journalistic, documentary, and original empirical research formats; conduct a literature search and synthesize to answer a specific question.

Collaboration: contribute to group discussion to generate ideas or discuss problems during class meetings, and listen/respond to ideas generated by other group members.

Self-Management and Professional Skills: cope with the anxiety of unfamiliar assignments and not being sure how to do the task well and what the expectations are; cope with getting a non-A on an assignment you put a lot of work into or felt was the best you could do; manage the stress that comes with a single assignment worth a large amount of final grade and GPA; regulate your impulses (water, restroom, cell phone) for 80 minutes at a time; remember details of assignments and deadlines; plan ahead and budget time to complete by the due date; anticipate the unexpected (printer problems, WIFI failure, roommate crisis) enough to meet deadlines.

Ethical Reasoning: write plagiarism-free descriptions and evaluations of theories and research studies; provide accurate citation of ideas and words in psychology research.

Technological Skills: utilize refinements of Google Scholar during literature search; develop software skills to present information in slideshow, video, brochure, or other multimedia format.
How to Use Your College Education to Develop the Skills That Employers Value

Drew C. Appleby, PhD (Professor Emeritus of Psychology, IUPUI)

Employers value seven basic categories of skills in college graduates during the hiring process (Appleby, 2014) and the presence or absence of these skills also determines whether new college hires succeed or fail on the job (Gardner, 2007). The three purposes of this poster are to (1) make you aware of these seven basic skill categories, (2) help you identify the specific skills within each of these categories, and (3) provide you with career-development advice about how to use both the curricular and extracurricular components of your undergraduate education to develop and/or strengthen these skills. If you lack these skills when you enter today’s very competitive job market, you risk unemployment, job dissatisfaction, the disturbing realization that your job is not related to your major, and the very real possibility of having to accept a less-than-paying job that does not require a bachelor’s degree. Once you become aware of these skills—and begin to collaborate with an academic or career advisor to create a semester-by-semester plan to attain them—then you can begin the process of including them in your cover letters and resumes in ways that will convince employers to hire you. Do not postpone your efforts to develop these skills; begin this process NOW, not tomorrow, not at the end of this semester, and absolutely not until after you graduate when your undergraduate education has ended and it will be too late to use it to develop these skills.

Communication Skills
Writing, speaking, listening, and reading

It is important to understand that people employed in the positions to which most college graduates aspire must not only write and speak clearly, coherently, and persuasively, but must also listen, to remember, understand, and act upon the information they read and hear. All students take basic communication courses such as English Composition and Speech. Unfortunately, many students do not understand the relevance of the skills taught in these courses to their professional futures and therefore take them to simply “get them out of the way” rather than to learn from them. Please take these courses seriously; without the skills they teach, you will put yourself at risk not only in the process of acquiring a job, but also in your ability to succeed in that job and to keep it once you are hired. Take advanced classes in these areas (e.g., Interpersonal Communication and Technical Writing), and seek out experiences that will provide you with opportunities to practice your ability to read, listen, write, and speak (i.e., classes that require extensive reading assignments, information-rich lectures, demanding written assignments, and formal oral presentations).

Critical Thinking and Research Skills
Applying information to solve organizational problems

Using statistical skills to summarize, organize, and analyze data

Finding, gathering, and organizing information from a variety of sources

Creating new knowledge by integrating existing information

Employers seek out people who can solve problems, analyze data, and create new ideas. One way to develop the critical thinking and research skills that employers value is to participate in research projects that require the following six critical thinking skills: (1) the generation and comprehension of information about the subject of the research, (2) the analysis and evaluation of the body of research upon which the research is based, and (3) the creation and testing of new hypotheses and the application of research findings to advance knowledge and/or improve the quality of human life. (Note that research refers to any systematic and organized method of asking questions and finding answers to these questions. It is not limited to the research methods of any particular academic discipline or area.)

Collaboration Skills
Working well in groups

Exhibiting various forms of leadership, including supervising, influencing, and motivating others

Your employer will require you to perform complex tasks that require teamwork. No one works alone, and almost all teams are composed of people who differ in terms of gender, race, culture, ethnicity, religion, marital status, education, socioeconomic status, sexual orientation, age, and physical or mental ability. The skills necessary to be a productive member of a diverse team can only be acquired through practice and the best place to practice these skills is in course-based group projects or extracurricular activities that involve working with groups composed of diverse members. The worst possible thing you can do in college is to isolate yourself from diversity by deliberately deciding to live, study, work, and spend your leisure time with only those students who are similar to you.

Self-management Skills
Being flexible and adaptable

Learning new skills and information

Managing time, stress, and conflict successfully

Employers avoid hiring people whose inability to manage time, stress, or conflicts causes them to perform poorly on the job by missing deadlines, exhibiting stress-related problems, or lowering workplace morale. Strengthen your self-management skills in college by seeking out courses whose instructors expect you to perform in the same responsible, conscientious, and mature ways that your future employers will demand. Avoid classes taught by instructors who have a negative or non-supportive attitude toward their students. If you feel the need for additional help, seek it out by attending office hours, meeting with your instructor, or using the tutoring services available on your campus.

Professional Skills
Organizing, planning, and carrying out projects

Managing resources

Acting and dressing in a professional manner

Employers want to hire employees who can carry out tasks in a professional manner. Therefore, you should choose classes taught by instructors who have the same high expectations as employers, such as those who (1) help students set and work toward specific goals; (2) function as the lead instructor for a large course, but take a strong role in providing feedback and guidance to less successful students; (3) are available for office hours; (4) actively participate in research projects, or (5) encourage them to get involved in research. The four skills employers value most are: (1) the ability to think, act, and communicate effectively; (2) the ability to develop a plan and follow through on it; (3) the ability to manage resources effectively; and (4) the ability to act in a professional manner.

Technological Skills
Computer literacy, word processing, and email

You must realize that texting your friends, checking social media, and shopping online are not skills valued by employers. In fact, the presence of these actions on-the-job can lead to highly undesirable outcomes. Employers expect their employees to select and use appropriate technological tools to identify, locate, acquire, store, organize, display, analyze, and evaluate verbal, numerical, and visual information. Therefore, students should enroll in classes that require (1) papers written with word-processing programs, (2) the organization of information with databases, (3) the manipulation of numbers with spreadsheets, (4) the analysis of data with statistical programs, (5) the location of information with search engines, (6) the enhancement of speeches with presentation software, and (7) communication with their instructors and fellow students via the Internet. Savvy job-seeking students master these skills while they are in college so that they can “hit the ground running” when they are hired and not waste their employers’ time by having to be trained those skills on-the-job.

Ethical Reasoning Skills
The ability to make ethical decisions based on appropriate ethical knowledge and the willingness to act on these decisions

Although this was the least often mentioned skill by employers during the hiring process, it is crucially important for job-seeking college students to possess because of the dire consequences for new hires who fail to demonstrate it on-the-job. You should be aware that job interviews can include questions designed to evaluate your ability to think and act in an ethical manner, such as “Tell me about a project that required you to be aware of and act in accordance with a set of ethical principles.” The only way to answer this question in a credible manner is to have actually participated in such a project. Therefore, you should engage in (1) research projects that require the creation of IRB protocols, (2) writing assignments that conform to guidelines prohibiting plagiarism, and (3) internships that require you to be aware of, understand, and act according to ethical guidelines such as those you would need to follow when you would work with clients whose confidentiality must be protected or who may be exposed to risks.

References


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If you would like copies of a sample cover letter and resume that have been created using skills as their organizational structure, please email me at deappleby@ispui.edu. These are Word documents you can modify to include your own contact information, career objectives, and skills.
How Does Dr. Blackwell Interpret the Honor Code?

The Honor Tradition is an integral aspect of Salem college, and students are expected to act with honor at all times in the course. This includes being respectful of your classmates and your professor during class sessions, and working with integrity on your assignments outside of class.

- **Honor with your classroom behavior.** Whenever you are in the presence of other students, you have the potential to either enhance or disrupt their learning experience. You can enhance their learning by asking questions of the professor, listening attentively to the questions other students ask, and contributing to group activities. However, you can also disrupt other students’ learning when you become a distraction (such as whispering to other students, using your phone, moving about the classroom during lecture). You must also respect the questions and statements made by other students; you don’t have to agree, but you do have to manage your disagreements through civil discourse with no sarcasm, insults, raised voices, dismissive gestures, or other aggressive or disrespectful actions.

- **Honor with your tests.** Whenever you complete a test, you are expected to use only whatever resources the professor explicitly said were allowed. Using any other resources, including information from other students, breaks the integrity of the test. Sharing information with other students also hurts the integrity of the test, and will be treated the same as using unauthorized resources yourself, even if you didn’t benefit on your own test. You should not discuss the test, even how long it took, with other students in the course, or where you might be overheard by other students, until the professor tells you it is okay to do so.

- **Honor with your written work.** Whenever you put your name on an assignment, you are saying that you alone are responsible for the content – both the ideas and the words used to describe them – unless you indicate otherwise with a citation. Even then, a citation gives credit for the idea, not the words used to describe it; you are claiming the words as your own unless they are in quotation marks. If those words are not your own, and are not in quotation marks, then they are plagiarized. This is true for words that come from Wikipedia, the textbook, your friends, or previous papers you wrote for any class. You are responsible for knowing what counts as plagiarism, and avoiding it. Even one sentence of “unintentional” plagiarism, which comes from forgetting to identify sources as you take notes, or “patchwork” plagiarism, which comes from trying to paraphrase by changing or moving a few words, will be treated as plagiarism.

- **Honor with your creative work and presentations.** Just as you must give credit for ideas and words in your written work, you should also give credit for ideas and artifacts (usually pictures or charts) in other assignments. Any images you use must be clearly marked as your own, or give proper attribution to the person who created them. If you do not know or cannot determine who created an image or artifact, you cannot use it in your presentation. Even if an image is widely copied on Pinterest or Google Images, you can only use it if you can identify the original creator. Ideally, you should use artwork published under a Creative Commons license, with permission given for others to use the work as long as they credit the original creator.

Penalties for breaking the honor code will be determined by the professor, based on the nature severity of the honor code violation. Penalties may include reducing the student’s engagement grade (by 25%, 50%, 75%, or 100%) regardless of in-class engagement; receiving no academic credit for an assignment that contained an honor code violation; or failing the course. First time Honor Code violations may be reported to the Honor Council at the professor’s discretion; second time Honor Code violation will automatically be reported to the Honor Council.
How Do I Submit Assignments? When Are They Due?

All written work will be typed in double-spaced 12-point Times New Roman font with 1-inch margins, printed and turned in as hard copy.

Citations will be in APA (American Psychological Association) Format, 6th edition rules.

Course preparations are due 1 minute before class starts. Once class has begun you can no longer prepare for it. Therefore, you cannot turn course preparation in late. If you will be absent from class, you may submit your preparation activity to my office before class begins, or send it with a classmate.

The PSA, autobiography, and all components of the interaction are due 1 minute before class starts on the date listed on the course website. (Dates listed on this page may be pushed later in the semester due to inclement weather or similar circumstances). If these assignments are submitted late, but before 5 p.m. on Friday, May 17th, they will be graded without penalty, but will only be given a letter grade, with no written feedback or comments. No assignments will be accepted or graded after 5 p.m. on Friday, May 17th unless a syllabus exception agreement (described on the next page) has been made.

The schedule below identifies essential dates, and is subject to change as needs arise. The contains a detailed schedule with assigned readings.

February 7, 12, 14, 19  Must pregnant women completely abstain from caffeine and alcohol?

Feb. 21, 26, 28, March 5  Can we predict from infants’ future from their behavior?
Thursday February 21: Interaction Proposal
Thursday March 7: Critical Period Public Service Announcement

March 12, 14, 26, 28  How do children form their race and gender identities?

April 2, 4, 9, 11  Why do so many mental illnesses emerge during adolescence?
Tuesday April 2: Nature-Nurture Autobiography
Tuesday April 9: Interaction Field Notes
Thursday April 11: Interaction Reference Analysis #1

April 16, 18, 25, 30  Can we predict how we will change as we age?
Thursday April 18: Interaction Reference Analysis #2
Thursday April 25: Interaction Reference Analysis #3

May 2, 7, 9, 14  What can be done about the dementia epidemic?
Thursday May 2: Interaction Reference #4
Thursday May 9: Skills Self-Assessment
Friday May 17: Interaction Analysis

What’s My Grade?

Final letter grades will be calculated based on the Psychology Department grading system:

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<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>94+</td>
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<td>A-</td>
<td>92.5-93</td>
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<td>B</td>
<td>86-90</td>
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<td>B-</td>
<td>84.5-85</td>
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<td>C</td>
<td>79-82</td>
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<td>C-</td>
<td>77.5-78</td>
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<td>D</td>
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<td>69.5-70</td>
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<td>D+</td>
<td>76-77</td>
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Detailed progress reports will be provided at the end of each calendar month.
What If I Have Special Circumstances?

If you qualify for accommodations under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), you must bring your accommodations letter and meet with me before **Friday, February 15th** to discuss how any accommodations might apply to this course.

If you experience a severe injury during the semester or have an ongoing medical diagnosis that could interfere with at least 2% of your final course grade (roughly, the timely completion of two course preparations or missing a week of class) you can request a Syllabus Exception Agreement to modify assignment deadlines and values toward your final grade.

To arrange a Syllabus Exception Agreement, you must notify the Dean of Undergraduate Studies (Dean Vinson) within a week of your situation arising, and provide him with whatever documentation or information he requires. The Dean of Undergraduate Studies will inform your professors that you will be requesting accommodations. Following this notice, you will meet with me individually to discuss what reasonable exceptions to the syllabus can be made.

As a general rule, with a Syllabus Exception Agreement:

- You will still be responsible for all material covered in the class meetings you missed, and must get this information from other students.
- An alternative assignment will be created, to replace the Engagement value of all missed classes, which will be graded with the usual standards of the course (e.g., if you miss 5 days of class, a new assignment of difficulty and content worth 2.5% of your final grade will be created).
- Assignment due dates may be adjusted to replace any days lost due to your illness or situation (e.g., extended by the number of days you spent in the hospital).
- Whatever adjustments are made, there will be no substantial change to the structure or content requirements of the course. For example, an oral presentation might be given over Skype, but will not be replaced with a written assignment.
- You may be asked to complete additional activities, such as meeting with me during the term or making use of academic support services.

In the event that you are unable to complete the necessary coursework before end of semester grades are due, you will be given an Incomplete for the course, with a deadline for all work at least 1 week before the deadline for Incomplete replacement grades the following semester. *Please note that I am not available to meet, to provide feedback, or to grade assignments between academic terms.*