

**Graduate School of Education  
Department of Educational Psychology  
Introduction to Child Psychology/15:295:512  
Fall 2011**

Instructor: Dr. James O'Kelly

Class Meetings: Wednesday/4:50 – 7:30 PM/MU-113

Office: 321A/GSE/Wednesday/7:30 – 8:30 PM

Telephone: 732 254 3470

Email (best way to reach me): james.o'kelly@gse.rutgers.edu

Textbook: Berk, Laura (2008). Infants, Children, and Adolescents (6<sup>th</sup> ed.). Boston: Allyn and Bacon/Pearson. *This textbook is available at New Jersey Books/9 Easton Avenue New Brunswick, NJ 08901/(732) 253-7666.*

**ABOUT THIS COURSE**

This is an introductory course in child psychology that ranges from infancy through adolescence. The objectives of this course are to introduce you to the foundations of children's cognitive, and socio-emotional development and to understand the empirical evidence and theoretical frameworks used to explain them. Child psychology is an interdisciplinary science. For this course we will largely take an educational perspective.

**Course Specifics**

The sections below will acquaint students with the aims and structure of this course. Please be advised that the instructor may make small modifications to this syllabus.

**Online Support**

Additional course announcements and information will be available through the course's website at [ecollege/ecompanion](http://ecollege/ecompanion) ([ecollege.rutgers.edu](http://ecollege.rutgers.edu)). Sign in using your NETID and password.

**Grading**

Grades will be awarded as follows:

- 90 - 100 points = A
- 86 - 89 points = B+
- 80 - 85 points = B
- 76 - 79 points = C+
- 70 - 75 points = C
- < 70 = D

There will be no extra credit assignments in this course.

**Teams**

By the end of the third class meeting students will form work teams. Team members should exchange contact information; share notes with members who miss a class meeting; study together for the final exam, and so on. Teams will be used for In-Class Graded Tasks

### **Assignments/Tasks**

There is no one type of assignment or assessment system that can perfectly capture and model what a student has learned in a course. Therefore, this course will employ a variety of learning tasks through which students can demonstrate their growing expertise of child psychology in a variety of formats. These tasks include a traditional objective test for a final exam, several independent writing tasks, and several group tasks.

#### *In-Class Graded Tasks (25/27 points)*

At six class meetings there will be tasks in which students will work in groups to solve or address various scenarios related to child psychology. Each task will be worth up to 5 points. The lowest grade for the six tasks will be dropped. Any student who completes all six of the tasks will receive 2 bonus points.

#### *Literature Review GOs (15 points)*

Each student will locate, analyze, and report about a literature review that addresses a topic of research in child psychology. Students will prepare a set of graphic organizers that illustrates the key ideas of the review. Students will also create a presentation to their work groups that summarizes the review. Specific directions for this assignment will be found on [ecollege/ecompanion](#).

#### *Research Sketch (20 points)*

Each student will design a research “sketch” about a topic discussed in class, presented in the readings, or any other topic pertinent to child psychology. Details will be found on [ecompanion/ecollege](#).

#### *Online Discussion*

On November 30, we will not have a face-to-face class meeting. Instead, I will set up an online discussion board in which students will post their thoughts about that day’s readings and their reaction to the article. More information about the requirements of the activity will be announced at a later time. This assignment will be a factor in the participation grade.

#### *Presentations: What Child Care Professionals Should Know about... (10 points)*

This assignment will be a group activity in which students will present information about a significant topic in child psychology; one that knowledge of would benefit all professionals who work with or for children. A set of example topics and the directions will be found on [ecollege/ecompanion](#).

#### *Participation (10 points)*

Discussions will be an important element of most class meetings. A significant percentage of each student’s grade will be based on participation.

#### *Final Exam (20 points)*

On December 21 students will take a traditional test that focuses on basic course concepts and information.

### Schedule of Assignments

Assignment	Date	Points
In-Class Graded Tasks (ICGT)	See course calendar	25/27
Literature Review GOs	10/26	15
Research Sketch	11/16	20
Participation	ongoing	10
Presentations	12/14	10
Final Exam	12/21	20

### Course Calendar

<i>Class Meeting/Date</i>	<i>Topic*</i>	<i>Readings</i>
1 – 9/7	Course Intro/Research Methods	Ch. 1
2 – 9/14	Bio/Env Influences/Prenatal Dev	Ch. 2/Ch. 3
3 – 9/21	Brain Development	pp. 168-176/296-299/537-538/slides
<b>4 – 9/28</b>	Language Development	pp. 236-246/355-361/462-466/577-578/slides
5 – 10/5	Motor Development	pp. 187-193/312-317/427-432
<b>6 – 10/12</b>	I & T: Cog Dev	Ch. 6
<b>7 – 10/19</b>	I & T: Emot & Soc Dev	Ch. 7
8 – 10/26	EC: Cog Dev	Ch. 9
<b>9 – 11/ 2</b>	EC: Emot & Soc Dev	Ch. 10
<b>10 – 11/9</b>	MC: Cog Dev	Ch. 12
11 – 11/16	MC: Emot & Soc Dev	Ch. 13
Happy Thanksgiving		
12 – 11/30 (online)	Adolescence: Cog Dev	Ch. 15
<b>13 – 12/7</b>	Adolescence: Emot & Soc Dev	Ch. 16
14 – 12/14	Presentations**	NA
15 – 12/21	Final Exam	NA
* ICGTs will be on the bold-faced dates..		
**If all presentations are not completed on this date, they will be done on 12/21.		