

MSS Developmental Psychology (PSYC7305) First Semester, 2024-2025

Lecture Hours	: Mon 3:30pm-6:20pm
Lecture Hall	: MW-T7
Instructor	: Dr XU Jia-Qi Melody
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Conversation Hours	: Wed 2:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. or by appointment
Tutor	: Tom C. H. Wong
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Office	: Rm C6.17
Conversation Hours	: Tue 2:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. or by appointment
Pigeon Hole	: Rm C6.27 (No. 46)

COURSE OBJECTIVES

As a master's course taught in a problem-based learning mode, students are expected to go beyond understanding existing knowledge. This course aims at helping students build knowledge of developmental issues. More importantly, it aims at helping students develop an ability to relate the knowledge to real-life scenarios, and *access, integrate and evaluate* information from different sources. Various topics in developmental psychology are selected to illustrate thematic, theoretical as well as methodological issues. Students will also gain hands-on experience of simple data-collection projects. To achieve these aims, students will play an active role in the course. Through various class activities, the facilitators and peers will give timely feedback to students' ideas and work.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

1. Acquire a better understanding of different aspects of human development from a life-span perspective
2. Developing the habit and ability to search for, and critically integrate, analyze and evaluate information
3. Gain hands-on experience in applying psychological concepts and research methods by conducting developmental psychology projects

COURSE SCHEDULE

Lecture	Date	Topic	Due
1	Sept 2	An overview of developmental psychology	-
2	Sept 9	Infancy (Class 1A)	-
3	Sept 16	Infancy (Class 1B)	Pre-lecture Question 1
4	Sept 23	Early Childhood (Class 2A)	Individual Reflection 1
5	Sept 30	Early Childhood (Class 2B) (Guest lecture by Mr Ikey Cheung)	Pre-lecture Question 2
6	Oct 7	Nature Nurture Debate	Proposed Essay Title
	Oct 14	<i>Reading Week - no class</i>	
7	Oct 21	Middle Childhood (Class 3A)	One-page Essay Draft/Outline (Optional)
	Oct 28	<i>No class (Essay preparation)</i>	Individual Reflection 2
8	Nov 4	Middle Childhood (Class 3B)	Pre-lecture Question 3
9	Nov 11	Adolescence and Young Adulthood (Class 4A)	Individual Reflection 3
10	Nov 18	Adolescence and Young Adulthood (Class 4B)	Pre-lecture Question 4
11	Nov 25	Ageing (Guest lecture by Dr Jacky Choi)	Individual Reflection 4

ASSESSMENT

In-class attendance and participation 15%

Pre-class questions 15%

Individual reflections 30%

Final Essay 40%

1. In-class Participation and Attendance (15%):

Attendance and contribution to in-class discussion will both be assessed. Please make sure that you read and think about the assigned readings before attending the class discussion. Absence without adequate justification or proper documentation (e.g. a medical certificate) will be counted negatively towards class participation. 2% of the course grade will be deducted for a no-show or a late arrival more than 15 minutes without sound justification.

2. Three Pre-class Questions (15%):

A good question is half the answer. These questions aim to push you to think deeper about the readings and will also lay the foundation for the learning. After each Class A, the reading materials will be posted on Moodle to be read before Class B. **For at least three out of four times over the semester, before Class B, post ONE intelligent question related to the assigned materials.**

The question should not exceed 70 words and should be submitted to designated Moodle forums 24 hours before the class (i.e. **Sunday 3:30 pm before each Class B**). Late submission will NOT be graded. Please ask questions that you really want the answers, instead of just for the grades. Your tutor will provide comments and tentative answers to your questions within one week. Read them and feel free to engage in further discussion with your tutor in the tutorials. *If you submit all four pre-class questions, the best three will be counted.*

3. Three Mini-Project Reflections (30%)

Before each Class A, you will start to engage in some mini-project activities with your group members. Each group will conduct and report all four mini projects which resemble data collection or behavioral testing. Instructions for each mini project will be given at an appropriate time. Please note that this is not a research method course, and you are not required to find a big number of participants in the mini-projects. Try to be creative in data-collection and observe carefully the strengths and limitations of the method you employed. Then, reflect further on how the methodology can be improved and share the experience with the class. Based on your learning from the mini-projects, reading, group discussions, and lectures, you can choose to **write an individual reflection with guided questions for three out of the four topics** (no more than 2 pages, font 12, Times New Roman, double line spaced and formatted in APA-format). You can write about one or more of the following:

What have you learned/experienced in the mini-project?

How do you interpret the findings?

How do your findings relate to the existing literature?

What could you apply/bring to your learning, daily life, or your professions?

A reflection that is critical, insightful and supported by theory and evidence is of higher quality than one that is merely based on personal opinion or one that only summarizes the readings or lecture materials. **The submission deadline is generally one week after each Class B, at 3:30 pm.** You will receive comments from your tutor within one week. Feel free to bring the comments to your tutors for further discussion. If you write all the four reflections, only the best written three will count.

3. Final Essay (40%)

Write an essay (1500 words excluding references) in APA-format. The topic should be related to developmental psychology, but you will decide on the exact topic title. You can choose from the following topics or come up with your own topic. The general principle is to devise a title that is specific enough for discussion, which does not have a clear answer and thus allow room for critical analysis and argumentation. If you are not sure about whether your topic is a suitable one or not, seek help from your instructor or tutor. Submission time is based on the time you submit the soft copy. **Due date: 11:59 pm Dec 02 2024.**

Suggested Essay Topics:

1. Will children benefit by learning more than one language during their school years?
2. Will violent video gaming cause physical aggression?
3. Will social media use lead to depressive symptoms?
4. Will same-sex parenting affect children's developmental outcomes?
5. Article Critique

Select an assigned or optional reading we posted on Moodle and write an article critique. First, summarize the methodology and the major findings, with specific focus on the aspects that you are going to comment on later. Then critically evaluate the methodology and conclusion of the paper. Make sure that these arguments are NOT based on your personal opinion, but backed up by the current body of literature. Finally, conclude the paper by suggesting areas that can be done better, or something that future researchers can follow up.

- i. Submit your proposed topic title to the tutor (on Moodle) for approval no later than **11:59 pm Oct 07**. We will give you very brief comments on the feasibility of your topic within one week.
- ii. (optional) Submit a one-page draft to Moodle no later than **11:59 pm Oct 21**. You will schedule an individual appointment with your tutor to receive written OR verbal feedback.

The essay is due **11:59 pm Dec 02 2024**. Submit a soft copy to Moodle. Use font 12 Times New Roman, double line spacing and format the essay in the APA 6th Ed format. The essay will not be accepted one week after the due date. Late submission will be deducted 10% of the assignment grade per day. Extension of deadline will only be considered if your medical doctor gives you TWO or more consecutive days of sick leave inclusive of the day on which the work is due.

Academic honesty

Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. Any student who engages in any form of academic dishonesty (e.g., cheating on exams, plagiarism, self-plagiarism, interfering with grading, falsification and fabrication of data in any academic exercise etc.) will receive a grade of F on the component(s) of assessment concerned or in this course and will be reported to the Department/Faculty Office/University Disciplinary Committee for further disciplinary action. There will be no exceptions. If you are not sure what constitutes the academic offense of plagiarism, checkout the webpage at <https://tl.hku.hk/plagiarism/>. Department of Psychology has

formulated departmental policies/guidelines on student misconduct. Visit the website at <https://psychology.hku.hk/useful-information-to-current-students/> for more information.

Beware of Plagiarism

A softcopy is required for the assignment of article critique. The softcopy will be checked for plagiarism against database of articles, books, webpages, and essays submitted by students at HKU and other universities. No credit will be given for an assignment that contains plagiarised materials. Further penalties may also be applied. These penalties may include a zero mark for the course. Plagiarism will also be reported to the Department / Faculty Office / University Disciplinary Committee for consideration of possible disciplinary action. If you are not sure what constitutes the academic offence of plagiarism, checkout the webpage at <http://www.hku.hk/plagiarism>. Please note that if you reuse any material previously submitted for another course without proper acknowledgement that also constitutes plagiarism, although you are the author of the original work. This is called self-plagiarism.

Generative AI usage

Given the assignments in this course are reflective and personal in nature using generative, AI tools, such as ChatGPT, DALL-E, and similar technologies, is **ONLY** permitted to help students, fine-tune assignments, or check grammar and writing style. AI tools are NOT permitted to write the entire draft of a writing assignment, paragraphs, or sentences. You will receive a failed grade in the corresponding assessment if we suspect the content of your assignments is not written by you.

It is essential to recognize that students bear responsibility for the content generated through AI queries, ensuring that it remains compliant with intellectual property laws, devoid of misinformation, plagiarism, and ethically sound. To maintain adherence to university policies on academic integrity, the utilization of AI tools must be acknowledged. The following acknowledgment statement should be added to the end of all written assignments:

“No content generated by AI tools has been used/presented as my work.” or “I acknowledge the use of [insert AI system(s)/ChatGPT/POE] to check grammar and writing style ONLY.”

Optional Tutorials

There will be optional tutorials throughout the semester. Your tutor will provide some general guidance and feedback to the written assignments in the tutorials. Some basic research skills will also be introduced to help you better cope with the course. Tutorial is also the time when you can ask whatever questions you have about the course. These tutorials are entirely optional and there will be no consequences of not attending them.

Required Readings

The reading list will be available on Moodle soon for each topic should be read before you attending the relevant lecture. Your pre-lecture questions shall be based on the knowledge and reflections from the assigned readings.

Optional Readings

As the course is partially adopting the problem-based learning approach with no exam, you will be assigned to read empirical papers instead of chapters from a textbook throughout the semester. However, you are more than welcome to consult the relevant chapter(s)/section(s) of any textbook on developmental psychology. Some textbooks that you may consider include:

Boyd, D., & Bee, H. Lifespan development (7th ed.). Boston: Pearson.

Berk, L. (2015). Child development. Pearson Higher Education AU.