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Wesleyan University  
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## **Life-Span Development**

### **Course Description**

This class will provide an overview of developmental issues across the life span. One theme involves how we are all similar at different ages – what does it mean to be a 1-year-old, a 7-year-old, or a 42-year-old? And how do we change over time, what are the common human developmental trajectories that we travel during our lifetimes? Another major theme is how, despite our commonalities, we differ from one another beginning even in infancy. For example, some infants sleep through the night and are easy to soothe, while others are irritable and fussy almost from birth. A 3rd theme is whether these individual differences really matter in the long run. Does the fussy baby become an even-tempered toddler; does the aggressive preschooler just grow out of it? In more general terms, is development relatively continuous or discontinuous for most of us? Finally, we will discuss how gender, culture, class, and race/ethnicity influence all of these developmental themes.

### **Course Objectives/Goals**

Upon completion of this class, students will be able to:

- Describe the major life stages and the developmental issues characteristic of these stages
- Be able to distinguish emerging individual differences from precursors to psychopathology
- Have an appreciation for developmental continuities and discontinuities
- Be able to describe some of the ways that gender, race & ethnicity, social class, and culture influence and direct the broad developmental trajectories described above

### **Course Processes**

Class sessions will typically include a lecture during the first part of the class, followed by breakout discussion groups and ad-hoc group summaries of discussion themes. In addition to lectures and class discussions, we will also see several developmentally relevant movies and participate in one informal class experiment. During the last week, each student will give a brief oral summary of a theme related to his or her final research paper.

### **Course Requirements**

- 1) An obvious one with only 12 sessions - consistent attendance & timely reading of assignments. Please let me know in advance if you have an anticipated conflict, and please email me if something unexpected happens.
- 2) The major written requirement is a 12-15 page term paper on a topic relevant to Life-

Span Psychology. The paper is due one week after the end of class and should be mailed to me at 335 Ridge Rd., Middletown, CT 06457. Please, no email attachments will be accepted. On-going feedback will be provided regarding possible topics, guidelines on how to write Psychology papers, how to use available library resources at Wesleyan, etc.

- 3) A brief oral summary (15 minutes) on a theme related to the term paper. More details will be provided in class.

### **Grading Policy**

The class paper counts for 65% of your grade. You may get preliminary feedback on a draft of your paper (in this case submitted by email) if you send it to me within one week after the final class. Feedback will be limited to general aspects of your paper, including appropriate writing style, basic clarity, and depth/sophistication. The feedback phase is NOT required and is not graded. Oral reports will count for 20% of your grade and will be evaluated on clarity and informational content. Finally, classroom participation counts for 15% of your grade.

If possible, please complete the readings for the first week (Santrock, Chapters 1 & 2 in *A Topical Approach to Life-Span Development*. Boston: McGraw Hill) prior to attending the first class.

### **Required Text**

NOTE – you must buy either the 6<sup>th</sup> or 7<sup>th</sup> edition of the Santrock book that starts with “A Topical Approach...” (He has more than one Life-span book.)

Santrock, J. (2014). *A Topical Approach to Life-Span Development (7<sup>th</sup> Ed.)*. Boston: McGraw Hill.

Other readings will be posted on Moodle.

### **Course Sequence**

#### Week 1 - Class Overview- Readings, Assignments, & Major Themes

Santrock, J. (2014). Chapters 1 & 2 in *A Topical Approach to Life-Span Development (7<sup>th</sup> Ed.)*. Boston: McGraw Hill.

Elder, G. (1998). The life course as developmental theory. *Child Development*, 69, 1-12.

Movie “Short” – 7-Up

#### Week 2 - Attachment Across the Life Span

Santrock, J. (2014). Chapter 10 “Emotional Development” (pp. 319-332 – Attachment sections) in *A Topical Approach to Life-Span Development (7<sup>th</sup> Ed.)*. Boston: McGraw

Hill.

Ainsworth, M., & Bowlby, J. (1991). An ethological approach to personality development. *American Psychologist*, *46*, 333-341.

Lecompte, V., Moss, E., Cyr, C., & Pascuzzo, K. (2014). Preschool attachment, self-esteem and the development of preadolescent anxiety and depressive symptoms. *Attachment & Human Development*, *16*, 242-260.

Smyke, A., Zeanah, C., Fox, N., Nelson, C., Guthrie, D. (2010). Placement in foster care enhances attachment quality among young institutionalized children. *Child Development*, *81*, 212-223.

### Week 3 - Cognitive Development

Santrock, J. (2014). Chapters 6, “Cognitive Developmental Approaches” and 7 “Information-Processing” in *A Topical Approach to Life-Span Development (7th Ed.)*. Boston: McGraw Hill.

### Week 4 Emotions and Emotional Development – Basic Themes

Santrock, J. (2014). Chapter 10 (skip pp. 348-359), “Emotional Development” in *A Topical Approach to Life-Span Development (7th Ed.)*. Boston: McGraw Hill.

Plutchik, R. (1984). Emotions: A general psychoevolutionary theory. In K. Scherer & P. Ekman (Eds.), *Approaches to emotions* (pp. 197-219). Hillsdale NJ: LEA.

Bates, J., Goodnight, J., & Fite, J. (2008). Temperament and emotion. In M. Lewis, J. Haviland-Jones, & L. Barrett (Eds.), *Handbook of emotions, 3rd Ed.* New York: Guilford Press.

Penela, E., Walker, O., Degnan, K., Fox, N., & Henderson, H. (2015). Early behavioral inhibition and emotion regulation: Pathways towards social competence in middle childhood. *Child Development*, *86*, 1227-1240.

### Movie – *Emotional Development*

### Week 5 Emotions – From Individual Differences to Psychopathology

Oatley, K., Keltner, D., & Jenkins, J. (2014). Childhood Psychopathology. In *Understanding emotions (3rd ed.)*. Malden, MA: Blackwell.

Cole, P., Michel, M., & Teti, L. (1994). The development of emotion regulation and dysregulation: A clinical perspective. In N. Fox (Ed.), *The development of emotion regulation: Biological and behavioral considerations* (pp. 73-100). *Monographs of the Society for Research in Child Development*, *59* (2-3, Serial No. 240).

Tomlinson, J., Carmichael, C., Reis, H., & Aron, A. (2010). Affective forecasting and individual differences: Accuracy for relational events and anxious attachment. *Emotion, 10*(3), 447-563.

Arsenio, W., Segin, M., & Siegel, L. (2004). Emotion-related abilities in depressed and non-depressed Latina mothers and their children. *Development & Psychopathology, 16*, 95-112.

Arsenio, W., & Loria, S. (2014). Coping with negative emotions: Relations with adolescents' academic performance and stress. *Journal of Genetic Psychology, 175*(1), 76–90.

In-class experiment on Emotion Knowledge

#### Week 6 The Self, Identity, and Personality

Santrock, J. (2014). Chapter 11 in *A topical Approach to Life-Span Development*. Boston: McGraw Hill.

Roberts, B., Mroczek, D. (2008). Personality trait change in adulthood. *Current Directions in Psychological Science, 17*(1), 31-35.

Hill, P., Jackson, J., Roberts, B., Lapsley, D., Brandenberger, J. (2011). Change you can believe in: Changes in goal setting during emerging and young adulthood predict later adult well-being. *Social Psychological & Personality Science, 2*(2), 123-131.

#### Week 7 – Economic Trends, Institutional Fairness, and Life-Span Development

Duncan, G., & Murnane, R. (2011). Introduction: The American dream, then and now. In G. Duncan, G., & R. Murnane (Eds.). *Whither opportunity: Rising inequality, schools, and children's life chances* (pp. 3-23). New York & Chicago: Russell Sage & Spencer Foundations.

Arsenio, W. (in press). Education, class, and the divergence of children's life opportunities. *Human Development*.

Norton, M. & Ariely, D. (2011). Consensus on building a better America- one wealth quintile at a time. *Perspectives on Psychological Science, 6*, 9-12.

Arsenio, W. (2015). Moral psychological perspectives on distributive justice and societal inequalities. *Child Development Perspectives*.

#### Week 8 Parent-Child Interactions and the Family

Santrock, J. (2014). Chapter 14, “Families, Lifestyles, & Parenting” in *A Topical Approach to Life-Span Development (7th Ed.)*. Boston: McGraw Hill.

Steinberg, L., Blatt-Eisengart, I. (2006). Patterns of competence and adjustment among adolescents from authoritative, authoritarian, indulgent and neglectful homes: A replication in a sample of serious juvenile offenders. *Journal of Research on Adolescence, 16(1)*, 47-58.

Velez, C. Wolchik, S., Tein, J. & Sandler, I. (2011). Protecting children from the consequences of divorce: A longitudinal study of the effects of parenting on children's coping processes. *Child Development, 82*, 244–257.

Gottman, J., Katz, L. & Hooven, C. (1996). Parental meta-emotion philosophy and the emotional life of families: Theoretical models and preliminary data. *Journal of Family Psychology, 10*, 243-269.

OPTIONAL - Brett, Z., Humphreys, C., Smyke, A. Gleason, M. Nelson, C. Fox, N., & Drury, S. (2015). Serotonin transporter linked polymorphic region (5-HTTLPR) genotype moderates the longitudinal impact of early caregiving on externalizing behavior, *Development & Psychopathology, 27*, 7–18.

#### Week 9 Social Relations – Peers & Friends

Santrock, J. (2014). Chapter 15, “Peers and the Sociocultural World” in *A Topical Approach to Life-Span Development (6th Ed.)*. Boston: McGraw Hill.

Bierman, K. (2004). Chapters 2 & 3, *Peer Rejection: Developmental Processes and Interventions Strategies*. New York: Guilford Press.

Rodkin, P., Espelage, D., & Hanish, L. (2015). A relational framework for understanding bullying. *American Psychologist, 70*, 311-321.

OPTIONAL - Allen, J., Chango, J., & Szwedo, D. (2014). The adolescent relational dialectic and the peer roots of adult social functioning, *Child Development, 85(1)*, 192–204.

#### Week 10 Social Relations – School, Work, & Achievement

Santrock, J. (2014). Chapter 16, “Schools, Achievement, and Work” in *A Topical Approach to Life-Span Development (6th Ed.)*. Boston: McGraw Hill.

Aronson, J., & Steele, C. (2005). Stereotypes and the fragility of academic competence, motivation, and self-concept. In A. Elliot & C. Dweck (Eds.), *Handbook of competence and motivation* (pp. 436-456). New York, Guilford.

Blackwell, L., Trzesniewski, K., Dweck, C. (2007). Implicit theories of intelligence predict achievement across an adolescent transition: A longitudinal study and an intervention. *Child Development, 78(1)*, 246-263.

Reetan, A., Savani, K., Naidu, N., Dweck, C. (2012) Can everyone become highly intelligent? Cultural differences in and societal consequences of beliefs about the universal potential for intelligence. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*.

Class Oral Presentations

Week 11 Risk & Resilience: Developmental Psychopathology

Werner, E. (1989, April). Children of the garden island. *Scientific American*, 106-111.

Masten, A., & Coatsworth, J. (1998). The development of competence in favorable and unfavorable environments: Lessons from research on successful children. *American Psychologist*, 53, 205-220.

Pargas, R., Brennan, P., Hammen, C., & Le Brocque, R. (2010). Resilience to maternal depression in young adulthood. *Developmental Psychology*, 46, 805-814.

McLoyd, V. Kaplan, R., & Purtell, K. (2011). Assessing the effects of a work-based antipoverty program for parents on youth's future orientation and employment experiences. *Child Development*, 82, 113-132

Tough, P. (2011, March 21). The poverty clinic: Can a stressful childhood make you a sick adult? *The New Yorker*, 21, 25-32.

Werner, E. (2011). Children and war: Risk, resilience, and recovery. *Development & Psychopathology*, 24, 553-558.

Class Oral Presentations

Week 12 Late Adulthood: Aging, Living, & Dying

Santrock, J. (2014). Chapter 17, "Death, Dying, & Grieving" in *A Topical Approach to Life-Span Development (7th Ed.)*. Boston: McGraw Hill.

Diamond, J. (2012). *The world until yesterday: What we can learn from traditional societies*. Chapter 6, The treatment of old people: Cherish, abandon, or kill? (pp. 210-242). New York: Viking

Vaillant, G. (2002). *Aging Well*, Chapters 1 & 7. Little & Brown: New York.

Class Oral Presentations

