

CLPS0610  
Children's Thinking: Introduction to Cognitive Development  
Fall Semester, 2012

Instructor

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Overview

This course will examine children's thinking and cognitive development from infancy to elementary school. Some of the topics we will consider are children's memory, reasoning ability, categorization, and concepts such as space, time, number, biology, and mind. To examine these topics, we will investigate some of the major theories of cognitive development, and we will attempt to evaluate those theories in light of the available psychological data. Care will also be taken to integrate behavioral work with issues in developmental cognitive neuroscience.

Required Reading

(GOS): Goswami, U. (2008). *Cognition in children: The learning brain*. New York: Psychology Press (Available at Bookstore)

Reader (Available Online, see below)

Recommended Reading

(GOP): Gopnik, A. (2009). *The philosophical baby: What children's minds tell us about truth, love, and the meaning of life*. (Available anywhere)

Course Requirements

*General Grading Guidelines:* Grades are determined by performance on the assignments listed below. In general, a grade on an assignment reflects your ability to demonstrate knowledge of the material specific to that assignment, which is hopefully correlated with your knowledge of the material. Your overall grade for the term reflects this demonstrative ability.

*Class.* Our class meets MWF from 10-10:50pm in Wilson 302. I expect you to attend each class and to complete the assigned reading (see below). Lecture slides (except for the first class) will be posted to the CLPS0610 Canvas page prior to the class session. I recommend accessing these slides prior to class to assist in your note taking. I strongly discourage you from simply listening to the lectures without taking notes because the slides will be available to you

later. These slides will not contain all of the material presented in class and I will expect you to understand material beyond what is presented on the slides. Further, I reserve the right to change the lecture slides the day of the class to reflect any changes I feel are necessary to present material to you as clearly as possible. This might also include not covering material on the slides, covering material in addition to the slides, or changing the slides all together.

*Auditing.* If you choose to audit this class, you are responsible for two things: 1) You must introduce yourself to me in person (not over email, please) to inform me that you are auditing the class. 2) You will be responsible for satisfactory work (i.e. grade of S, C or better) on all written assignments (paper and reaction papers). You will be excused from the exams.

*Readings.* Each class has a reading associated with it. These readings are required, unless noted by an (R) on the schedule below, in which case the reading is recommended. Your chances for success will improve if you do the recommended readings. Just because I do not talk about a particular topic from the reading in class does not mean that I will not ask about it on an exam. However, my exams are often made up of material presented in both the readings and the lecture.

Goswami's (2008) book is our text. The other required readings will be available through OCRA. The course password is **Piaget**. The notable recommended reading is Alison Gopnik's book *The Philosophical Baby*. It can be purchased cheaply or taken out from the library.

*Exams.* There will be two exams, a midterm and a final. The midterm will be on October 24, during class time. The final will be on December 14 at 2pm (location TBD). Do not take this class if you cannot make the exam dates, as there will be no scheduled make-ups. The final will concentrate on material presented in the second half of the semester. However, there will be at least one questions on the final that will require you to integrate material from the first half of the semester.

Both exams will be made up of fill-in-the-blank and essay questions. You will receive a study guide with the exact essay questions at least one week before each exam. The midterm will constitute 25% of your grade for the class. The final will constitute 30% of your grade.

*Paper:* There will be one research paper, due on December 7, 2012 at 5pm. The goal of this paper will be to incorporate theory and empirical data. The paper will be worth 35% of your grade. More information will be provided during the semester. Because of the size of the class, no extensions will be given on the paper for any reason. A small amount of extra credit will be given on this assignment if you turn it in by, November 30 at 5pm. Papers turned in after the 7<sup>th</sup> will be accepted, but penalized one half grade per day. Papers will not be accepted after 5pm on December 12<sup>th</sup>.

*Reaction Papers:* Over the course of the semester, you will be asked to write *four* 1-page reaction papers to some of the assigned readings from journal articles. There are 12 possible assignments (you can do as many as you like, but you will only receive credit for four). The assignments are marked below. I strongly advise not waiting until the last weeks of the semester to do these assignments. These papers are due in class on the days indicated below. Because there are twelve possible chances, I will not accept late papers at any time, nor will I (or the TAs) give extensions on these papers or accept these papers over email (in theory, they will be submitted through Turnitin). Feedback will be given on your writing style and the content of the papers. Together, these papers are worth 10% of your grade (2.5% each). There is also one extra credit paper (worth 1% of the course grade) that you can do as well. It will require you to attend a lecture and write about that lecture. This will be in addition to (not in lieu of) the four reaction papers.

What is a reaction paper? Writing a reaction paper involves taking the content of the article and writing a response position. Since all of the articles will contain experiments (either full descriptions with methods and results, or summaries), it is often wise to focus on those experiments. An experiment is done to answer a question. What is that question? How was the experiment designed to answer it? What did it find? Did it answer the question in a satisfactory way (why or why not?). Do the results bring up other questions? Do the authors address those

questions? Do you think the authors have answered the questions they pose in a suitable manner? Why or why not?

The above questions are general guidelines. You do not have to answer all of them in each reaction paper. Nor do you have to answer these questions for the entire article (that will often be difficult). Rather, you should focus on one or two of them for one or two parts of the article, and expound on your answer. Importantly, a reaction paper is not a summary. The purpose of the assignment is to determine whether these experiments address the research topic in a satisfactory manner, and for us to gauge your thoughts about the experiments and relation between the data and the theoretical claims that are made. The hope is that the reaction papers provide you with a good deal of preparation for writing the final paper. My advice is to do them early, and talk to the TAs about the feedback you receive and the questions you might have. Reaction papers will be graded on an S/NC basis. The TAs will assign grades of NC to reaction papers that just summarize the material (i.e., present no original thought) or if your paper indicates a less than thorough reading of the assignment.

Finally, there is one additional extra credit assignment. If you attend Cristine Legare's lecture on October 3<sup>th</sup> and write a one-page reaction paper (due in class on Oct 5), you will receive extra credit towards your final grade for the semester.

### Schedule of Classes and Assignments

Below is a list of each class meeting, the topic that will be discussed, and the reading that is assigned for that class. All class assignments are also indicated below. (R) indicates a recommended (as opposed to a required) reading.

<u>Dates</u>	<u>Topics</u>	<u>Readings</u>
Sept 5	Introduction	GOS, Forward
Sept 7	Methods 1	Miller (1998) Ch. 2 (R): GOP Intro, Ch 1-3
Sept 10	Methods 2	Miller (1998), Ch. 3 (R): GOP Ch. 4-8
Sept 12	Theories 1	GOS 373-389 (R): GOP Ch. 9
Sept 14	Theories 2	GOS 389-399
Sept 17	Theories 3	GOS 399-417
Sept 19	Infant Memory and Perception	GOS, pp. 3-14 DeCasper & Fifer (1980) (R): Kellman & Spelke (1983)
Sept 21	Infant Categorization <i>RP on Quinn et al. Due</i>	GOS pp. 14-19 Quinn et al. (2001)
Sept 24	Infant Object Representation 1	GOS pp. 19-33 (R): GOS pp. 33-39
Sept 26	No Class	

Sept 28	Infant Object Representation 2 <i>RP on Baillargeon Due</i>	Baillargeon (1987)
Oct 1	Infant Imitation and Causality <i>RP on Leslie &amp; Keeble Due</i>	GOS pp. 41-52 Leslie & Keeble (1987)
Oct 3	Infant Reasoning about Objects 1 <i>Legare Colloquium 4pm in Metcalf Auditorium</i>	GOS pp. 52-68
Oct 5	No Class, but <i>RP for Legare Colloquium Due</i>	
Oct 8	No Class: Fall Weekend	
Oct 10	Infant Reasoning about Objects 2 <i>RP on Spelke et al Due</i>	Spelke et al. (1992) Wynn (1992)
Oct 12	Infant Social Cognition 1	GOS pp. 75-92 Meltzoff & Moore (1977)
Oct 15	Infant Social Cognition 2 <i>Receive Study Guide for Midterm</i>	GOS pp. 93-102
Oct 17	Infant Social Cognition 3 <i>RP on Onishi &amp; Baillargeon Due</i>	Onishi & Baillargeon (2005)
Oct 19	Conceptual Development 1	GOS pp. 109-126
Oct 22	Conceptual Development 2 <i>RP on Keil Chapters Due</i>	Keil, Ch. 8-9
Oct 24	MIDTERM	
Oct 26	Biological Knowledge 1 <i>Receive Final Paper Assignment</i>	GOS 126-145 (R): Miller, Ch. 9
Oct 29	Biological Knowledge 2 <i>RP on Johnson &amp; Carey Due</i>	Johnson & Carey (1998)
Oct 31	Causal Reasoning 1	GOS 183-199
Nov 2	Causal Reasoning 2 <i>RP on Gopnik et al (2001)</i>	GOS 199-219 Gopnik et al. (2001) (R): Gopnik & Schulz (2007)
Nov 5	Theory of Mind 1	GOS 221-232 (R): Flavell (1999)
Nov 7	Theory of Mind 2 <i>RP on Repacholi &amp; Gopnik Due</i>	Repacholi & Gopnik (1997) Sommerville et al. 2005

Nov 9	Theory of Mind 3 <i>RP on Wellman et al. Due</i>	Wellman et al. (2001)
Nov 12	Theory of Mind 4	Lillard (2001)
Nov 14	Theory of Mind 5	No reading
Nov 16	Memory Development 1	GOS 251-269 Rovee-Collier (1999)
Nov 19	Memory Development 2 <i>RP on DeLoache Due</i>	DeLoache (2000)
Nov 21-23	Thanksgiving: No Class	
Nov 26	Memory Development 3 <i>RP on Bruck &amp; Ceci Due</i>	GOS 269-274 Bruck & Ceci (1999)
Nov 28	Memory Development 4	GOS 274-293 GOS 310-320

*\*Note: It is possible that class will be canceled on Nov 28 or 30. An announcement will be made the week before, either way.*

Nov 30	Reasoning 1 <i>Paper assignment extra credit date</i>	GOS 320-332
Dec 3	Reasoning 2	Harris & Nunez (1996)
Dec 5	Dev Cog Neuro 1	GOS 232-233, 245-248 Saxe (2006)
Dec 7	Dev Cog Neuro 2 <i>Receive study guide for final Final Paper Due at 5pm</i>	Baron-Cohen et al. (1985)
Dec 10	Catch Up Class (If Necessary)	
Dec 14	Final Exam at 2pm, Location TBD	