



Department of Applied Psychology
Graduate School of Applied and Professional Psychology (GSAPP)
Rutgers University
New Brunswick, New Jersey

Social Developmental Psychology Fall 2025

18:820:506:01 Credits: 3
Monday 3:35pm - 6:05pm
Smithers 219

Instructor:

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Rutgers University Land Acknowledgment: We acknowledge that the land on which we stand is the ancestral territory of the Lenape People. We pay respect to Indigenous people throughout the Lenape diaspora – past, present, and future – and honor those who have been historically and systemically disenfranchised. We also acknowledge that Rutgers University, like New Jersey and the United States as a nation, was founded upon the exclusions and erasures of Indigenous peoples.

Rutgers University Mission: As the premier comprehensive public research university in the state's system of higher education, Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, has the threefold mission of:

- providing for the instructional needs of New Jersey's citizens through its undergraduate, graduate, and continuing education programs;
- conducting the cutting-edge research that contributes to the medical, environmental, social, and cultural well-being of the state, as well as aiding the economy and the state's businesses and industries; and
- performing public service in support of the needs of the citizens of the state and its local, county, and state governments.

Each component of the university's mission reinforces and supports the other two. As the University of New Jersey®, Rutgers is dedicated to teaching that meets the highest standards of excellence, to conducting research that breaks new ground, and to providing services, solutions, and clinical care that help individuals and the local, national, and global communities where they live.

GSAPP Mission: The mission of GSAPP is threefold: education, research/scholarship, and public service. Its goal is to prepare well-educated, qualified, and competent direct-service

psychologists who have a special commitment to direct community involvement and to underserved populations--professionals who can integrate scientific knowledge with innovation in the delivery of psychological services to individuals, families, groups, and organizations. Professionals receiving a doctoral degree in psychology should be capable of extending psychological knowledge and exhibiting the high level of analytic skills and theoretical understanding needed to use existing and emerging psychological knowledge.

Core Values: We are guided by four core values that are apparent in our learning environment, centers, and clinics:

1. **Academic excellence** in preparing students for careers in clinical and school psychology.
2. Commitment to **social justice** and helping **underserved populations**.
3. **Diversity** of students trained, approaches used, theoretical orientations followed, and populations served.
4. **Knowledge generation and dissemination** using contemporary research approaches.

Applied Psychology Statement: The Applied Psychology Department embraces the mission of the school by offering instruction that has an emphasis on civic and global citizenship, social justice, and cultural diversity. Our programs provide students with knowledge needed to understand individual and collective behaviors; develop quantitative and qualitative statistical analysis and research design needed to analyze the corresponding physical and environmental contributors to human behavior; and a beginning understanding of the analysis and treatment of behavior problems and disorders.

Our programs prepare students with the requisite theoretical knowledge; critical thinking and problem-solving skills needed to successfully participate in employment or scholastic activities. Students will have opportunities to pursue scholarly activities that prepares them to successfully compete for admissions into doctoral level psychology and related academic programs and pursue Master level career pathways through available concentration and certificate. In general, students will acquire a knowledge base grounded in psychological theory and experiential learning (research or practicum) designed to further advance their personal and professional career development.

Course Objectives:

By the end of the course, the students will be able to:

1. Identify and describe developmental challenges across all ages related to social and emotional development.
2. Identify and describe how biological and cognitive factors influence social and emotional development.

Course Description:

Through readings, lectures, group exercises, videos, assignments, and writing assignments, students will study human behavior throughout the lifespan regarding developmental norms, physical, social and emotional growth, and challenges. Active participation is required and expected.

Readings:

Required Text:

Santrock, J. (2025). A topical Approach to Lifespan Development. McGraw Hill
First Day Connect Access.

Please see Canvas for additional readings and schedule.

Suggested but not required:

Baffour, S. (2019). I dare you to care: Using emotional intelligence to inspire, influence, and achieve remarkable growth. Amplify Publishing/Mascot Books.

Methods of Evaluation

Rubrics will be used to evaluate performance in all areas. All rubrics will be available in Canvas and reviewed ahead of time. Student feedback on assessment process and rubrics is welcome and appreciated.

Category	Weight of Grade
Reading Assignments / Class Participation	70%
Group Project & Presentation	20%

Assignments

Readings & Reading Assignments:

Foundational component of your learning will involve engaging with the assigned chapters thoroughly. Each chapter comes with a set of Connect Reading Questions designed to enhance your comprehension and critical analysis of the material. These questions aim to ensure that you grasp not only the content but also the broader context and implications of the readings. You are expected to complete the questions for each chapter, with successful completion earning you 5 points per chapter. It is essential that you approach this assignment with diligence and thoughtfulness, as it will significantly contribute to your understanding of the subject matter and facilitate more informed discussions in class.

Discussion Participation:

Class participation is a critical component of the learning experience, as it not only fosters engagement but also enhances comprehension of the readings. It is part of your reading grade to contribute to discussions based on assigned texts and lectures.

Group Project Title: “Social Development Across Contexts: A Case Study Analysis”:

Each group will select a real-world case (or create a composite case) illustrating a key issue in social development (e.g., peer relationships, identity formation, moral development, family dynamics, cultural influences). They will analyze the case using developmental theories and present their findings and proposed interventions in a PowerPoint presentation. Groups will be assigned early in the course. The rubric can be found in Canvas.

Grading:

A	90-100	Outstanding
B+	87-89	Intermediate Grade
B	80-86	Good
C	70-79	Does not count towards graduation credits
F	0-69	

Program requirement: All students in Applied Psychology courses must achieve a grade of B or better and maintain a GPA of 3.0, or academic remediation will be enforced.

Course Structure:

Week:	Lecture Topics: *See Canvas for tentative schedule of readings for each week*	Assignments:
Week #1 9/8/25	Intro to Course and Syllabus, Intro to Developmental Psych	
Week #2 9/15/25	Biological Foundations, Brain, Genetics, Sleep	Read Chapters & Complete Reading Assignments for Chapters 2 & 3
Week #3 9/22/25	Cognitive Development	Read Chapters & Complete Reading Assignment for Chapter 6
Week #4 9/29/25	Information Processing and Intelligence	Read Chapters & Complete Reading Assignments for Chapters 7 & 8
Week #5 10/6/25	Self and Social Identity	Read Chapters & Complete Reading Assignments for Chapters 11 (Sections on Self and Social Identity)
Week #6 10/13/25	Personality Characteristics	Read Chapters & Complete Reading Assignments for Chapters 11 (Section on Personality Characteristics)
Week #7 10/20/25	Emotional Development, Attachment, Social Neuroscience	Read Chapters & Complete Reading Assignment for Chapter 10
Week #8 10/27/25	Emotional Intelligence	
Week #9 11/3/2025	Moral Development	Read Chapters & Complete Reading Assignment for Chapter 13

Week #10 11/10/25	Families, Parenting	Read Chapters & Complete Reading Assignment for Chapter 14
Week #11 11/17/25	School, Achievement, Work	Read Chapters & Complete Reading Assignment for Chapter 16
Week #12 11/24/2025	Gender and Peers	Read Chapters & Complete Reading Assignments for Chapters 12 & 15
Week #13 12/1/2025	End of life, Palliative Care, Hospice, Grief	Read Chapters & Complete Reading Assignment for Chapter 17
Week #14 12/8/2025	Presentations	
Week #15 12/15/2025	Presentations	

Additional Course Information:

1. **Email communication phone access:** Email is the best way to contact the instructor (ejpod@gsapp.rutgers.edu) Typically, I will respond to your emails within 48 hours (about 2 days) during the work week. If you did not receive a response within this period, please resend your message. In addition, Canvas tools will be used for communication throughout the semester.
2. **Commitment to EDI:** Our diverse identities, shape the perspectives we all bring to the classroom. Together, we will work to promote equity, diversity, and inclusion, because EDI principles promote excellence, innovation, and justice. Imperfections in our growth and practice of EDI values are acknowledged, are encouraged to be called in and addressed and reports of racial abuse will addressed.
3. **Personal disclosures:** It is recommended that you do not discuss personal histories when discussing thoughts and reactions to the material presented. If anyone feels particularly distressed by anything discussed/assigned, I am requesting that you make this known to me. If necessary, I can make referrals for further services. However, if personal issues are accidentally revealed, it is expected that members of the class will maintain confidentiality.

4. **Reasonable Accommodation:**

GSAPP is firmly committed to reasonable accommodation of disability-related needs. Students entitled to this accommodation are encouraged to request assistance from the Office of Disability Services, and to provide the department, and instructors, with paperwork and communication from that office. See: <https://ods.rutgers.edu/>

5. **Academic Integrity and Student Code of Conduct:**

All GSAPP students are responsible for knowing, and conforming to, principles of academic integrity, as specified in: <http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/academic-integrity-policy/> and [University Code of Student Conduct | Student Conduct - Division of Student Affairs | Rutgers University-New Brunswick](#)

6. **Writing Assistance:**

The university provides resources for students who feel they need assistance in improving their writing. It is your responsibility to make use of this help, should you need it. You can contact: Shawn Taylor, Ed.D. College Avenue Learning Center Academic Building Room 1247 15 Seminary Place 848-932-1662 sktaylor@rutgers.edu

7. **Classroom Etiquette:**

Please refrain from using electronic devices for non-class related material during class.