



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

## Social Developmental Psychology Fall 2025

18:820:506:02 Credits: 3  
Monday 6:15-8:45pm  
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:**

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

Please see Canvas for additional readings and schedule.

### **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
Discussion Questions (five total, four count)	25%
Discussion Participation (11 total, 9 count)	20%
Social Experience Project: Individual Write Up	30%
Social Experience Project: Group Presentation	15%
Connect SmartBook Exercises	10%
Canvas will calculate a weighted average and display this average under the Total score. Assignments in each category area will be weighted equally.	

### **Details on Evaluation Methods**

#### **Discussion Questions**

Five (5) topics noted below will require students submit a discussion question, with four of these counting toward your grade (lowest grade will be dropped). There is a template you must follow to submit your question. In brief, you are to write a clear question to prompt discussion based on the readings for that week. This should be an open-ended question that does not necessarily have a clear correct answer. You will also provide the background thinking that led to this question and how you would approach answering it. Grading of the question will be based on the rubric posted in Canvas that will be reviewed in class. Examples of questions can be provided if requested.

#### **Discussion Participation**

Nearly every class, 11 to be specific, will give you an opportunity to discuss the topics that week and across weeks. In these classes we may discuss questions that either you or I provide (spontaneous discussion also counts). You receive credit for actively participating in nine (9) of these classes. Participation will be rated by the rubric posted in Canvas and reviewed in class.

#### **Small Group Social Experience Project**

A comprehensive guide to this project will be posted in Canvas and reviewed in class. The purpose of this project is to give you an opportunity to understand the social development experience by growing your skills in interviewing and assessment.

Groups will be assigned early in the course. Each group will choose a social developmental topic to dive deeper on. Class time will be given to choose and begin to refine the project idea. Then each member of the group will interview two people from different age groups between the ages of 18 and 100. An interview guide will be provided.

Interview information will be discussed among group members and integrated with course information/current research. Every group member will write up their own summary using the template provided. The group as a whole will give a presentation to the class on one of the last two weeks of the semester. Presentations should be no more than 20 minutes. More information and rubrics for the write up and presentations will be provided prior to the end of the semester.

### **Grading:**

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

**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 Schedule:**

<b>Week</b>	<b>Lecture Topics*</b> *see Canvas for tentative schedule of readings for each week
Sept 8	Intro to course and syllabus review Intro to developmental psych
Sept 15	Biological Foundations <sup>2</sup>
Sept 22	Cognitive Development <sup>2</sup>
Sept 29	Information processing and intelligence <sup>2</sup>
Oct 6	Self & Social Identity <sup>12</sup>
Oct 13	Personality Characteristics <sup>12</sup>
Oct 20	Emotional Development, Attachment <sup>1</sup>
Oct 27	Emotional Intelligence, discussion of I Dare You To Care by Sylvia Baffour <sup>2</sup>
Nov 3	Moral Development <sup>12</sup>
Nov 10	Families and parenting <sup>12</sup>
Nov 17	School, achievement, work <sup>2</sup>
Nov 24	Gender and peers <sup>2</sup>
Dec 1	End of life, palliative care/hospice/grief <sup>2</sup>
Dec 8	Start presentations
Dec 15	Complete presentations

<sup>1</sup> Topic where discussion question is due 24 hours prior to class.

<sup>2</sup> Discussion graded on these days

### **Due Dates (all times 1159pm in Canvas)**

Discussion Questions Due by Oct 5, 12, 19; Nov 3, 10

Group Presentations – Week of Dec 8 and 15

Individual Write Up – Due by Dec 14

### **Late Assignment Policy**

Best advice here is to turn everything in on time and **PLEASE contact me** if you are having trouble with keeping up with the work and deadlines. I'm more than happy to work with you to the degree I can and that cannot happen if I don't hear from you. The policies for the specific evaluations apply if severe extenuating circumstances (e.g. missing many weeks to months of class for documented issue) are not present.

- **Discussion Questions** have a 24-hour automatic extension. As long as it is turned in within 24 hours of the due date, its considered on time. Beyond that time, a 10-20% reduction in grade will be assessed if turned in within one week of the original due date. I may or may not accept any work beyond one week from the due date. You may miss one discussion question without it affecting your grade as noted above.
- **Discussion Participation:** You may miss 2 discussion participation grades without it affecting your grade. Beyond that you will need to contact me as discussion cannot be re-created and there may or may not be an equivalent assignment to do.
- **Group Presentations** are scheduled in advance and cannot be late.
- **The individual write up** cannot be late unless severe extenuating circumstances exist.
- **Connect SmartBook Exercises** are accepted within one week of the due date.

### **Additional Course Information:**

1. **Email communication phone access:** Email is the best way to contact the instructor ([ejpod@gsapp.rutgers.edu](mailto: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](mailto:sktaylor@rutgers.edu)

7. **Classroom Etiquette:**

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