



Master of Arts in Counseling

COU 699 Human Development Across the Lifespan

3 graduate credits

Course Syllabus

The following articles are posted on Black board. Please read them and be prepared to discuss them the first night of class:

Cicchetti, D. & Toth, S.L. (2009). The past achievements and future promises of developmental psychopathology: The coming of age of a discipline. *Child Psychology and Psychiatry* 50 (1-2).

Ader, R. (2001). Psychoneuroimmunology. *Center for Psychoneuroimmunology*

Course Description

This course examines human development throughout the lifespan with a focus on developmental psychopathology and psychoneuroimmunology. Developmental psychopathology views human development as an ongoing process and provides a framework to explore the interaction of biological, psychological, and socio-contextual aspects of both normal and abnormal development. Students will examine critical domains that serve as risk factors for psychopathology (i.e. temperament, attachment, parenting style, socioeconomic status) and explore current intervention strategies.

Psychoneuroimmunology (PNI) is an interdisciplinary area of research that examines the interactions between the brain, behavior and the immune system and expands our understanding of how psychosocial factors can protect or damage our health. PNI is based on a systemic model of functioning which explores how individuals shape the environment in which their immune system operates through their thoughts, feelings and behaviors. Students will examine the interaction of psychosocial stress, contextual change and health outcomes and the implications for mental health professionals.

Learning Objectives

At the conclusion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Demonstrate knowledge of major theories of human development across the lifespan, including life transitions.
2. Demonstrate knowledge of human behavior including an understanding of psychopathology and the biological, psychological and socio-contextual factors that affect both normal and abnormal development.
3. Demonstrate knowledge of current theories of optimal development and wellness over the life span.
4. Read and evaluate current research in the field.

Required Text:

Broderick, P.C., and Blewett.P. (2010) *The Life Span: Human Development for Helping Professionals*, 3rd ed. Boston: MA Pearson.
ISBN: 978-0-13-715247-6

Weekly synthesis and critical questions

Students are required to complete all assigned readings weekly. Some of the required reading will be research articles, which are posted on Black board. In addition, students will be required to find one research article each week that is related to that week's readings. Students should come to class, prepared to summarize the article and discuss how the article is linked to the chapters assigned from the textbook and research articles posted on Black board.

Each week, students should generate two critical questions about the readings. Some readings may have multiple concepts so it will not be feasible to cover all of them. Instead, focus on a few points that you think are particularly important, of interest, or simply not explained well or conceptually sound, and generate questions that you feel need to be answered in order to expand the issue or move the field to the next level on these topics. Provide a brief synopsis explaining why you generated the question. The questions that you generate and the synopsis providing the background for your question should provide some synthesis of the readings and how this lead to your questions. Your question should reflect your understanding of the readings and will be graded on critical thinking and integration of the information. The critical questions will be posted on Blackboard by Friday each week.

Discussion Leadership

Once or twice during the term, students will lead discussion for that week's class. The discussion leader(s) will give an overview of the topic including a summary of each of the required readings. Leaders may provide a brief lecture on background materials. Grades will be based on clarity, depth, critical thinking and discussion.

Midterm Paper

Each student will interview/observe a child in an attempt to assess the child's current level of development. The student will then compare the data they have collected to the literature in terms of typical development at that age level. All subjects must be volunteers and should be at least six years old. You may not represent yourself as a counseling psychologist performing a developmental evaluation, but as a student practicing developmental observation. No one is to know the assessment of any subject. Parents should be told beforehand that your findings cannot be disclosed to them because you are simply learning how to interview/observe a subject and you cannot be sure of the reliability of the results. However, you may emphasize that this can be a positive and valuable learning experience for them and their child. Also, you may not make recommendations for treatment for intervention based upon your evaluation. If any difficulties arise, please consult the instructor. All interview data, case samples, and information concerning the subject that you obtain during this course are confidential. All practices and policies in this course are to conform to the ethical standards outlined by the American Psychological Association and the American Counseling Association. Interview/observation should be compiled in an 6 to 8 pages written document (double-spaced, typed). Paper does not have to be APA style. The student will analyze the data presented in terms of typical development in each area, (physical, cognitive, social, moral and personality.) The paper is due the 5th week of the term.

Final Paper

Students will select a topic of interest in the field of developmental psychopathology or psychoneuroimmunology. The paper must use APA guidelines and should be approximately 8-10 pages in length and include a minimum of 5 sources. The paper should review the current research on the topic and summarize how this impacts mental health clinical practice. The paper subject and general idea must be e-mailed to the instructor by the third class meeting.

Grading

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| 1. Attendance and participation | |
| a. Class attendance | 10% |
| b. Submission of weekly questions reflecting critical thinking skills and integration of information from articles and text | 15% |
| c. Leadership of discussion | 15% |
| d. Classroom participation | 15% |
| 2. Midterm paper | 25% |
| 3. Final paper | 25% |