

PSYC GU4880

In Service of Equity: Examining Developmental Science Through the Lens of Policy

4 points

Instructor: Prof. Dima Amso, Ph.D.

Class Time: Tuesdays 10:10 am-12:00 pm

Class Location: TBA

Office Hours: Tuesdays 9-10 and 12-1

Course Bulletin Description:

Urie Bronfenbrenner (1974) wrote, “*We have now come the full circle and returned to our starting point—issues of social policy as points of departure for the identification of significant theoretical and scientific questions concerning the development of the human organism as a function of interaction with its enduring environment—both actual and potential.*” This course is designed to examine emotional and cognitive development through the lens of existing financial, social, and educational policies. We will examine the influence- on child development - of inequities in education, household socioeconomic status and poverty, neighborhood socioeconomic status and poverty, access to prenatal care, parental incarceration rates, and systemic racism.

Prerequisites: PSYC UN1001 The Science of Psychology or an equivalent introductory psychology course and PSYC UN2280 Introduction to Developmental Psychology or an equivalent developmental psychology course. Children at Risk PSYC 3615 would also be helpful preparation for understanding experiential influences on developing children. (The courses do not overlap in content.) Instructor permission is required.

Contact hours: Seminar meets 2 hours a week, and readings, presentations, and writing assignments are expected to take an additional 10 hours of work time per week.

Full Description and Learning Objectives:

- (1) There is no textbook for this course. This is an interactive seminar. The goal is to learn how to explore these issues together.
- (2) We will first assess the research. We will ask about the validity of the research methods and whether there is bias in the sample or measurements.
- (3) We will, as a collective unit, research the policies and laws currently in place that may be driving observed outcomes.
- (4) The final paper will be a group (4 per group) paper in the format of an SRCD Social Policy Report (<https://www.srkd.org/research/journals/social-policy-report>).

Readings: Readings will comprise empirical and review papers. Journal articles and review chapters will be posted to Courseworks as pdfs.

Role in The Psychology Department Curriculum: PSYC GU4880 is a seminar course open to PhD students and advanced undergraduate students in Psychology. It fulfills the following requirements:

- For PhD students, this course could be used to fulfill one of the seminar requirements for the MA or the MPhil.
- For Neuroscience & Behavior majors, this course could be used to fulfill the P5 Advanced Psychology Seminar requirement.
- For Psychology majors and concentrators, this course could fulfill the seminar requirement and/or the Group X special elective requirement.
- PhD students in Psychology and Psychology and Neuroscience & Behavior majors will have enrollment priority.

Grading and Evaluation

- (1) Class participation (20%). Attendance is mandatory. Participation in discussions is expected of every student. This provides an opportunity to debate and discuss with mutual respect for other scientific opinions.
- (2) Article presentations (20%). You will be asked to present two articles to the class over the course of the semester and to lead a discussion.
- (3) Two short (3-5 page) essay discussions on a topic to be announced in class (30%).
- (4) Final Paper (30%). We will write a review and analysis (45 pages, double-spaced) on one of the three topics, together synthesizing the data, policies that have led to the observed outcomes, and making recommendations for change. The goal is to have something we can submit to a relevant journal for publication. More detail in class.

Grading: Details regarding expectations and grading will be provided in class.

>=97.5-100: A+	>=87-90: B+	>=77-80: C+	60-70: D
>=94-97.5: A	>=84-87: B	>=74-77: C	<60: F]
>=90-94: A-	>=80-84: B-	>=70-74: C-	

Assignment Due Dates:

1. 2/16 Essay 1 Due
2. 3/24 Essay 2 Due
3. 4/15 Final Paper and Presentations Due

Fostering an Inclusive Classroom: My aim is to foster a learning environment that supports a diversity of perspectives and experiences and honors your identities. Please reach out to me with any concerns or suggestions you may have to better address your learning needs and to improve the effectiveness of this course. I look forward to working together to create a classroom community built on mutual respect and inclusivity.

Students with special needs who may require classroom/test accommodations should make an appointment with me before or during the first week of class. You should also contact the Office

of Disability Services (ODS) in Lerner Hall before the start of the course to register for these accommodations. The procedures for registering with ODS can be found at <https://health.columbia.edu/content/disability-services> or by calling (212) 854-2388.

Promoting Wellness: Many of us have periods in which our mental health and well-being suffer. I urge you to take care of yourselves – and of each other. Please prioritize your mental health and wellbeing and know that there are many resources available to you both within our classroom community and throughout the university:

<https://health.columbia.edu/content/counseling-and-psychological-services>
<http://blogs.cuit.columbia.edu/nightline/>
<https://universitylife.columbia.edu/student-resources-directory#health>

Ensuring Academic Integrity: As members of this academic community, we are responsible for maintaining the highest level of personal and academic integrity, which includes presenting only our own work on assignments and exams. You can find detailed definitions and examples in Columbia University’s Guide to Academic Integrity: (<http://www.college.columbia.edu/academics/academicintegrity>).

Any questions of academic integrity will be automatically referred to Columbia’s office of Student Conduct and Community Standards. The semester progresses very quickly, and there is a lot of material to learn. If you find yourself in a situation – e.g., starting an assignment too late – in which it seems like the best option may be to violate your academic integrity, please see me. Together, we can work out a solution. It is far better to have a few points deducted from an assignment than to compromise your academic integrity and potentially put your academic standing at the university in jeopardy. Plagiarism—whether intentional or inadvertent—is a serious violation of academic integrity. If you have any questions about what constitutes plagiarism and/or how to properly cite sources, please come to me. I am more than happy to help.

TENTATIVE COURSE SCHEDULE

Jan 12

Introduction

Bronfenbrenner, U. (1974). Developmental research, public policy, and the ecology of childhood. *Child Development*, 45(1), 1-5.

Hruschka, D., Medin, D.L., Rogoff, B., & Henrich, J. (2017). Pressing questions in the study of psychological and behavioral diversity. *PNAS*, 115(45).
www.pnas.org/cgi/doi/10.1073/pnas.1814733115

UNIT 1

Jan 19

SES and Poverty: Impact on Intergenerational Mobility

Chetty, R., & Hendren, N. (2017). The Impacts of Neighborhoods on Intergenerational Mobility II: County-Level Estimates. *Quarterly journal of economics*, 133(3): 1163-1228.

Chetty, R., & Hendren, N., & Katz (2015). The Effects of Exposure to Better Neighborhoods on Children: New Evidence from the Moving to Opportunity Experiment. *American Economic Review*, 106(4), 855-902.

Chetty, R., Hendren, N., Jones, M.R., & Porter, S. (2018). Race and economic opportunity in the United States: An intergenerational perspective.

Jan 26

SES and Poverty: Impact on brain and cognitive development I

Noble et al., (2015). Family income, parental education, and brain structure in children and adolescents. *Nature Neuroscience*, 18, 773-778.

Lawson, G. M., & Farah, M. J. (2017). Executive function as a mediator between SES and academic achievement throughout childhood. *International Journal of Behavioral Development*, 41(1), 94-104. <https://doi.org/10.1177%2F0165025415603489>.

Farah, M.J. (2017). The neuroscience of socioeconomic status: correlates, causes, and consequences. *Neuron*, 96(1), 56-71. DOI: 10.1016/j.neuron.2017.08.034

Feb 2

SES and Poverty: Impact on brain and cognitive development II

Taylor, R.L., Cooper, S.R., Jackson, J.J., & Barch, D.M. Assessment of neighborhood poverty, cognitive function, and prefrontal hippocampal volumes in children. *JAMA Open Network*. 2020

Amso, D., & Lynn, A. (2017). Distinctive mechanisms of adversity and socioeconomic inequality in child development: A review and recommendations for evidence-based policy. *Policy Insights from the Behavioral and Brain Sciences*, 4(2), 139-146. <https://doi.org/10.1177%2F2372732217721933>.

Manduca, R., & Sampson, R.J. (2019). Punishing and toxic neighborhood environments independently predict the intergenerational social mobility of black and white children. *PNAS*, 116(16) 7772-7777.

Feb 9

SES and Poverty: Impact on mental health outcomes

Assari, S., Boyce, S., Barzagan, M., & Caldwell, C. (2020). African Americans' diminished returns of parental education on adolescents' depression and suicide in the ABCD study. *Eur. J. Investig. Health Psychol. Educ.* 2020, 10(2), 656-668.

Hao, Y., & Farah, M. (2020). The affective neuroscience of socioeconomic status: implications for mental health. *BJPsych Bull*, 44(5) 202-207.

De France K, Evans GW (2020). Expanding context in the role of emotion regulation in mental health: How socioeconomic status (SES) and developmental stage matter. *Emotion*. doi: 10.1037/emo0000743

Ellis, B. et al. (2017). Beyond risk and protective factors: an adaptation-based approach to resilience. *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, 12(4), 561-87.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1745691617693054>

Feb 16

Working Week – We will work in groups, outside of class, to search policies in place that link to Unit 1 outcomes. During synchronous class time, each group will report to the class and lead a discussion on their findings.

UNIT 2

Feb 23

Parent and Juvenile Incarceration: Impact on Intergenerational Mobility

Shaw, M. (2016). The racial implications of the effects of parental incarceration on intergenerational mobility. *Sociology compass*, 10(12), 1102-09.

Vallas, R., Boteach, M., West, R., & Odum, J. (2015). *Removing barriers to opportunity for parents with criminal records and their children: A two-generation approach*. Washington, DC: Center for American Progress.

March 2-Spring Break

March 9

Parent and Juvenile Incarceration: Impact on brain and cognitive development

Gabel, S. (1992). Behavioral problems in sons of incarcerated or otherwise absent fathers: The issue of separation. *Family Process*, 31(3), 303–314.

Brain Development, Social Context, and Justice Policy *Bringing Science to Law and Policy*
Scott, Elizabeth; Duell, Natasha; Steinberg, Laurence
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Cohen, A.O. & Casey, B.J., (2014). Rewiring juvenile justice: the intersection of developmental neuroscience and legal policy. *TICS*, 2, 63-5. doi: 10.1016/j.tics.2013.11.002.

Levitt, P., & Eagleson, K. L. (2018). The Ingredients of Healthy Brain and Child Development. *Washington University Journal of Law & Policy*, 57, 75-88.

March 16

Parent and Juvenile Incarceration: Impact on mental health outcomes

Smith, K., & Pollock, S.D. (2020). Rethinking concepts and categories for understanding the neurodevelopmental effects of childhood adversity. *Perspectives on psychological science, 1*-27.

Phillips, S. D., & Gates, T. (2011). A conceptual framework for understanding the stigmatization of children of incarcerated parents. *Journal of Child and Family Studies, 20*(3), 286–294.

Lee, R. D., Fang, X., & Luo, F. (2013). The impact of parental incarceration on the physical and mental health of young adults. *Pediatrics, 131*(4), e1188–e1195.
doi:<http://dx.doi.org/10.1542/peds.2012-0627>

March 23 Working Week – We will work in groups, outside of class, to search policies in place that link to Unit 2 outcomes. During synchronous class time, each group will report to the class and lead a discussion on their findings.

UNIT 3

March 30

Access to Quality Education: Impact on Intergenerational Mobility

Raj Chetty, John Friedman, Nathaniel Hilger, Emmanuel Saez, Diane Whitmore Schanzenbach, Danny Yagan. How Does Your Kindergarten Classroom Affect Your Earnings? Evidence from Project STAR. *QUARTERLY JOURNAL OF ECONOMICS* 126(4): 1593-1660, 2011

Raj Chetty, John Friedman, Jonah E. Rockoff. Measuring the Impacts of Teachers II: Teacher Value-Added and Student Outcomes in Adulthood. *AMERICAN ECONOMIC REVIEW* 104(9): 2633-2679, 2014

April 6

Access to Quality Education: Impact on brain and cognitive development

Ansari, D. & Coch, D. (2006). Bridges over troubled waters: education and cognitive neuroscience. *TICS, 10*(4), 146-51.

Pettito, L-A, & Dunbar, K.N. (2009). Educational neuroscience: new discoveries from bilingual brains,. Scientific brains, and the educated mind. 3(4):185-197. doi: 10.1111/j.1751-228X.2009.01069.x.Epub 2009 Oct 12.

Peng, P. , & Kievit, The Development of Academic Achievement and Cognitive Abilities: A Bidirectional Perspective. *Child Development Perspectives, 14*(1).

April 13 - We will work in groups, outside of class, to search policies in place that link to Unit 3 outcomes. During synchronous class time, each group will report to the class and

lead a discussion on their findings.

April 15 – Group paper presentations