S3280Q Seminar in Infant Development

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Required text:


Suggested resources:


Course description:
William James (1890) described the experience of the young infant as a blooming, buzzing confusion. Because of advances in the study of infant perception and cognition, we now recognize that this is not true. Newborn infants are equipped with basic sensory systems that rapidly develop. This seminar will provide an overview of infant development based on current research, with the primary focus on perception and cognition. Theoretical issues, such as assessment of competence, continuity in development, and the relative contributions of genetics and experience, will be discussed.

Course requirements and grading:
- Paper and presentation based on one of the topics in the course outline (40% of grade),
- Weekly short answer take home assignments based on information presented in class and in the reading (40% of grade) due the following week, and
- Class attendance and participation (20% of grade).

Paper: Paper topics will be discussed in the first class meeting. Students will briefly review what is in the reading and then supplement this by including material from other sources as the basis of their paper. Papers should be based on research articles from journals, such as *Infant Behavior and Development*, *Developmental Psychology*, and *Child Development*, and contributions from advanced texts. Papers should not exceed 10 pages and include at least 5 journal articles as references. Students will present their topic and lead a discussion on the last day of class.
- Deadline: **The deadline is August 13** for all papers.
**Course Outline of Topics and Chapters in the Text:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Chapter</th>
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| July 9  | Why study infants?  
History and theoretical background  
Methods and Social Policy | 1       |
| July 11 | Prenatal development  
• *Weekly short answer take home assignment #1 due* | 2       |
| July 16 | Birth  
Reflexes  
Motor development | 3       |
| July 18 | Newborn states of arousal  
Perceptual development  
• *Weekly short answer take home assignment #2 due* | 4 & 5   |
| July 23 | Cognitive development: Learning and Information processing | 6       |
| July 25 | Cognitive development: Piaget  
Tests of infant intelligence  
• *Weekly short answer take home assignment #3 due* | 7       |
| July 30 | Memory  
Categorization  
Symbolic play | 8       |
| Aug. 1  | Language development  
• *Weekly short answer take home assignment #4 due* | 9       |
| Aug. 6  | Emotional development  
Temperament | 10 & 12 |
| Aug. 8  | Social development  
Attachment; child care  
• *Weekly short answer take home assignment #5 due* | 11      |
| Aug. 13 | Effects of Socioeconomic class and culture  
• *Weekly short answer take home assignment #6 due* | Additional reading |
| Aug. 15 | Presentation and discussion of students’ paper topics  
Papers due |         |