



Course Syllabus: Human Development
COUN 2023 Section 101 Fall 2025
West College of Education and Professional Studies
Tuesdays and Thursdays 11:00am – 12:20pm Room 209

Contact Information

Instructor: Dr. Kelly Medellin Office: Bridwell 216

Office hours: Tuesdays 9am – 11am,
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Instructor Response Policy

Please feel free to contact me via cell phone BUT you need to leave a voice or text message so that I can get back to you. I will respond within 24 hours M-F

Textbook & Instructional Materials

Berk, L. E. (2021). *Infants, Children, and Adolescents* 9th ed.). Pearson Education Inc: Boston

Course Description

A study of human development and how empirical data using accepted reputable research methodology extends and supports our understanding of how development impacts society and what it is to be “human” through the stages of development, specifically in the areas of cognitive, social, moral, and emotional domains.

Course Objectives/Learning Outcomes/Course Competencies

Objectives	Learning Activities
Students understand and think critically about the major theories of children’s physical, cognitive, social, moral, and emotional development. Students will explain how developmental behavior impacts the individual and use empirical data to discuss the impacts that behavior has on the larger society.	discussion questions, lecture and/or guided reading, videos, portfolio, simulations, activities

Objectives	Learning Activities
Students understand and think critically about genetic, prenatal, hereditary, and environmental influences and how these influences and differences prevalent in various global regions impact human development and learning. Students will develop an understanding of the social and personal responsibility of being aware of the impact of diverse influences on human development across the globe.	discussion questions, lecture and/or guided reading, videos, portfolio, simulations, activities
Students recognize, understand, and think critically about the reciprocal influence of family and culture on human development.	discussion questions, lecture and/or guided reading, videos, portfolio, simulations, activities
Students understand and think critically about the contribution of heredity and environment (both geographically and culturally) to development and learning.	discussion questions, lecture and/or guided reading, videos, portfolio, simulations, activities
Students develop an in-depth understanding of human growth and development and the changes that occur from infancy to young adulthood to better understand what makes us human.	discussion questions, lecture and/or guided reading, videos, portfolio, simulations, activities
Students will practice reflective habits regarding human development and develop an understanding of one's own development and how that process impacts one's approach to children and adolescents.	discussion questions, lecture and/or guided reading, videos, portfolio, simulations, activities
Students will develop an understanding of the development and maintenance of a healthy self-concept. Students will investigate developmental/environmental-related issues such as stress, risky behavior, gang violence, bullying, poverty, substance abuse, prenatal care, etc., and discuss the impacts on individuals, groups, and institutions.	discussion questions, lecture and/or guided reading, videos, portfolio, simulations, activities

Grading/Assessment

Core Assessment (Portfolio Part I-IV)

The Core Assessment will be conducted in a four-part portfolio project that directly aligns with the core course objectives and demonstrates a student's understanding of human development and its impact on the individual, society, and culture. This assessment also requires students to apply empirical methods to think critically about how human development, behavior, and learning impact and are impacted by cultural differences to further their understanding of what makes us human. The portfolio includes four components: (1.) A research-based brochure students create that will require them to think critically about factors impacting the prenatal environment and how diverse environments influence those in a global context. A component of this brochure also includes a call to action to highlight social responsibility for a resolution to the issue. (2.) A project and presentation that requires students to be engaged in the research process that will allow them to analyze and think critically about human development, specifically infancy, and toddlerhood, to develop a presentation for the class. (3.) An observation to collect data that allows students to analyze adolescent behavior and link that to developmental characteristics and discuss how cultural differences impact development. Additionally, students will analyze interactions of adolescents among groups and discuss subsequent impacts. (4.) A final reflective piece that requires students to critically reflect on each component of the portfolio to synthesize and demonstrate an understanding of the social and personal responsibility to the issues in human development from diverse cultures and communities in the US and across the globe. The separate portfolio components will be used as formative assessments during the course and assessed using elements of the AACU Critical Thinking, Global Learning, Written Communication, Quantitative Literacy, and Oral Communication rubrics. All written portfolio components must adhere to APA 7th edition guidelines.

The following explains each part of the portfolio.

Portfolio Part I: Protecting the Prenatal Environment Brochure

To demonstrate your understanding of influences on the prenatal environment and our personal and social responsibility for awareness and action, you will create a brochure highlighting an issue and provide strategies or solutions.

Download and complete the chart entitled "Protecting the Prenatal Environment".

Using your answers from the sheet, consider the following questions: "What did you find most difficult to give up (or avoid)? Why? What was most surprising? Why?" Next, choose one that you found difficult to give up (or avoid) and find a

research article from a reputable source exploring this issue in another country. Additionally, you must locate empirical, numerical evidence on this issue's impacts (local, national, or global). Create a visually appealing brochure highlighting the challenges of protecting the prenatal environment in this particular area of the world and how that might compare and contrast with the prenatal environment in a culture-specific to the US. Be sure to include supporting research data and numerical data on the impacts and provide research-based strategies/recommendations/solutions to address this challenge. **Detailed explanations and rubrics are located in D2L.*

Portfolio Part II: Infancy and Toddlerhood Research Project & Presentation

To deepen your understanding of human behavior and development, the influence that development has on institutions, other age groups, culture, or our society as a whole, you will conduct research and create a presentation describing physical, cognitive, emotional, and social development in infancy and toddlerhood. Include information from the text, videos, simulations, and any supplied readings provided in D2L. You will submit an APA formatted paper, citing all sources that are no more than 1,000 words, and a video presentation that you will upload to YouTube for your classmates to view. You will copy the link on a word doc and turn it into the dropbox. Be sure that you include the following information in your paper. Each of the bullets below can be used as a paragraph topic with the addition of an introduction and conclusion for a complete essay.

- Physical Development: Discuss gross and fine motor skills during this stage of development. How might cultural influences impact development of motor skills? How might delayed motor development impact socialization?
- Cognitive Development: Use Piaget's theory to describe the cognitive differences between infants and toddlers. What specific behaviors support your supposition? How might cultural influences impact cognitive development and behavior? How might cognitive development impact further learning? How does cognitive development impact pedagogical and curricular decisions in schools?
- Emotional Development: Describe fear reactions and discuss when and why they appear in growth. How might cultural influences impact emotional development? How might individuals at this age communicate emotions? How might low or high EI impact an individual's interactions with others?
- Social Development: Discuss self-discovery in infancy and toddlerhood. How might cultural influences impact social development? How might individuals at this age interact and communicate with other individuals?
- In addition to your choice of one of the above developmental areas, also address the following: How has research furthering our understanding of child development impacted education, entertainment, retail, and or local, state, or national government agencies? Consider Legislative and media impacts as well. Make sure to include statistical data to support the impacts you focus on. For example, you might use a consumer report citing the dollar amount retail allows to market to the parents of this age group to discuss impacts.
- For the second part of the assignment, choose one of the four areas above and create a 3- 5 minute video presentation about that area of development during the infancy and toddler period. In the presentation, discuss the most well-known theories about the area you chose from the text. Create a presentation for the video, such as Google Slides or PowerPoint with important points and quotes in bulleted form. Include graphics or graphs to support your information. When you record, you may use movie maker, Screencast-o-Matic, VOKI, or any similar program, but upload it to YouTube and provide the link when you turn in the assignment. The images or voices of all group members must be present on the video. **Detailed explanations and rubrics are located in D2L.*

Portfolio Part III: Adolescent Observation and Analysis

To gain an understanding of the social, emotional, cognitive, and physical development of the adolescent period and its impacts on other groups, you will be observing adolescents in a popular film to collect data. You will then analyze aspects of their behavior that indicate the unique characteristics of this stage of human development. You will complete an observation protocol sheet and then compose a synthesis paragraph further exploring a behavior you observed and how that is connected with changes associated with this stage and its influences on the adolescent age group itself, institutions such as schools, and the larger culture of our society. The following are **possible** areas for exploration:

- How might adolescent moodiness contribute to the psychological distancing between parents and children that accompanies puberty? (Consider bidirectional influences in parent-child relationships.) How might cultural differences in child rearing impact development? How might this adolescent characteristic impact the school?
- How does adolescents' propensity for risky behavior impact society? School policy? Legislative actions?
- List various personal and contextual factors that promote identity development. Then, explain how ethnic identity development is achieved for ethnic minority adolescents.
- How might cultural differences in gender expectations during adolescence impact emotional, physical, social, and cognitive development? How has gender exploration impacted society?
- How has information furthering our understanding of adolescents and associated developmental characteristics impacted education, retail, media, and legislation?

**Additional instructions, guidelines, protocol sheets, supplemental articles, videos, and requirements are available on D2L.*

Portfolio Part IV: Reflection

The reflective piece requires you to reflect on Parts I-III of the portfolio critically. You will synthesize the information you have gathered to demonstrate an understanding of human development and how it impacts individuals, society, and culture. You should address connections among the research-based developmental theories, experiences, and environments across the globe to demonstrate an understanding of our social and personal responsibility to grasp the differences in global environments—both the positive aspects as well as the challenges your own and other cultures face. The following are possible areas for reflection:

- How has the knowledge of a particular stage(s) of development and behavior impacted your understanding of what makes us human?
- How has an understanding of behaviors associated with developmental stages allowed you to be more understanding, and tolerant or to take a particular action?
- How has the knowledge of the impacts of global influences on development impacted your behavior (think about the actions suggested in your brochure)?
- How has the research you conducted supported and furthered the knowledge you have about human behavior and development?
- Why might you feel that it is important for people to understand human development and the associated behaviors?
- How has the research you conducted supported and furthered the knowledge

you have about issues pertaining to human behavior and development and why society needs to be aware of these issues?

- Considering the empirical data including quantitative information as well as qualitative data you use to support your opinions, how might this data be interpreted a different way or how might this data be influenced by other factors?

The reflection should be at least 500 words submitted as a PDF and uploaded by the date due to D2L.

**Additional instructions, guidelines, and requirements are available on D2L.*

Activities

The class will feature four formal learning activities worth 20 points each that will strengthen your understanding of the main stages of child development. Specifics of each activity will be discussed further in class; however, the completed works must be uploaded to D2L on the given due date.

Quizzes

There are 10 chapter quizzes throughout the course. These are accessed through D2L. They open at the beginning of their assigned week and close on Friday at midnight.

Table 1: Points allocated to each assignment

All assignments will be explained in detail on D2L and discussed in class.

Assignment	Grade Point
Portfolio Part I	100
Portfolio Part II	100
Portfolio Part III	100
Portfolio Part IV	100
Activities (4@ 50 pts each)	200
Quizzes (10@20pts each)	200
Class Participation	200
TOTAL	1000

Table 2: Total points for final grade.

Grade	Points
A	900
B	800 to 899
C	700 to 799
D	600 to 699
F	Less than 600

Class Participation

Each student brings a unique perspective and life experience to the learning environment and is expected to participate actively and thoughtfully by making pertinent contributions. All students are expected to read assignments and be prepared to discuss them. Moreover, additional readings may be assigned by the course instructor.

In addition to having thought through the answers to such questions before the start of class, you should be able to summarize the main argument(s) and/or central concepts for each assigned excerpt or text. Please come to class with questions or issues from the reading that you found central or worthy of further exploration. Students may also be asked to do activities and exercises related to the assigned readings or to lead discussions on a topic or reading. You will have many opportunities to participate in class and on D2L, which is a very important part of this course.

Because classroom participation is vital to your learning, 5 points will be deducted from your participation grade for each missed class after the first absence.

Dispositions

- Students will promote learner-centered instruction as preferable to teacher-centered instruction.
- Each student will “sell” the desirability of equity in the classroom.
- Students will become salespersons for choices and differentiation assignments in the classroom.
- When presented with current issues, students will encourage an analysis of both sides of the issue.

Attitude – Demonstrate the following dispositions that are essential for learning:

- Curiosity (ask questions, look for additional answers, probe, reflect)
- Flexibility (take alternate points of view, be open-minded)
- Organization (plan ahead – literally, GET A PLANNER!)
- Patience (take time to reason, be persistent in efforts)
- Risk-taking (try things beyond your current repertoire)
- Passion (invest in ideas, processes, products, and most of all – other people)

Change of Schedule

A student dropping a course (but not withdrawing from the University) within the first 12 class days of a regular semester or the first four class days of a summer semester is eligible for a 100% refund of applicable tuition and fees. Dates are published in the [Schedule of Classes](#) each semester.

Refund and Repayment Policy

A student who withdraws or is administratively withdrawn from Midwestern State University (MSU) may be eligible to receive a refund for all or a portion of the tuition, fees and room/board charges that were paid to MSU for the semester. HOWEVER, if the student received financial aid (federal/state/institutional grants, loans and/or scholarships), all or a portion of the refund may be returned to the financial aid programs. As described below, two formulas (federal and state) exists in determining the amount of the refund. (Examples of each refund calculation will be made available upon request).

Services for Students with Disabilities

In accordance with Section 504 of the Federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, Midwestern State University endeavors to make reasonable accommodations to ensure equal opportunity for qualified persons with disabilities to participate in all educational, social, and recreational programs and activities. After notification of acceptance, students requiring accommodations should make application for such assistance through Disability Support Services, located in the Clark Student Center, Room 168, (940) 397-4140. Current documentation of a disability will be required in order to provide appropriate services, and each request will be individually reviewed. For more details, please go to [Disability Support Services](#).

College Policies

Campus Carry Rules/Policies

Refer to: [Campus Carry Rules and Policies](#)

Smoking/Tobacco Policy

College policy strictly prohibits the use of tobacco products in any building owned or operated by MSU TEXAS. Adult students may smoke only in the outside designated-smoking areas at each location.

Alcohol and Drug Policy

To comply with the Drug Free Schools and Communities Act of 1989 and subsequent amendments, students and employees of Midwestern State are informed that strictly enforced policies are in place which prohibits the unlawful possession, use or distribution of any illicit drugs, including alcohol, on university property or as part of any university-sponsored activity. Students and employees are also subject to all applicable legal sanctions under local, state and federal law for any offenses involving illicit drugs on University property or at University-sponsored activities.

Campus Carry

Effective August 1, 2016, the Campus Carry law (Senate Bill 11) allows those licensed individuals to carry a concealed handgun in buildings on public university campuses, except in locations the University establishes has prohibited. The new Constitutional Carry law does not change this process. Concealed carry still requires a License to Carry

permit, and openly carrying handguns is not allowed on college campuses. For more information, visit [Campus Carry](#).

Active Shooter

The safety and security of our campus is the responsibility of everyone in our community. Each of us has an obligation to be prepared to appropriately respond to threats to our campus, such as an active aggressor. Please review the information provided by MSU Police Department regarding the options and strategies we can all use to stay safe during difficult situations. For more information, visit [Safety / Emergency Procedures](#). Students are encouraged to watch the video entitled "Run. Hide. Fight." which may be electronically accessed via the University police department's webpage: ["Run. Hide. Fight."](#)

Obligation to Report Sex Discrimination under State and Federal Law

Midwestern State University is committed to providing and strengthening an educational, working, and living environment where students, faculty, staff, and visitors are free from sex discrimination of any kind. State and federal law require University employees to report sex discrimination and sexual misconduct to the University's Office of Title IX. As a faculty member, I am required to report to the Title IX Coordinator any allegations, personally observed behavior, or other direct or indirect knowledge of conduct that reasonably may constitute sex discrimination or sexual misconduct, which includes sexual assault, sexual harassment, dating violence, or stalking, involving a student or employee. After a report is made, the office of Title IX will reach out to the affected student or employee in an effort to connect such person(s) with resources and options in addressing the allegations made in the report. You are also encouraged to report any incidents to the office of Title IX. You may do so by contacting:

Laura Hetrick
Title IX Coordinator
Sunwatcher Village Clubhouse
940-397-4213
laura.hetrick@msutexas.edu

You may also file an online report 24/7 at [Online Reporting Form](#)

Should you wish to visit with someone about your experience in confidence, you may contact the MSU Counseling Center at 940-397-4618. For more information on the University's policy on Title IX or sexual misconduct, please visit [Title IX Website](#)

Grade Appeal Process

Update as needed. Students who wish to appeal a grade should consult the Midwestern State University [MSU Catalog](#)

Notice

Changes in the course syllabus, procedure, assignments, and schedule may be made at the discretion of the instructor.