

COUN 2023 X20- Human Development
Online
Spring 2026
January 20, 2026- May 8, 2026
Midwestern State University
Gordon T. & Ellen West College of Education

Instructor/Contact Information:

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Office Hours: Tuesday 11:00AM-1:00PM, Wednesday 9AM-10AM, Thursday 11:00AM-1:00PM.

Appointments are recommended to avoid conflicts. Zoom appointments also available for other times outside of office hours- contact by email to discuss times.

Instructor Response Policy

The best way to contact me is via email. I will check my email between the hours of 8:00AM and 5:00 PM Mon-Fri. I will attempt to contact you within 24 hours; however, this does not apply on weekends or holidays. Once you contact me via email, we can then set up a virtual or phone meeting, depending on your needs.

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.

Textbook & Instructional Materials

Berk, L. E. (2022). *Infants, Children, and Adolescents* 9th ed.). Sage Publications Inc.

Core Content, Objectives, and Core Skill

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, textbook videos, portfolio, activities, quizzes

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 the different influences on human development across the globe.	discussion questions, lecture and/or guided reading, textbook videos, portfolio, activities, quizzes
Students recognize, understand, and think critically about the reciprocal influence of family on human development.	discussion questions, lecture and/or guided reading, textbook videos, portfolio, activities, quizzes
Students understand and think critically about the contribution of heredity and environment to development and learning.	discussion questions, lecture and/or guided reading, textbook videos, portfolio, activities, quizzes
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, textbook videos, portfolio, activities, quizzes
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, textbook videos, portfolio, activities, quizzes
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, textbook videos, portfolio, activities, quizzes

These objectives align with [NAEYC standards](#), [National Association for the Education of Young Children \(NAEYC\) Principles of Human Development](#) and [Principles of Child Development and Learning and Implications that Inform Practice](#) available on their web site at: [NAEYC](#).

Grading

Assignments	Points
Portfolio Part I:	25
Portfolio Part II:	25
Portfolio Part III:	25
Portfolio Part IV:	25
Activities (4 at 10 points each)	40
Online Discussion Questions (4 at 5 points)	20
Quizzes (10 at 10 points)	100
Total Points	260

Percentage of total points for final grade.

Grade	Percent
A	90% or Greater
B	80% to 89.9%
C	70% to 79.9%
D	60% to 69.9%
F	Less than 60%

Core Assessment

The Core Assessment will be conducted in a four-part portfolio project that directly aligns to the core course objectives and demonstrates a student's understanding of human development and its impact on the individual, and society. This assessment also requires students to apply empirical methods to think critically about how human development, behavior, and learning impact society to further their understanding of what makes us human. The final portfolio includes the following four components: (1.) A research- based brochure students create that will require them to think critically about factors impacting the pre-natal environment and how those are influenced by different environments 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. (3.) An observation to collect data that allows students to analyze adolescent behavior and link that to developmental characteristics and 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 in order to synthesize and demonstrate an understanding of the social and personal responsibility to the issues in human development communities in the US and across the globe. The separate portfolio components will be used as formative assessments during the course and the combined submitted portfolio is summative in nature and will be 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.

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" that is located in the Week 3 folder. 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 the impacts (local, national, or global) of this issue. Create a visually appealing brochure that highlights the challenges of protecting the prenatal environment in this particular area of the world and how that might compare and contrast with the pre-natal environment specific to the US. Be sure to include the supporting research data and numerical data of the impacts and provide research-based strategies/recommendations/solutions to address this challenge. Additional instructions, guidelines, and requirements are available on D2L/Brightspace in the Week 3 folder.

Portfolio Part II: Infancy and Toddlerhood Collaborative Research Project & Presentation

To deepen your understanding of human behavior and development, the influence that development has on institutions, other age groups 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 is no more than 1,000 words as well as a presentation. You will copy the link on a word doc and turn it in to the drobox. 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 family and outside 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 family and outside 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 outside 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 family and outside 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 allots 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 presentation going into detail 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.

Portfolio Part III: Adolescent Observation and Analysis

To gain an understanding of the social, emotional, cognitive, and physical development of the adolescent period and their impacts on other groups, you will be observing adolescents via a movie. You will then analyze aspects of their behavior that are indicative of 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 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 family 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.
- How has information furthering our understanding of adolescents and associated developmental characteristics impacted education, retail,

media, and legislation?

Additional instructions, guidelines, protocol sheet, supplemental articles, videos, and requirements are available on D2L/Brightspace.

Portfolio Part IV: Reflection

The reflective piece requires you to critically reflect on Parts I-III of the portfolio. You will synthesize the information you have gathered to demonstrate an understanding of human development and how it impacts individuals and society. You should address connections among the research-based developmental theories, experiences, and environments across the globe in order to demonstrate an understanding of our social and personal responsibility to grasp the differences in global environments—both the positive aspects as well as challenges. 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 it is that makes us human?
- How has an understanding of behaviors associated with developmental stages allowed you to be more understanding, 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 research you conducted supported and furthered the knowledge you have about human behavior and development?
- Why might you feel that it is important to people to understand human development and the associated behaviors?
- How has research you conducted supported and furthered the knowledge you have about issues pertaining 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 and must be submitted as a pdf and uploaded by the date due to D2L/Brightspace. Additional instructions, guidelines, and requirements are available on D2L/Brightspace in the Week 16 folder.

Additional Class Learning Activities

Discussion Questions

We will have several online discussions throughout the class. The discussions will occur throughout the semester in which you will explore and think critically about content

from the readings and textbook. This will allow you to further explore topics more in depth, making connections among theories, supplemental readings, and comments from your peers. Discussion questions are posted on D2L/Brightspace in advance, so you can post your response at any time. Responses are due on Thursday of the week due and are worth 3 points. You must also post two replies in the discussion board by Sunday of the week due for one point each for a total of 5 points.

Activities

The class will feature four formal learning activities worth ten 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 will need to be uploaded to D2L/ Brightspace on the given due date.

Quizzes

There are 10 chapter quizzes throughout the course. They open from the beginning and they close after the respective due date.

Late Work

Assignments are due by 11:59 PM of the date listed on the calendar. Assignments are expected to be turned in by the due date. Any work submitted after the deadline on the calendar will be docked up to 50%. It is your responsibility to keep up with when assignments are due in the syllabus calendar. ***Arrangements must be made at least two days in advance for any exceptions to be given.**

Written Work

All written work should be completed in a professional style. Using correct spelling and grammar are important writing skills you must know well because your students will learn from you. Therefore, all written assignments will have 10% -20% of the grade based on spelling and grammar. Expectations are for quality work.

Desire-to-Learn (D2L)/Brightspace

Extensive use of the MSU D2L program is a part of this course. Each student is expected to be familiar with this program as it provides a primary source of communication regarding assignments, examination materials, and general course information. You can log into D2L through the MSU Homepage. If you experience difficulties, please contact the technicians listed for the program or contact your instructor. All assignments must be submitted to D2L/BRIGHTSPACE for this course and should be in a PDF unless otherwise specified in the assignment guidelines. A minimum of 5% of the total points will be deducted for assignments not submitted through BRIGHTSPACE.

MSU-TEXAS Policies and Procedures:

[Student Handbook:](#)

Academic Misconduct Policy and Procedures

Academic Dishonesty:

Cheating, collusion, and plagiarism (the act of using source material of other persons, either published or unpublished, without following the accepted techniques of crediting, or the submission for credit of work not the individual's to whom credit is given). Additional guidelines on procedures in these matters may be found in the [Office of Student Conduct](#)

Acceptable Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) Tools:

AI is an amazing tool and can be a powerful reference and resource; however, it should be used as a reference/resource only. Passing another person or entity's work off as your own is dishonest and can also prevent you from properly learning the material you should in this course. Therefore, using AI to compose/create your assignments for you will not be tolerated. Assignments in which the professor suspects the majority was composed by AI will receive a zero. If a student receives a zero, the student may resubmit the work, revised in their own writing for half credit. The following are acceptable ways to use AI in this course but a citation must be provided to give credit to the AI program used: providing you an example answer to a question (put answer into your own words), give you a template or provide you a format to follow, assist with wording difficult concepts (then put into your own words for your assignment), researching topics to give you additional information or other viewpoints on a topic, or ideas for lesson activities.

Online Computer Requirements

Taking an online class requires you to have access to a computer (with Internet access) to complete and upload your assignments. It is your responsibility to have (or have access to) a working computer in this class. ****Assignments and tests are due by the due date, and personal computer technical difficulties will not be considered reason for the instructor to allow students extra time to submit assignments, tests, or discussion postings.*** Computers are available on campus in various areas of the buildings as well as the Academic Success Center. ***Computer issues are not an excuse for missing a deadline.** There are many places to access your class! Our online classes may be accessed from any computer, which is connected to the internet. Contact your instructor immediately upon having computer trouble. If you have technical difficulties in the course, there is also a student helpdesk available to you. The college cannot work directly on student computers due to both liability and resource limitations however, they are able to help you be connected to our online services. For help, log into [D2L](#).

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). For specific information and information regarding financial aid policies, contact the MSU business office.

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](#).

Campus Carry Rules/Policies

Senate Bill 11 passed by the 84th Texas Legislature allows licensed handgun holders to carry concealed handguns on campus, effective August 1, 2016. Areas excluded from concealed carry are appropriately marked, in accordance with state law. Refer to: [Campus Carry Rules and Policies](#)

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 [this online reporting link](#).

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 [this link for the university policy](#).

Smoking/Tobacco Policy

College policy strictly prohibits the use of tobacco products in any building owned or operated by MSU. 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.

Grade Appeal Process

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

Instructor Class Policies

Students are expected to assist in maintaining a classroom environment which is conducive to learning. Inappropriate behavior in the D2L online classroom shall result, minimally, in a request to drop the class or the student may receive an instructor drop with an "F" for the course.

An instructor may drop a student any time during the semester for failure to participate, for consistently failing to meet class assignments, for an indifferent attitude, or for disruptive conduct. The instructor must give the student a verbal or written warning prior to dropping the student from the class. An instructor's drop of a student takes precedence

over the student- initiated course drop of a later date. The instructor will assign a grade of either WF or F through the first 8 weeks of a long semester, the first 6 weeks of a 10 week summer term, or the 11th class day of a 4 or 5 week summer term consisting of 20 days. After these periods the grade will be an F. The date the instructor drop form is received in the Office of the Registrar is the official drop date.

Plagiarism

“By enrolling in this course, the student expressly grants MSU a ‘limited right’ in all intellectual property created by the student for the purpose of this course. The ‘limited right’ shall include but shall not be limited to the right to reproduce the student’s work product in order to verify originality, authenticity, and educational purposes.” from [Student Handbook](#) . All assignments submitted in BRIGHTSPACE will also be checked through Turn It In for originality. Assignments with more than 50% match will be given a 0.

Please note: By enrolling in this course, the student expressly grants MSU a “limited right” in all intellectual property created by the student for the purpose of this course. The “limited right” shall include but shall not be limited to the right to reproduce the student’s work product in order to verify originality and authenticity, and for educational purposes.

References:

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

NAEYC (2020). DAP: Principles of Human Development. Retrieved December 31, 2020, from [Principles of Human Development](#)

NAEYC (2020). DAP: Principles of Child Development and Learning and Implications that Inform Practice. Retrieved December 31, 2020, from [Principles of Child Development that Inform Practice](#)

Course Calendar

Week/Module	Topics/Assignments	Due Date for listed assignments. *11:59 PM
1	VARK Survey and Introduction Discussion	1/25
2	Chapter 1 Research Designs	2/1
3	Chapter 2 & 3 Genetic and Environmental Factors Prenatal-Birth Development Quiz 1 Due Portfolio Part I- Protecting the Prenatal Environment Brochure Due	2/8
4	Chapter 4 & 5 Birth and the Newborn Baby Physical Development in Infancy and Toddlerhood Activity 1- Interviewing Parents Due Discussion Question 1- Initial post by Thursday Quiz 2 Due	2/15
5	Chapter 6 Cognitive Development of Infants and Toddlers Quiz 3 Due	2/22
6	Chapter 7 Social and Emotional Development of Infants and Toddlers	3/1
7	Chapter 8 Physical Development Early Childhood Activity 2- Children's Drawings Due Quiz 4 Due	3/8
8	Chapter 9 Cognitive Development Early Childhood Quiz 5 Due	3/22
9	Chapter 10 Social and Emotional Development Early Childhood Discussion Question 2-Initial Post by Thursday Quiz 6 Due Activity 3- Toy Analysis	3/29

Week/Module	Topics/Assignments	Due Date for listed assignments. *11:59 PM
10	Chapter 11 Physical Development Middle Childhood Quiz 7 Due Portfolio Part II – Infancy and Toddlerhood Paper and Presentation Due	4/12
11	Chapter 12 Cognitive Development Middle Childhood Discussion Question 3-Initial Post by Thursday Quiz 8 Due	4/19
12	Chapter 13 Emotional and Social Development in Middle Childhood Quiz 9 Due Activity 4- Middle Childhood Activities Due	4/26
13	Chapter 14 & 15 Cognitive Development Adolescence Physical Development Adolescence	5/3
14	Chapter 16 & 17 Social and Emotional Development in Adolescence Quiz 10 Due Portfolio Part III- Adolescent Observation and Analysis Due	5/3
15	Turn in Portfolio Part IV-Reflection Discussion Question 4	5/5 This is a Tuesday

Not every week is there an assignment due. Assignments are due by 11:59 PM on the date stated in the calendar.

Notice:

Changes in the course syllabus, procedure, assignments, and schedule may be made at the discretion of the instructor. This calendar and syllabus are subject to change due to unforeseen circumstances. In the event that an update must occur, the newest version will be posted on D2L in the Read Me First tab and a News item will notify students.

Note: Ideas and opinions expressed in course materials are those of the respective authors and do not imply endorsement by the professor or university.

Appendix A

Inclement Weather: In the event that the university is closed for a short time due to inclement weather, course work that is posted in the course calendar is still due unless a notification is posted in D2L on the News page stating otherwise. In most cases courses will not be offered digitally synchronously unless the closing extends beyond a brief period and is otherwise noted on the D2L News page. Students enrolled in courses with observations, internships, and field work, will be handled on a case by case basis.