PSYC 430

COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT

SPRING 2007

**Instructor                                                                                            Teaching Assistant**

Dr. Andrea Greenhoot                                                                           Sarah Bunnell

529A Fraser                                                                                          529 Fraser

864-9842                                                                                               864-9811

# GENERAL COURSE INFORMATION

**Class Meetings**

Tuesday and Thursday, 9:30-10:45 AM, 100 Smith

**Course Description**

PSYC 430 is a survey course on the mental changes that take place from birth through adolescence.  The course covers the development of vision and other perceptual abilities, attention, memory, language, problem solving and reasoning, and social cognition, or thinking about social phenomena.

**Course Objectives**

The main goals of this course are (1) to promote your understanding of the development of basic cognitive abilities during infancy, childhood, and adolescence; (2) to introduce you to the use of research methods in studying cognitive development; (3) to teach you how to apply newly learned concepts to novel and meaningful settings; and (4) to foster the development of skills that will facilitate further learning and reasoning, including library skills, critical thinking, argument development, and verbal and written expression.

**Office hours**

We will be available for questions about course material and assignments for a total of 5 hours weekly, at the following times:

Day                              Time                             Who                                         Where

Monday                        2:00-4:00                       Andrea Greenhoot                     529A Fraser

Wednesday                   2:00-4:00                       Sarah Bunnell                            529 Fraser

Thursday                      11:00-12:00                   Andrea Greenhoot                     529A Fraser

We are also available to meet with students individually by appointment.  Sarah Bunnell may be reached by telephone at 864-9811, or by email at *sbunnell@ku.edu*.  Dr. Greenhoot may be contacted by telephone at 864-9842 or by email at *agreenhoot@ku.edu*.  If you call any of us, you may have to leave a voice-mail message.  You may also leave a message with a receptionist during working hours, at 864-4131.  *Please do not call us at home.*

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

**Textbook**

       Bjorklund, D.F. (2005).  *Children’s thinking: Cognitive development and individual differences*.  (4th edition).  Belmont, CA:  Wadsworth.

**Blackboard**

Announcements, study guides, handouts, assignments and grades will all be posted on a blackboard site for this course. Please check blackboard regularly for important announcements and so on. We will also post pared-down versions of the slides used in class at least 24 hours in advance of each class meeting. We encourage students to print these slides (they will be posted in note format with 3 slides per page) and to take in-class notes on the printed versions. Please note that the slides posted on blackboard will not contain all of the information presented in class, therefore it would be unwise to rely solely on these slides.

**Examinations**

There will be two midterms and a final examination, each consisting of multiple-choice, short-answer and essay-type “extended” questions.  To give you a feel for the kinds of questions that will be asked, you will be given some sample questions prior to the first test.  The midterms will be non-cumulative.  Part of the final will cover the last section of the course, whereas the other part will cover material from the entire semester.

The examination dates have been scheduled well in advance so that students will be able to adjust time and work schedules to avoid any time conflicts. We expect everyone will take the examinations as they are scheduled. However, in the event that a midterm is not taken, medical or other serious reasons for missing the exam should be presented in advance of the absence.  The exam can then be made up by taking a makeup on the last regularly-scheduled class meeting period (May 10). Those students not needing to take a makeup on this date do not have to come to class. If a student misses a midterm, and then also misses the makeup, the grade will be determined from whatever points the student earns on the other assignments and exams, out of 470 points.

**Term Project**

You will be required to complete a term project that involves using current research in cognitive development to write an “advice column” providing practical recommendations to parents or educators who deal with children or adolescents. You will be provided several hypothetical questions on topics related to cognitive development sent in by readers of a magazine about children (e.g., *Should I enroll my toddler in a Spanish class for infants and toddlers?*).  The project has been divided into several steps to be carried out over the course of the semester, including (1) the identification and submission of two scientific journal articles relevant to evaluating your chosen questions to supplement one identified by Dr. Greenhoot (20 pts), (2) writing and submitting summaries of each article and participating in an in class discussion of those summaries (30 pts), and (3) writing a 4-5 page paper reviewing the research presented in the three journal articles, and making practical recommendations based on the research (80 pts). This project will be discussed in more detail during the first two weeks of class.

**Application Essays**

You will also be required to complete two essays (1-2 pages typed and double-spaced) related to the reading (10 points each). These simple assignments are designed to give you some practice applying psychological research to “the real world,” and writing about it, while reinforcing important concepts from the reading. A **hard copy** of each assignment should be submitted in class the day it is due. *Please do not email your assignment to us, or leave it on or under one of our office doors.* Late assignments will not be accepted. The following should give you some idea of our grading criteria:

·         **9-10 points**:  The paper is insightful and addresses the assignment in a way that indicates comprehension of the assignment itself and the underlying issues. The message is communicated clearly*,* concisely*,* anddirectly and is generally well-written*.*

·         **7-8 points**: The paper meetsthe basic requirements of the assignment, and the message is reasonably clear.  However, the paper does not offer much insight into the greater issues of the assignment and/OR there is unevenness in the writing.

·         **6 points or below**:  The basic requirements of the assignment are only partially met.  There is considerable unevenness in the writing and the message is not communicated clearly, OR the assignment does not follow instructions or is incomplete.

**Participation**

To enhance class meetings we will frequently prepare “participation” assignments to be carried out in class. Participation assignments are designed to teach you a particular skill and will also form the basis of class discussions. In addition, as a way of rewarding students who attend class regularly, we will occasionally collect the work you complete on these assignments, and at the end of the semester we will use this information to add up to 10 points extra credit to your grade. We will calculate extra credit scores in the following way: completion of 80% or more of these assignments=10 pts; 60-79% = 7 pts, and 50-69%=5 pts. If you complete less than half of these assignments (and therefore presumably have attended less than half the class meetings) you will receive no extra credit.

**COURSE POLICIES**

**Deadlines**

Deadlines for the written assignments are firm. For the term project and application essays, the grades will be reduced by one letter grade for each business day the assignment is late.

**Grades**

Each of the above assignments contributes the following towards your final grade:

            Assignment                                           Point Value       Due date

            Midterm #1                                             90                   T: February 20

Midterm #2                                           100                   T: April 5

Term Project

Part I: Article Selection                20                   T: February 13

Part II: Article Summaries           30                   TH: March 15

Part III: Paper                             80                   TH: April 26

Application Essays                                  20                   TH: Feb. 8 and TH: March 1

            Final Exam                                            130                   W: May 16

                                                                        470 = Total

There will be *no* curve applied to final grades in the course. The grading scale is as follows:

Percent of Total Points Accumulated                              Letter Grade

423 points or more                                                         A

376-422 points                                                               B

329-375 points                                                               C

282-328 points                                                               D

Below 282 points                                                           F

You may keep track of your grades on Blackboard, where we will post your grade on each assignment throughout the semester.  The TA, Sarah Bunnell, does almost all of the grading for this course. Therefore, if you have questions about your grades, please contact her before contacting Dr. Greenhoot. Given that this is a large course, it is possible that we will occasionally make clerical errors in entering the grades.  It is your responsibility to ensure that you have gotten the appropriate amount of credit for each assignment you complete. *Final grades in this course will not be curved and should be considered firm; the ONLY situation in which we will change a final grade is when we have made a clerical error.*

**Attendance**

Attendance is strongly recommended, as a great deal of the material discussed in lectures will not be presented in the textbook.  It may be difficult, therefore, for students to do well on assignments and examinations if classes are regularly missed.  In addition, attending class will provide students with opportunities to earn extra credit.

**Assignment of Incomplete ("I") Grades**

If a student has been absent from class for an extended period of time (due to illness or some other extreme circumstance) a grade of Incomplete ("I") may be assigned, if it is requested prior to the end of classes.  We will not assign a grade of “I” to replace an undesirable grade.

**Withdrawing from the Course**

Under extreme and unusual circumstances, a student may withdraw from the class during the last third of the semester.  Students who wish to do so must obtain a permission slip from the instructor that states that the student is either withdrawing while passing (a grade of “W”) or withdrawing while failing (a grade of “F”).  It is up to the instructor to decide whether a student is assigned a “W” or an “F”.  For this course, if a student’s average grade on assignments due prior to the time of withdrawal is less than 60%, s/he will be assigned an “F”; if the student’s average is 60% or higher s/he will receive a “W”.

**Students with Disabilities or Special Needs**

Students who have special needs as documented by KU's Services for Students with Disabilities  ("KUSSD") may require special accommodations to meet course requirements.  Sometimes we can provide these accommodations ourselves (e.g., alternate testing venues).  Other times, it may require collaboration with personnel from the KUSSD (e.g., readers, note-takers, etc.).  In either case, we are happy to comply with requests for the types of accommodations that are indicated as appropriate by the KUSSD, given that the request is made in advance of the due date for meeting the course requirement.

**Academic Misconduct**

The following information about Academic Misconduct is discussed in Article II, Section 6 of the rules and regulations of the University Senate.  Students should see the section on "Student Rights and Responsibilities," in the Timetable.  “Academic misconduct occurs when either (a) work is not represented truthfully as to its source or accuracy, or (b) academic results are not obtained by fair and authorized means.  Examples of academic misconduct include (but are not necessarily limited to):

Cheating.  Giving, using, or attempting to use unauthorized materials, information, notes, study aids, or other devices in any academic exercise, including unauthorized communication of information.

Fabrication and Falsification.  Unauthorized alteration or invention of any information or citation in an academic exercise.

Plagiarism.  Knowingly presenting the work of another as one's own (i.e., without proper acknowledgment of the source).

Facilitating Academic Misconduct.  Giving or attempting to help another commit an act of academic misconduct.

Tampering with Materials, Grades, or Records.  Interfering with, altering, or attempting to alter university records, grades, or other documents without authorization from an appropriate university official for the purpose of changing, falsifying, or removing the original information found in such records.

An instructor may, with due notice to the student, treat as unsatisfactory any student work which is a product of academic misconduct.  Cases of academic misconduct may result in any or all of the following penalties: reduction of grade, admonition, warning, censure, suspension, or expulsion.

**TENTATIVE COURSE OUTLINE**

| **CLASS** | **DAY** | **TOPIC COVERED** | **READING/ASSIGNMENT** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 1 | T: January 23 | Introduction. Basic themes and issues. |  |
| 2 | TH: January 25 | Research methods  Overview of Term Project | Text:  Chapter 1 |
| 3 | T: January 30 | Literature Search Lab/  Biological Bases I:  Are some abilities innate? | Text:  Chapter 2 |
| 4 | TH: February 1 | Literature Search Lab/  Biological Bases I: Are some abilities innate? | Text:  Chapter 2 |
| 5 | T: February 6 | Biological Bases II: Brain Development | Text: Chapter 2 |
| 6 | TH: February 8 | Piaget’s Theory | Text Chapter 4 (to p.107)  Essay 1 Due |
| 7 | T: February 13 | Evaluation of Piaget’s Theory. | Articles/Paragraph Due |
| 8 | TH: February 15 | Sociocultural Theories | Text: Chapter 3 |
| 9 | T: February 20 | Midterm 1 | Chapters 1 through 4 |
| 10 | TH: February 22 | Information Processing Theories | Text: Chapter 5 |
| 11 | T: February 29 | Information processing Theories and Strategies | Text: Chapter 6 |
| 12 | TH: March 1 | Infant Perception | Text: Chapter 7  Essay 2 Due |
| 13 | T: March 6 | Spatial Cognition  Reading Journal Articles | Text: Chapter 8 |
| 14 | TH: March 8 | Representation in Infancy | Text Chapter 9 |
| 15 | T: March 13 | Representation in Childhood |  |
| 16 | TH: March 15 | Term Project: In class discussion of articles | Article summaries due |
| 17 | T: March 20 and Th: March 22 | SPRING BREAK NO CLASS |  |
| 18 | T: March 27 | Memory Development | Text:  Chapter 10 |
| 19 | TH: March 29 | No Class, but there may be an “online” activity TBA; Use time to work on rough draft of paper/study for midterm |  |
| 20 | T: April 3 | Memory Development |  |
| 21 | TH: April 5 | Midterm 2 |  |
| 22 | T: April 10 | Language Development | Text: Chapter 11 |
| 23 | TH: April 12 | Language Development | Optional rough draft due |
| 24 | T: April 17 | Problem Solving | Text:  Chapter 12 |
| 25 | TH: April 19 | Social Cognition | Text: Chapter 13  Rough drafts returned |
| 26 | T: April 24 | Schooling and Cognition | Text: Chapter 14 |
| 27 | TH: April 26 | Intelligence: Theories and Measurement | Text Chapter 15  Final Paper Due |
| 28 | T: May 1 | Intelligence: Theories and Measurement |  |
| 29 | TH: May 3 | Factors that Influence Intelligence | Text: Chapter 16 |
| 30 | T: May 8 | Factors that Influence Intelligence; Course Synthesis | Text: Epilogue |
| 31 | TH: May 10 | Make-up exams |  |