

PS 3368.01: Infancy

Spring, 2017

How do babies perceive the world? What do they understand about people and objects? What draws them to other people? How do they achieve the beginnings of symbolic thought and language? What about these early skills are distinctively human? How can we measure infants' understanding of the world around them?

Instructor Information

Class Schedule: Tuesday/Thursday from 1:30pm – 2:45pm
Instructor: Sophie Savelkous
Email: savelkou@bc.edu
Office: McGuinn 346
Office Hours: Thursday from 3:00pm – 4:00pm, or by appointment

Course Description

In this course we will discuss the ways in which infants perceive the world in the first few years of life. We will review past and current research, providing an understanding of the interactive role of nature and nurture on this very important period in human development. This course will cover infant development, throughout prenatal development, childbirth and neonatal development up to about age 3, exploring changes in biological, cognitive, social, and emotional domains.

Course Aim

My aim is for students to walk away from this course not only knowing more about the procedures involved in conducting infant research but aware of the ways in which infant research informs us about human development more generally. I am looking to provide an intellectually stimulating but comfortable space in which the class can discuss the significance and implications of findings in infant research.

Specific Course Objectives

By this end of this course, students will:

1. Have learned about multiple different methods of infant testing and have gotten some hands-on experience analyzing infant data
2. Have an in-depth understanding of a specific area of infant development that is of interest to the student
3. Be able to think critically about research and pick up on the strengths and weaknesses of an empirical paper.

Course Format

Each Tuesday class will be devoted to a lecture on the topic of that week, with each Thursday devoted to class discussion on the assigned articles. As such, it is expected that you will read all assigned readings prior to the Thursday class and come to class prepared to discuss the articles.

Course Etiquette

Since a large part of our class time will be spent having class discussions, ALL students are encouraged to speak up and participate during our class meetings. Because the class will represent

a diversity of individual beliefs, backgrounds, and experiences, every member of this class must show respect for every other member of this class.

Class Inclusivity and Equality Statement

I am firmly committed to diversity and equality in all areas of campus life, including specifically members of the LGBTQ community. In this class I will work to promote an anti-discriminatory environment where everyone feels safe and welcome. I recognize that discrimination can be direct or indirect and take place at both institutional and personal levels. I believe that such discrimination is unacceptable and I am committed to providing equality of opportunity for all by eliminating any and all discrimination, harassment, bullying, or victimization. The success of this policy relies on the support and understanding of everyone in this class. We all have a responsibility not to be offensive to each other, or to participate in, or condone harassment or discrimination of any kind.

Course Requirements

Mandatory Office Meeting

In order to find out about your individual learning goals and your specific interests in psychology, I will meet with each of you individually for 15 minutes in my office during the first two weeks of the semester. You can sign up for a meeting time by logging into Canvas, clicking on the "Calendar", and then clicking on the "Scheduler".

Class Attendance and Participation in Discussion (20% of grade):

You are expected to do all the readings ahead of time and actively participate and contribute to class discussions. This class is heavily oriented toward discussion, so your participation is vital for its success. Attendance is mandatory. If there is a reason why you cannot attend, please email me in advance and ask for an excused absence (e.g., in the case of illness). Non-excused absences will lower your grade.

Weekly Discussion Questions (20% of grade)

For each class in which there are assigned readings, you will be asked to post two discussion questions on Canvas. Make these interesting discussion questions that you would like to talk about in class – I will use them to guide our in-class discussions. Please post these discussion questions by 5pm on the Wednesday before class. Late posts will not be accepted, but you do get one "free pass".

Group Presentation – Presenting a new study (30% of grade)

Each group will be given a different set of infant data that you will be asked to analyze and perform various statistical tests on. I will also give each group 2 empirical papers to give you some background information relevant to the particular data set that you are given. You will then present this as a study to the class. You should include an introduction to the topic, citing the two empirical papers that you are given and explaining the research question that your data is looking to answer. Your methods should describe a bit about the study (# of subjects, approximate ages, what the stimuli looked like, details of the number of trials, etc.). However, your primary focus should be the results section where you will summarize some simple analyses of the data – we will go through how to run and report these analyses in class. Lastly, the discussion section will summarize the main findings of the experiment, mention potential limitations, and discuss future directions for research.

Literature Review (30% of grade) – Due May 12th

Write an 8-10 page literature review on a topic pertinent to infancy. Your review should summarize the literature (a minimum of 6 empirical, peer-reviewed references) This topic may or may not be related to one of the issues covered in class, however you must only cite studies that were *not* discussed in class. Feel free to schedule a meeting with me for feedback on ideas or drafts.

The format of the paper should be double-spaced, 12-point font, with one-inch margins, and pages numbered at the top right of each page. Papers should be stapled. Papers must conform to APA format (as described in the APA Publication Manual). For information on APA format, see this useful website:

http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/research/r_apa.html

NOTE: Extensions on papers will not be granted lightly, and will be reserved for serious, documented problems and must be requested BEFORE the due date. Grades will be lowered for papers handed in late if no extension has been previously granted.

Course Readings

Course readings will be available on Canvas.

Grading

Semester grades will be calculated as follows:

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|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|---------|
| A+ 96.67-100 | B+ 86.67-89.99 | C+ 76.67-79.99 | D+ 66.67-69.99 | F <60.0 |
| A 93.34-96.66 | B 83.34-86.66 | C 73.34-76.66 | D 63.34-66.66 | |
| A- 90.00-93.33 | B- 80.00-83.33 | C- 70.00-73.33 | D- 60.00-63.33 | |

Academic Integrity

All students are asked to review Boston College's policy on academic integrity at

<http://www.bc.edu/offices/stserv/academic/resources/policy.html#integrity>

Academic dishonesty can take a variety of forms: copying another student's answers on a test, bringing material to an exam, copying another student's paper or a paper off the internet, copying from someone else's work without using quotations and without referencing the source, or paraphrasing from someone else's work without referencing. If a student is suspected of academic dishonesty, the matter must be turned over to the University Academic Integrity Committee and the student will receive an F in this course. Other more serious penalties may be imposed by the Academic Integrity Committee, such as suspension or expulsion. So please remember, it is never worth it! Sometimes students tell me that they do not know what constitutes plagiarism. All students should go to <http://www.indiana.edu/~wts/pamphlets/plagiarism.shtml> and read this site carefully. Clear examples are provided about the difference between using a secondary source correctly and plagiarizing from it. Students should also take the academic integrity quiz on the Political Science Department website

(<http://www.bc.edu/schools/cas/polisci/integrity/quiz.html>).

Accommodations

If you are a student with a documented disability seeking reasonable accommodations in this course, please contact Kathy Duggan, (617) 552-8093, dugganka@bc.edu, at the Connors Family Learning Center regarding learning disabilities and ADHD, or Paulette Durrett, (617) 552-3470, paulette.durrett@bc.edu, in the Disability Services Office regarding all other types of disabilities, including temporary disabilities. Advance notice and appropriate documentation are required for accommodations.

Course Schedule

January 17 and 19th: Introduction; History, Themes, and Methods

January 24th and 26th: Prenatal Development

Auyeung, B., Baron-Cohen, S., Ashwin, E., Knickmeyer, R., Taylor, K., Hackett, G., & Hines, M. (2009). Fetal testosterone predicts sexually differentiated childhood behavior in girls and in boys. *Psychological Science*, 20(2), 144-148.

Sandman, C. A., Davis, E. P., & Glynn, L. M. (2012). Prescient human fetuses thrive. *Psychological Science*, 23(1), 93-100.

January 31st and February 2nd: Motor Development

Kretch, K. S. and Adolph, K. E. (2013), Cliff or Step? Posture-Specific Learning at the Edge of a Drop-Off. *Child Development*, 84: 226-240. doi:10.1111/j.1467-8624.2012.01842.x

Somerville, J. A., Woodward, A. L., & Needham, A. (2005). Action experience alters 3-month-old infants' perception of others' actions. *Cognition*, 96(1), B1-11.

February 7th and 9th: Attention

Cuevas, K. & Bell, M.A. (2013). Infant attention and early childhood executive function. *Child Development*, 85(2), 397-404.

Jankowski, J.J., Rose, S.A., & Feldman, J.F. (2001). Modifying the distribution of attention in infants. *Child Development*, 72, 339-351.

February 14th and 16th: Causal Reasoning

Gweon, H. & Schulz, L. (2011). 16-month olds rationally infer causes of failed actions. *Science*, 332, 1524.

Dewar & Xu (2010). Induction, overhypothesis, and the origin of abstract knowledge: Evidence from 9-month old infants. *Psychological Science*, 1-7.

February 21st and 23rd: Memory

Yoon, J. M. D., Johnson, M. H., & Csibra G. (2009). Communication-induced memory biases in preverbal infants. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 105(36), 13690-95.

Kibbe, M. M. & Leslie, A. M. (2011). What do infants remember when they forget? Location and identity in 6-month olds' memory for objects. *Psychological Science*, 22(12), 1500-1505.

February 28th and March 2nd: Language

Arunachalam, S. & Waxman, S. R. (2010). Meaning from syntax: Evidence from 2-year-olds. *Cognition*, 114, 442-446.

Saffran, J. R., Aslin, R. N., & Newport, E. L. (1996). Statistical learning by 8-month old infants. *Science*, 274, 1926-28.

March 6th and 8th: NO CLASS – SPRING BREAK ☺

March 14th and 16th: Numerical Cognition

Starr, Libertus, Brannon (2013). Number sense in infancy predicts mathematical abilities in childhood. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 110, 18116-18120.

de Hevia, M. D., & Spelke, E. S. (2010). Number-space mapping in human infants. *Psychological Science*, 1-8.

March 21st and 23rd: Categorization

Fulkerson, A. L., & Waxman, S. R. (2007). Words (but not tones) facilitate object categorization: Evidence from 6- and 12-month-olds. *Cognition*, 105(1), 218-228.

Sloutsky, V. M., Kloos, H., & Fisher, A. V. (2007). When looks are everything Appearance similarity versus kind information in early induction. *Psychological Science*, 18(2), 179-185.

March 28th and 30th: Imitation

Gergely, G., Bekkering, H., & Király, I. (2002). Developmental psychology: Rational imitation in preverbal infants. *Nature*, 415(6873), 755-755.

Powell, L. J., & Spelke, E. S. (2013). Preverbal infants expect members of social groups to act alike. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America*, 110(41), E3965–E3972. <http://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.1304326110>

April 4th: Infant Data Analysis Workshop

April 6th: NO CLASS

April 11th: Child Care

NICHD Early Child Care Research Network. (1996). Characteristics of Infant Child Care: Factors Contributing to Positive Caregiving. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, 11(3), 269-306.

Erel, O., Oberman, Y., & Yirmiya, N. (2000). Maternal versus nonmaternal care and seven domains of children's development. *Psychological Bulletin*, 126(5), 727.

April 13th: NO CLASS – Easter Break

April 18th and 20th: Class Presentations

April 25th and 27th: Social Cognition

Mahajan, N. & Wynn, K. (2012). Origins of “us” versus “them”: Prelinguistic infants prefer similar others. *Cognition*, 124, 227-233.

Shutts, K., Banaji, M. R., & Spelke, E. S. (2010). Social categories guide young children’s preferences for novel objects. *Developmental Science*, 13(4), 599-610.

May 4th and May 6th: Infant Morality

Hamlin et al. (2011). How infants and toddlers react to antisocial others. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Science*, 108, 19931-19936.

Sloane, S., Baillargeon, R., & Premack, D. (2012). Do infants have a sense of fairness? *Psychological Science*, 23(2), 196-204.