

BCS 172-1
DEVELOPMENT OF MIND AND BRAIN
Spring Semester 2026, 4 Credit Hours
University of Rochester

Tuesdays & Thursdays 3:25 – 4:40 PM
Morey Hall 321

Instructor: Daniel W. Mruzek, PhD

Office: Meliora Hall Room 323

Email: dmruzek@ur.rochester.edu

Office Hours: 1:00 PM – 2:00 PM on Thursdays and by appointment

Graduate Instructor: Chen Li

Office: Brain and Cognitive Sciences suite, 3rd floor Meliora, adjacent to kitchenette

Email: cli89@UR.Rochester.edu

Office Hours: 4:00 PM – 5:00 PM on Wednesdays and by appointment

Graduate Teaching Associate: Yumeng Luo

Office: Brain and Cognitive Sciences suite, 3rd floor Meliora, adjacent to kitchenette

Email: [y whole name@UR.Rochester.edu](mailto:yluo41@UR.Rochester.edu)

Office Hours:

Graduate Teaching Associate: Adam Kissai

Office: Brain and Cognitive Sciences suite, 3rd floor Meliora, adjacent to kitchenette

Email: akissai@UR.Rochester.edu

Office Hours:

Undergraduate Teaching Assistant: Ziqi Gao

Email: zgao19@u.rochester.edu

Required Textbook

Galotti, K. M. (2017). *Cognitive development: Infancy through adolescence 2nd Edition*.
SAGE.

I recommend that you purchase the e-book version.

Recommended if you plan to publish psychological research

American Psychological Association. (2020). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association* (7th ed.). Mayfield Publishing Company. ISBN 978-1433832161

Additional readings will be added over the course of the semester. These will be posted on Blackboard.

Library Research Help

The research guide for Psychology may be useful and can be accessed at <https://libguides.lib.rochester.edu/psyc>

If you need assistance with research for this course or assignments, River Campus Librarians may be able to assist.

For help accessing library resources off-campus, see <https://www.library.rochester.edu/services/campus-access-vpn>. You can also ask for help at the Q&A Desk in any of our campus libraries or chat with a librarian online via the “Online Chat” link on the library website (<http://www.library.rochester.edu>).

Purdue University maintains an excellent resource for writing in general and formal writing in psychology more specifically. You may find it here:

https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/apa_style/apa_style_introduction.html

Course Content

In this course we will focus on human development with a special focus on cognition, including perception, reasoning, attention, memory, and language acquisition. Our work together will include investigation of the neural basis for cognition and those factors, environmental and genetic, that impact neural development. A special emphasis will be placed on appreciating developmental differences (e.g., intellectual and developmental disabilities), as well as applications of cognitive science in everyday life. Along the way, we will practice the discipline of scientific inquiry, including maintenance of scientific skepticism in considering content presented by others (e.g., peer reviewed journals, popular media) and analysis of data.

General Goals and Expectations

Through your participation in this course, you can expect to learn a tremendous amount regarding the cognitive development of humans. Human cognitive development is a fascinating, exciting topic!

Our goal is that, by the end of this course, you acquire knowledge about cognitive development that is valuable both professionally and personally. To achieve this goal, we expect you to come to class prepared to discuss, critique, and analyze material presented in class and in our reading assignments. The topics subsumed under the heading of “cognitive development”, like many topics of scholarly inquiry, are often fertile grounds for debate and, quite possibly, disagreement. Our ground rule for those times that we are engaged in class discussion is that we all respect each other and each other’s point of view. We hope that we can all make every effort to listen to each other’s comments courteously without interrupting, and to respond to each other in a mature and thoughtful manner. This will help us all get the most out of the course.

Finally, we expect each of you to make every effort throughout the course to communicate your needs, concerns, and any other feedback to us. Most importantly, we

need to know if you have special needs or circumstances that are impacting your performance or completion of work for the course. We are willing to be flexible and accommodating of special circumstances but can only reasonably do so if you keep us informed about what it is that you need.

Laptop/Electronic Devices Policy: We understand that many scholars prefer to take notes on their laptops during class. However, we have found that laptop use can be distracting both for the individual and for other class members. Laptop use often takes away from active participation in class – especially with respect to class discussions. For this reason, we ask that you limit your use of laptops and other electronic devices to class content during class time. If we find that members of the class are using their laptops or other electronic devices inappropriately (e.g., social media), we will restrict the use of those devices altogether.

Access to the Professor's Slides and Other Materials: Our responsibility is to promote scholarship and active learning. To that end, slides and other materials used by the faculty during class are generally not available to the students. Rather, we encourage students to (a) regularly attend; (b) study with classmates who can collaborate on maintaining thorough and complete notes; and (c) read the text carefully, especially when one misses class due to illness or other reasons.

What you can expect of us:

We are committed to making this course not only an educational experience, but a fun and positive experience as well. We really enjoy the topics discussed in this class, and we want to share that enjoyment with you! To that end, just as we expect for each of you to make efforts over the course of the term to communicate your needs and concerns to us, we will endeavor to give you regular feedback and make ourselves available to you. In addition to the time that we spend together in class, we will do our best to make ourselves available to you for help and consultation outside of class time, and we hope you will avail yourself of our office hours.

We will make great use of the Blackboard website throughout the semester (e.g., class announcements, additional reading, and other assignments). Please check Blackboard frequently for updates, announcements, and course information.

Course Requirements and Assignments

- 1. Discussion Posts. (10% of your grade).** We will have five opportunities for you to respond to a question that we pose about some aspect of cognitive development. You can anticipate that each of these questions will require (a) an opinion regarding a particular topic; and (b) a grounding of your opinion in course content (e.g., reading of text) or other, brief scholarly research. We will discuss responses to each question in class through an aggregate analysis of each response. Late submissions will not be accepted for grading.

- 2. Exams (75% of your grade).** We will have two noncumulative exams and one final, comprehensive exam, with each exam constituting 25% of your grade. Each exam will cover content presented in class, as well as in our Galotti text. Format will vary, but each exam will most probably contain opportunity to provide short, written answers (i.e., brief essays).
- 3. Cognitive Development Investigation (15% of your grade).** You will have the opportunity to investigate a specific topic related to cognitive development and write a brief reflection of your findings. If class time is available, you may have the opportunity to briefly present your findings to the class for extra credit. A separate handout will describe this assignment in detail.
- 4. Extra Credit.** Opportunities for extra credit toward your final grade may be available throughout the semester. We will discuss these opportunities in class.

Overall Grading Scale

A =	93 – 100%
A- =	90 – 92%
B+ =	87 – 89%
B =	83 – 86%
B- =	80 – 82%
C+ =	77 – 79%
C =	73 – 76%
C- =	70 – 72%
D =	60 – 69%
F =	<60%

COURSE SCHEDULE

Date	Topic	Reading / Assignment Due (Galotti Text)
1/20/26	Introduction to the Class Class Assignments/Requirements Class Discussion	
1/22/26	Cognitive Development – Overview and Conceptualization	Chapter 1
1/27/26	Major Theories of Cognitive Development	Chapter 2
1/29/26	Major Theories Continued	
1/30/26	Discussion Post One Due	

2/3/26	Research Methods for Studying Cognitive Development	Chapter 3
2/5/26	Prenatal, Perinatal, and Infant Development, including teratogens, nutrition, and contact	
2/10/26	Infant Development Continued (e.g., developmental delay and early enrichment)	Chapter 4
2/12/26	Infant Development Continued	Chapter 5
2/13/26	Discussion Post Two Due	
2/17/26	Infant Development Continued	
2/19/26	EXAM ONE	
2/24/26	Language Development	Chapter 6
2/26/26	Language Development Continued (e.g., assessment, evaluation, and communication intervention)	
3/3/26	Early Childhood	Chapter 7
3/5/26	Early Childhood - Continued	
3/6/26	Discussion Post Three Due	
3/10 & 3/12/2025	SPRING BREAK BEGINS	Have fun and be safe!
3/17/26	The Behaviorist's Perspective	Chapter 8
3/19/26	Early Childhood Continued (including impact of trauma and neglect)	
3/24/26	Middle Childhood (including executive functioning [and dysfunction])	Chapter 9
3/26/26	Middle Childhood (including social media, bullying, and gaming)	
3/27/26	Discussion Post Four Due	
3/31/26	Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities	Supplemental Reading

4/2/26	Middle Childhood Continued (including learning disabilities and differences)	Chapter 10
4/3/26	Cognitive Development Investigation Due by 5 PM EST	
4/7/26	Adolescence	Chapter 11
4/9/26	Adolescence Continued (including traumatic brain injury, sleep, media)	
4/10/26	Discussion Post Five Due	
4/14/26	EXAM TWO	
4/16/26	Young Adulthood (including strategies for university and career success)	Supplemental Reading
4/21/26	Cognition and Growing Older (including dementia and adult-onset disorders)	Supplemental Reading
4/23/26	Autism Spectrum Disorder and Cognitive Functioning	Supplemental Reading
4/28/26	Individual Differences in Cognition	Chapter 12
4/30/26	Final Summation and Review	
5/08/26 8:30 AM	FINAL EXAM	

Ethics of being a Student in the Departments of BCS and Psychology

The members of the faculty of the Department of Psychology and the Department of Brain and Cognitive Sciences at the University of Rochester uphold the highest ethical standards of teaching and research. They expect their students to uphold the same standards of ethical conduct. By registering for this course, you are implicitly agreeing to conduct yourself with the utmost integrity throughout the semester.

In both departments, acts of academic misconduct are taken very seriously. Such acts diminish the educational experience for all involved – students who commit the acts, classmates who would never consider engaging in such behaviors, and instructors. Academic misconduct includes, but is not limited to, cheating on assignments and exams, stealing exams, sabotaging the work of classmates, submitting fraudulent data, plagiarizing the work of classmates or published and/or online sources (e.g., ChatGPT), acquiring previously written papers and submitting them (altered or unaltered) for course assignments, collaborating with classmates when such collaboration is not authorized, and assisting fellow students in acts of misconduct. Students who have knowledge that classmates have engaged in academic misconduct should report this to the instructor.

Accommodations Policy

The University of Rochester supports the right of all enrolled students to a full and equal educational opportunity. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) require that students with disabilities be reasonably accommodated in instruction and campus life. Reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities is a shared faculty and student responsibility. Students are expected to inform faculty [me] of their need for instructional accommodations by the end of the first week of the semester, or as soon as possible after a disability has been incurred or recognized. Disability information, including instructional accommodations, as part of a student's educational record is confidential and protected under FERPA.