

Lifespan Development in the Human Environment

HDF 211-02

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Course Description/Goals

HDF 211 covers most aspects of human development, from conception to old age. You will not be expected to learn about every aspect, however, but rather to learn what a developmental approach entails. Over the course of an individual's life huge changes take place in that individual's physical appearance, thinking, and relationships with others. Nonetheless, that individual also experiences continuity—in some important senses she is still the same person at 50 as she was at age 10. Continuity and change are key factors in human development.

Among the sort of questions that we shall address are the following:

- Why is it that some children are born into families that seem so disorganized and chaotic, or who early in life have health problems or who seem to have learning difficulties while other children show no such problems? What are the consequences over time of these different experiences?
- Why is it that two children, apparently so similar, can go to the same school, and one be perfectly happy while the other one has a difficult time? What are the likely consequences for these two children? Are they destined for quite different futures, or can other events and other relationships turn things around?
- As some people grow up, they are faced by major societal problems (such as a major war, or the Great Depression) or by broad social changes (the Civil Rights movement, or the women's movement), whereas others grow up during periods of relative calm, or at a time in which the economy is shrinking, gas prices are rising, and so on. What are the consequences for the people themselves, and for their children?
- What are the effects of stresses of a more individual or family-oriented nature? For example, what are the short- and long-term results of being a "difficult" child and adolescent, and how do these results differ because of the type of environment in which people are situated?
- What is the impact of divorce—on the divorcing couple themselves, and on their children? Are these effects different for younger children than for adolescents, and do they have long-term consequences?
- What happens to family relationships as people age, and how do individual, interpersonal, and socio-cultural aspects of life enhance or detract from the aging process?

These are the types of issues that we shall be dealing with in this class, and you should leave the class with a good understanding of factors that influence stability and change, continuity and disruption, trajectories and pathways of development—how they get started and how they change.

As well as understanding what a developmental perspective looks like, this course will provide a solid introduction to the work of some theorists, focusing on those whose theories are clearly developmental and relevant across the lifespan. Above all, we shall stress the fact that development cannot be understood without examining the interrelations between **individual** (biology, temperament, etc.), **interpersonal** (family, friends, etc.), and **cultural-historical** factors (when and where the person is developing).

Blackboard

The url is: <https://blackboard.uncg.edu>. Blackboard currently works best with Firefox as your browser (it's very slow with Internet Explorer). If you don't have Firefox, it's a free download at: <http://www.mozilla.com/en-US/> (just click "download"). (If you get onto the net from AOL or some other ISP, minimize its browser and open Firefox.)

Texts/Readings

- Werner, E. E., & Smith, R. S. (2001). *Journeys from childhood to midlife: Risk, resilience, and recovery*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
- Electronic reserve readings, listed in the calendar.

The text is available at the bookstore and the papers will be available on Blackboard in Course Documents.

The class will also make some use of film, including documentaries (for the "Up" series, DVDs that chronicles people's lives as they develop from age 7 to 49). These videos will be shown during class times, and some test and exam questions will be taken from them. A copy will, if possible, be available for you to watch in the University Teaching and Learning Center (McNutt).

Requirements

- You need to have read the relevant materials (chapters from the book or readings on reserve) **prior to the class period**. The lectures are intended as a guide to the chapters and readings, and not as a substitute for them.
- During most classes I will encourage you to discuss some of the key ideas and concepts, by asking you to reflect on questions that are raised. I may ask you to form into small groups, to allow as many as possible of you to engage in this discussion, and then will follow up with a whole-class discussion, to ensure that you have all understood the concepts appropriately. **Obviously this type of discussion will only be helpful if you have read the material for the week prior to coming to class.**
- Two short papers have to be submitted on line (using Blackboard)—see below.
- Three exams—see below.

Communication

- Office hours. My office hours are listed above. If you have any problems, questions or concerns, **please** come to see me, or send me an e-mail to schedule a different time if these office hours do not work for you.
- Questions about class organization. Using Blackboard, you will also be able to post questions about class organization or about the tests or exams, and I will answer you on Blackboard.
- Questions about the readings. Although we will always have time during class for people to raise questions, it is impossible for everyone to ask a question in a class this large. Each week I will therefore have a space for you to post questions about anything that you're not clear about in the relevant chapter and/readings. I will typically respond to these posted questions during class, so that everyone can benefit.
- Announcements. ALL important communications from me to you (for example, reminders about a forthcoming test or exam, a message that a test or paper has been graded and that the grades have been posted on Blackboard) will appear in the "Announcements" section of Blackboard. It is **essential** that you read all announcements.

Additional Information

- **At the end of each test and exam you will be asked four additional questions, about:**
 - **how much you like the way in which this class is being taught;**
 - **your interest in the materials (the text and the readings);**
 - **the extent to which you are reading the materials; and**
 - **approximately how many hours you spend studying for the class.**
- **Your responses to these questions are purely for my information, and have no bearing on your grade.**

Academic Integrity

It is your responsibility to read the [Academic Integrity Policy](#), available in the *UNCG Student Calendar/Handbook*, and at the following link: <http://academicintegrity.uncg.edu/complete/>, and to abide by its requirements on all exams and on each paper. The offenses are listed on pp. 175-181 (in the current edition), with their corresponding penalties. These issues are taken seriously in this class as in all HDFS classes. You are required to read, on each exam, and sign underneath: "I have abided by the academic integrity policy on this assignment." With each paper you submit you need to include this statement, with your name and the date typed underneath.

Appropriate Classroom Behavior

- **Arrival and departure.** It is my responsibility to be prepared to start the class on time and to end it no later than the designated time. If I arrive late, I will apologize to you for my late arrival. The same is required of you; if you arrive late, for whatever reason, you need to enter the classroom quietly, and an apology, at the end of class, would be polite. **If you have, for whatever reason, to leave class early, please let me know at the start of class, and sit towards the back.** That ensures that I and other students will only be minimally disturbed.
- **Cell phones** need to be switched off before entering the classroom, and kept off during class time.
- **Be respectful to others.** Attendance and arrival also fits under this heading, but during class it is also important to be polite and respectful to others, including those whose views we do not agree with. I encourage all students to participate in discussion; be careful that your own participation in the discussion does not make it more difficult for others to participate. **It is also not respectful to talk or whisper either while I am lecturing or when another student is addressing me or the whole group, and it also qualifies as a lack of respect to read the newspaper, prepare for other classes, play computer games, sleep during class, etc., etc., etc.**
- **Use of laptops.** You are encouraged to bring your laptop to class; it may help you to be able to follow along with the lecture, or look at one of the required readings while it is being discussed. However, using your laptop for some purpose that is not class-related is not only inappropriate but also distracting to students sitting nearby. If you are seen using your laptop for something unrelated to class you will be asked to close it down, or to not bring it to class again.

Teachers Academy Conceptual Framework Mission Statement: *The mission of professional education at UNCG is to prepare and support the professional development of caring, collaborative, and competent educators who work in diverse settings. This mission is carried out in an environment that nurtures the active engagement of all participants, values individual as well as cultural diversity and recognizes the importance of reflection and integration of theory and practice. UNCG's professional education programs are guided by shared commitments to: (a) equity and excellence in teaching, research, and service; (b) professional integrity and ethical deliberation in dealing with students and colleagues (university-based, school-based, and community-based); (c) the construction of a professional knowledge base through collaboration and collegiality; and (d) the dissemination of professional knowledge, skills and dispositions through the preparation and continuing professional development of teachers, principals and other school personnel.*

Grading/Evaluation:UNCG Undergraduate Grading System

Activities	Description	Points
Exams	<p>There will be two exams plus a final, each of which will have 50 multiple-choice questions and be worth 50 points. The second exam will concentrate on the material covered since the first exam, but will not be restricted to that material. One thing that I am stressing in this class is that experiences early in the life-course have impact on later experiences. Those aspects of life that we discuss in the first part of the class necessarily have impact on those we discuss later. The same is true of the theoretical perspectives that we talk about. The final exam will be cumulative.</p> <p>Those students scoring 38 points or more on each of the first two exams do not need to take the final; if you choose to take the final, I will drop the score of your lowest exam. Those students scoring less than 38 points on either of the first exams must take the final exam. In this case, your lowest score from the first two exams will be dropped (your score on the final will not be dropped). Please note: There will be NO make-up exams. If you miss Exam 1 or Exam 2, your final grade will consist of your score from the Final and the exam you took. If you miss the Final exam, you will get an Incomplete in the class and will need to re-take the final the next time I teach the class.</p>	100
Tests	<p>Four times over the course of the semester there will be a test (see calendar for the dates), based on the material covered since the last test. A correct answer will be worth one point, and a total of 10 questions will be asked on each test. The questions will be taken both from the material presented in lecture and from the most recent required readings. The purpose of these tests is to help you make sure that you understand the important concepts that you have read about, and to help you understand the types of questions that will appear on the exams. Your lowest test score will be dropped (i.e., only your top three scores will count). This allows you to miss one test without penalty, or take all four and drop your lowest score.</p>	30
Discussion Papers	<p>Twice during the course of the semester there will be a question raised relating to the readings. You will be expected to write a brief response (half a page to a page will probably be enough) in which you relate the issue to your own life or the life of other people you know. Each paper is worth 6 points, 4 of which are for content, and 2 of which are for grammar, lack of typographical errors, etc. If you are worried about your writing, please go to the Writing Center, 100 Mclver, where someone will help you. These papers MUST be sent as an email attachment to jrtudge@uncg.edu with your last name and "211 paper" in the subject line.</p>	12
Total		142

Out of a possible 142 points, the scores needed for the various grades are as follows:

A- 120-122	A 123 and above		
B- 105-107	B 108-116	B+ 117-119	
C- 90-92	C 93-101	C+ 102-104	
D- 75-77	D 78-86	D+ 87-89	

On each exam, the following scores are equivalent to the following grades (but your final grade will obviously also depend on the scores you get on the tests and papers): A: 43; B: 38; C: 33; D: 28.