PSYCHOLOGY 380A: GRADUATE SEMINAR IN DEVELOPMENTAL PSYCHOPATHOLOGY

Fall 2011
Mondays 9-11:30
Dewey 342
3 credits

Professor: Jamie L. Abaied, PhD
Office: Dewey 210B (to the right of the Psych 1 TA office)
Phone: 656-4032
Email: jabaied@uvm.edu (email is the best way to contact me)
Office Hours: Tuesdays 10-12, or by appointment

Course Objectives

This course will provide an overview of major concepts, issues, and research in the field of developmental psychopathology. We will explore theoretical perspectives, methodological and analytic approaches, and other key themes within the field, focusing on the intersection between normative and atypical development. In addition, this course is designed to promote professional development by exposing students to the many roles they will assume within an academic context, including critically evaluating theoretical concepts and empirical research, generating and developing innovative research ideas, writing about and presenting research ideas, and providing constructive feedback on others’ research and writing.

This course is intended for graduate students in Psychology and related fields. In addition, this course is required for psychology graduate students completing the developmental psychopathology concentration at UVM.

Required Readings

There is no textbook for this course. The readings will be a mixture of “contemporary classics” or seminal works in the field, review articles/chapters, and recent empirical articles. Readings will be posted on Blackboard unless indicated otherwise below.

Class Format

This class will follow a seminar format, with an emphasis on discussion and active learning. Some weeks I may provide brief lectures or videos to illustrate concepts from the readings for that week; however, the majority of our class time will consist of discussion.

Course Evaluation

1. Discussion Questions & Class Participation (25%)
   Engaging in intellectual discussions of theory and research is a critical component of a career as a psychologist. Students must come to class alert and ready to engage with the material for that
week; that means completing all readings before class. Active participation is essential for the success of this course. This includes listening attentively and responding to others as well as making contributions regarding your own thoughts and ideas. If you aren’t comfortable in discussions yet, our class meetings will provide you with the opportunity to practice. Remember that the purpose of our class meetings is to learn and develop skills.

To facilitate class discussion, you must write three or more discussion questions (one on each reading) and post them on our Blackboard message board by 5PM the day before each class (Sundays). Your discussion questions should NOT simply request clarification on minor points in the paper, but rather facilitate our discussion. Should I call on you, you should be prepared to elaborate on your discussion questions in class and lead the class discussion based on your questions.

2. **In-Class Presentation (25%)**

Each student will give a presentation and lead a class discussion on one of the assigned readings. Readings that are eligible for presentations are starred below. Please bring your top 3 choices for presentations to class on 9/5.

Class discussion leaders must read 3-4 additional articles on the assigned topic, prepare a brief presentation of the topic (15 minutes), develop a list of discussion questions based on the assigned reading for the day, and facilitate class discussion. Your brief presentation on the topic should provide an overview of key theories, methods, findings, etc., in the research area and should incorporate ideas from the additional readings that you completed.

On the day of your presentation, please hand in: 1) a list of the additional articles that you read in preparation for your presentation; 2) an outline of your presentation (or PowerPoint slides, if you use PowerPoint), and 3) a list of discussion questions that you have developed for your presentation.

3. **Research Proposal (40%)**

You will identify a particular research question that is of interest to you in the field of developmental psychopathology and write a research proposal that outlines how you would address that question. Although it is ideal to write about a topic that is relevant to your own research, be sure to choose a question on which you have not previously written a research proposal for a class or thesis. Your paper should be approximately 20 pages including references and written in APA style.

Your research proposal will include:

1. a brief literature review in which you discuss relevant research (feel free to use articles from the syllabus, but be sure to extend your review well beyond articles covered in class), provide a rationale for your study, develop your question, and formulate specific, testable hypotheses.
2. a method section in which you describe the research design (e.g., sample, procedures, measures) that will be used to test your hypotheses.
3. an analytic plan in which you provide an overview of the types of analyses that would be needed to test your hypotheses.
4. a discussion of the limitations of the study.
Five double-sided copies of a complete “good” draft of your paper are due in class on Monday, 11/7. You will give a 20-25-minute presentation on your research proposal in class on either 11/28 or 12/5. The final draft of the paper is due in my mailbox Friday, 12/9 at 5 PM. Additional information on this assignment will be provided.

4. Peer Review of Research Proposal (10%)

Giving and receiving peer reviews of your colleagues’ works-in-progress is an important part of being a scholar. Thus, as part of the process of completing your paper, you will read and provide feedback on your classmates’ writing. You will receive copies of a “good” first draft of each of your classmates’ papers on 11/7. Your reviews of the papers will be due in class on 11/14. During class on 11/14, you will have a peer review workshop, in which you discuss each paper as a group. More information on this assignment will be provided.

Schedule & Reading List

All readings are available on Blackboard except book chapters, which will be distributed for photocopying.

***indicates articles eligible for in-class presentations

9/5: History of the Discipline & Reading Skills


Neuroskeptic (2010). The mystical path of scientific understanding.


9/12: Principles & Conceptual Frameworks


Only pp. 211-223 are required!


9/19: Research Designs & Statistical Techniques


9/26: Nature and Nurture Intertwined


10/3: Biology and Physiology


10/10: Temperament and Emotion Regulation


10/17: Family


10/24: Peers


10/31: Context & Culture


11/7: Intervention, & Policy Implications, & Concluding Thoughts


11/14: Peer Review Workshop

11/28: Student presentations

12/5: Student presentations

12/9: Final papers due at 5 PM.