Description and Goals

Two frameworks organize this course: (a) a bioecological systems view of adolescent problem behaviors, and (b) a model-analytic approach to developmental risk. The systems view orders the topics, from an analysis and contrast of biological and social aspects of the pubertal transition, to conceptualizations of conflict and risk in larger family and school systems, to analysis of economic and community contexts of adolescent problem behaviors. The model-analytic approach organizes each topic by conceptualizing and contrasting developmental risk models. The goals of the course are (a) to train you to think critically and systematically about developmental and psychological claims, (b) to conceptualize contextual influences on development in particular social settings, and (c) to expose you to issues concerning educational risk for adolescents.

Course Requirements

(a) The course will have a 120-point exam on Thursday, March 27, and a 150-point cumulative final examination in the finals week. The tests will have an essay format and will concern lecture and discussion material. (b) You must prepare 8 analyses of readings, each worth 20 points, and each about 3 pages long, and you have an option of an 9th analysis for extra-credit (not an option for Honors section). Three pages aren’t much—a piece of cake, a walk in the park, a snooze in the backyard hammock—and if you are going to read, you might as well write. The short analyses encourage you to digest the material in advance of class discussion, and provide an opportunity for you to impose a perspective and structure on material, rather than just take a passive stance. The goals are pedagogical more than evaluative. Late submissions will lose 5 points, and I will not accept a submission after the next class after the due date.

I want to be especially clear about the importance of attending class. This message is especially critical for seniors for the Spring semester. There is no textbook in this class, which means that class represents your only access to critical constructs, conceptual domains and perspectives, and analytic strategies and forms. If you miss class you will be at serious risk for failing exams and failing the class. Conclusion: don’t take this class if you can’t drag your sorry body to just about every class. If you have a hot date every Tuesday afternoon, don’t take this class. If you must celebrate St. Patrick’s day in some place more ambitious than Newark, like to hit the Spring snow in Aspen, or have a Spring wedding on the Gold Coast in Namibia, don’t take this class. If you need to work so that you can eat, starve or don’t take this class. If you have to break up with your honey, do it on Thursday night, or don’t take this class. If already you can’t stand the sight of me or hate this room, don’t take this class. If you don’t like my ties, grin and bear it.

Grade Criteria

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Point Total:</th>
<th>Minimum Grade:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>90%</td>
<td>A-</td>
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<tr>
<td>78%</td>
<td>B-</td>
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<tr>
<td>65%</td>
<td>C-</td>
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<tr>
<td>55%</td>
<td>D</td>
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<tr>
<td>&lt; 55%</td>
<td>F</td>
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The minimum grade is the grade guaranteed by your point total. Point population characteristics and improvement will result in a grade above the minimum for some of you. I also add in points for class participation—helping me teach this class matters a lot.
So, yes, some students could get a grade ≥ yours, even though you have more points. Most important, if you get < 55% of the points you will fail this class, even if you come to class and try. Simply showing up does not get the job done.

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**Syllabus**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week of:</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Assignment</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Feb 11</td>
<td>I. Theoretical Perspectives</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A. Adolescence Ethnotheory</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B. Developmental Risk</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Feb 18</td>
<td>II. Biosocial Models</td>
<td>Arts 1-5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb 25</td>
<td>III. Family System</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb 27</td>
<td>A. Systems Model</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mar 6</td>
<td>B. Family Transformation</td>
<td>Arts 6-11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mar 13, 20</td>
<td>C. Parenting Style</td>
<td>Arts 12-17</td>
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<tr>
<td>Apr 8</td>
<td>D. Conduct Problems</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apr 15, 22</td>
<td>1. Coercion Hyp (SIL)</td>
<td>Arts 23, 18-22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apr 29, May 6</td>
<td>2. NeuroPsych Trait</td>
<td>Arts 23-27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 13</td>
<td>E. Childhood Sex Abuse</td>
<td>Arts 28-33</td>
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<tr>
<td>Apr 15, 22</td>
<td>IV. School System</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Apr 29, May 6</td>
<td>A. Peer Aggression</td>
<td>Arts 23, 34-39</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>B. Educational Risk</td>
<td>Arts 40-46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 13</td>
<td>V. Exosystem Risk</td>
<td>Arts 47-51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A. Theoretical Perspectives</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B. Social Causation Model</td>
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<td></td>
<td>VI. Emerging Adulthood</td>
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</tbody>
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**Readings**

There are a lot of readings below, but many are small (though pithy). The assignments are spread over 7-to 14-day intervals, which means you have sufficient time if you spread the readings over the time period. The upshot is that I seriously want you to do all the readings. At the very least, you need to understand the abstract, the introduction, and the discussion. Methods and results sections often can be skimmed, though you should take a gander at the figures.

The readings are available through electronic journals on the library website. Go to the electronic journal page on the website. Enter the name of the journal and then enter. Then click on the name that is provided. Be sure to note the dates of the entry and that your selected volume is within those dates. If you are off-campus, at this point the library website will ask for your U-D identification information. Enter and then open up the journal. On the journal website, find the year or volume and enter, and then find the article by page #s. If we suddenly lose access to a journal for some reason (i.e., perhaps the access contract was renegotiated), let me know and I will send material by UD pobox. A few of the articles may serve double duty in that they are assigned for multiple essays. Read them well the first time and life will be easier. Read the articles on-line if you can. You do not have to print most articles. But if you prefer hard copy, focus on printing the theoretical stuff—the abstract, the introduction, and the discussion section.

If the library web-site can’t find a journal, it is likely that you entered the wrong name, or perhaps that I provided you with the wrong name.

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**Early Puberty and BioSocial Risk**


Family Transformation (aka Storm and Stress)


Parenting Style


Coercion Hypothesis


Neuropsychiatric “Trait” Theory of Conduct Disorder


Childhood Sexual Abuse


### Aggression and Peer Relationships in School


### School Risk


### Exosystem Stress


Guidelines for Course Success

1. Here are three firm rules: (a) I have a MANDATORY ATTENDANCE policy. You must come to class. If you miss class (one class) for some unavoidable circumstance, you must get the notes from a good student. (b) I have a NO CELL PHONE policy. I am completely irrational concerning any use of cell phones in class. If I see a cell phone once class starts, I will not grade the next thing you hand in. If that is a midterm or final exam, your likelihood of approaching self-actualization will decrease considerably. (c) I have a similar policy concerning computer use in the classroom. Use it to take notes— that’s all. If I have any sense that you are using it for other purposes (e.g., e-mail, google), I will exact the same penalty as in (b). Trust me, it is easy to see that you are paying attention to something other than my fulsome appearance and scintillating verbiage.

2. Hand in your analyses on time.

3. Take a critical approach, not a descriptive approach. The course is a tutorial in critical thinking about psychological claims.

4. Do all of the readings. The concepts will be tested.

5. Talk—you are responsible for class excellence and for keeping yourself awake. I am responsible for walking upright and my sweet disposition. The more you talk, the less I cover, and the easier the exams. Ask anybody.

6. Consult with me and your classmates. I don’t have any answers but I have a good grasp of the questions.

7. Question all truth claims. I take an ironic stance about most claims in psychology, including my own.

8. Be prepared to be offended. My aim is to provoke, and to upset an often too-comfortable and too-normative ethnotheory that students and parents hold. Offensive concepts and language sometimes are needed to accomplish the aim.

Tentative Event Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Readings</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Analysis 1</td>
<td>Arts 1-5</td>
<td>Tuesday, Feb 18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analysis 2</td>
<td>Arts 6-11</td>
<td>Tuesday, Feb 25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analysis 3</td>
<td>Arts 12-17</td>
<td>Thursday, March 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analysis 4</td>
<td>Arts 23, 18-22</td>
<td>Thursday, March 13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Analysis 5 ** Arts 23-27 Tuesday, March 25
Mid-Term Exam
Analysis 6 Arts 28-33 Thursday, March 27
Analysis 7 Arts 23, 34-39 Thursday, April 10*
Analysis 8 Arts 40-46 Thursday, April 17*
Analysis 9 Arts 47-51 Thursday, May 1*

* Dates are tentative.

** Extra-credit.