

METHODOLOGICAL ISSUES IN DEVELOPMENTAL PSYCHOLOGY

PSY 785, SPRING 2008

1:30 – 4:15pm Thursday Poe 636

INSTRUCTOR: Shevaun D. Neupert, Ph.D.

Office: Poe 732 A

Office hours: Wednesdays 10am-noon and by appointment

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COURSE DESCRIPTION: The overarching goal of this course is to familiarize students with the primary designs used in Developmental Psychology. More specifically, this course will focus on methodological, analytical, and interpretative issues surrounding these designs. In addition to focusing on the various implications of design, a considerable amount of time will be spent on introducing various analytic techniques and procedures that are inseparable from developmental methodology. Ultimately, this course should provide you with a deeper understanding of the methodology used to understand development across the life span.

REQUIRED TEXTBOOK:

Baltes, P.B., Reese, H.W., & Nesselroade, J.R. (1988). *Introduction to research methods: Lifespan developmental psychology*. Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

There will also be supplemental readings which will be available via the course website (<http://vista.ncsu.edu>).

EVALUATION:

Reaction papers	Due each week	25%
Final Exam	May 6, 1-4pm	25%
Presentation and Final Paper	April 24	40%
Participation	Throughout semester	10%

Overall course grades will conform to the following as designated by the university: A+ (97-100%), A (93-96%), A- (90-92%), B+ (87-89%), B (83-86%), B- (80-82%), C+ (77-79%), C (73-76%), C- (70-72%), D+ (67-69%), D (63-66%), D- (60-62%), F (anything below 60%).

Reaction papers are brief (approximately 2 pages) weekly assignments which you will write in preparation for each weekly meeting, after you have read the chapters and articles for the upcoming week. These papers will help you integrate the current readings with previous readings, and will also allow you to point out issues which you would like to address in the discussion of the readings. Critical thinking is an important component of the reaction papers. These papers can incorporate several pieces of information including, but not limited to: (1) aspects of the reading you do not understand, (2) challenges to the information conveyed in the readings, (3) application of the material to other domains, and (4) any other aspect of the reading which you feel is important to critically evaluate. All reaction papers will be **due by 9am the day of the class meeting**. Your papers will help guide the discussion of class for that day. Late papers will be accepted with a 10% per day deduction in points.

Exam: There will be a cumulative Final Exam worth 25% of your overall grade. This exam will consist of questions from several testing formats such as multiple choice, fill-in-the-blank, short answer, and essay. This test is designed to measure domain-specific knowledge of developmental methodology and application of this knowledge. Mastery of the material presented in readings and in class will be necessary for adequate performance on the exam.

Presentation and Final Paper: For this project you are to choose a topic that was not covered in the course (e.g., dyad designs, qualitative designs, focus groups, behavioral observation, etc.), write a paper (15+ pages), and make an in-class presentation on your chosen topic at the end of the semester. Topic choices need to be distinct from other students', so availability of topics is on a first come first served basis. All students must have their topics approved by March 1.

Class participation includes (a) being in class every week, (b) being well-prepared by having carefully read all the assigned readings, and (c) contributing actively to critical discussions in class about the readings.

FOR EXTRA HELP:

I will make every effort to support students in understanding course content and reading materials. I can meet with students during office hours and as needed by appointment. Students are also welcome to e-mail questions at any time.

INCOMPLETE GRADES:

An incomplete grade may be assigned at the discretion of the instructor as an interim grade for a course in which the student has: (1) completed a major portion of the course with a passing grade, (2) been unable to complete course requirements prior to the end of the term because of extenuating circumstances, and (3) obtained agreement from the instructor and arranged for resolution of the incomplete grade.

ACCOMODATIONS:

Reasonable accommodations will be made for students with verifiable disabilities. Please register with Disability Services for Students at 1900 Student Health Center, 515-7653. See http://www.ncsu.edu/provost/offices/affirm_action/dss for more information.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:

Students will adhere to the University's Code of Student Conduct (http://www2.ncsu.edu/prr/student_services/student_conduct/POL445.00.1.htm). Consistent with the provisions of this Code, academic dishonesty is defined as cheating, plagiarism, and aiding and abetting others to cheat or plagiarize. Students who are accused of violations of the Code will be referred to the Coordinator, Office of Student Conduct.

Overview of Topics

Note: Schedule subject to change/update

Readings

January 10	Welcome and Introduction	
January 17	Theoretical Underpinnings of Lifespan Developmental Psychology and the Data Box	Baltes, 1987 Riegel, 1976 Cronbach, 1984
January 24	Introduction to Developmental Methodology: Cross-sectional, Longitudinal, and Sequential Designs	BRN Chs 1,2,4,10 Schaie & Caskie
January 31	Special Longitudinal Designs – Narrow and Accelerated	Hofer & Sliwinski Bell Duncan et al.
February 7	Within-Person Designs	Nesselroade (1991a) Nesselroade & Featherman van Geert van Geert & van Dijk
February 14	Daily Diary and Measurement Burst Designs	Bolger et al. Nesselroade (1991b) Neupert et al.
February 21	Experimental Designs	Keppel Ch. 1 Wohlwill Ch. 11
February 28	Internal and External Validity of Research Design	BRN Chs 5,6,15, 16
March 6	NO CLASS: SPRING BREAK	
March 13	Measurement: Level, Reliability, and Validity	BRN Ch 7 Cook, Campbell Ch. 2 Allen & Yen Ch. 4
March 20	Generalizability: Selection of People and Variables	Nesselroade (1998) Little et al.
March 27	Types of Missing Data	Schafer & Graham
April 3	Mediation	Lindenberger & Poetter Collins, Graham, & Flaherty
April 10	NO CLASS: WORK ON PRESENTATIONS AND PAPERS	
April 17	Moderation	Baron & Kenny Newsom et al.
April 24	Presentations, Final Paper Due	
May 6 (Tuesday)	Final Exam: 1-4pm	

References

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- Cook, T.D., & Campbell, D.T. (1979). *Quasi-experimentation: Design and analysis issues for field settings*. Chicago: Rand McNally College Publishing.
- Cronbach, L.J. (1984). A research worker's treasure chest. *Multivariate Behavioral Research*, *19*, 223-240.
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