



PSYC 250: Developmental Psychology

Spring 2026

Tues & Thurs 1:20-2:50pm

Theater & Dance Room 200

Your Instructor



Erika R. DeAngelis, Ph.D.

Pronouns: she/her/hers



Olin-Rice 359C



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Course Overview

Each of us is a unique individual with distinct interests, abilities, and appearances. At the same time, we all have much in common—each of us started as just a single cell at conception, our brains and bodies developed in essentially the same sequence, and someday, we will all die. What are the general paths and stages of development? How do our unique qualities emerge? What role does our genetic material play in development? What role does our environment play? Is there a point at which some of our traits are “set”, or do we retain the capacity to change throughout development? In this course, we will work to answer these questions and more. With a life-span approach, we will examine the theories and research that describe and explain our physical, cognitive, and social development from conception to death.

Prerequisites: PSYC 100 or permission

Student Hours

Mon 12:00-1:00pm, Thurs 11:30am
– 12:30pm, or by appointment

Location: OLRI 359C or Zoom (please email for link).

I am available on a first-come, first-served basis during student hours to meet for any reason. Not available at these times? Email me to set up an individual appointment, either in my office or on Zoom.

Course Goals

1. **Explain** and **critically evaluate** key concepts, methods, theories, and findings relevant to the study of developmental psychology.
2. **Apply** key developmental theories, methods, and findings to a) your own life and b) broader global events and issues.
3. Learn how to **communicate** scientific knowledge and findings with academic *and* non-academic audiences through multiple formats.
4. **Discuss** the importance of studying culture, context, and individual variability to better understand developmental outcomes.

Course Format

This is a synchronous, in-person course that will primarily consist of live lectures, in-class activities, and discussions. Active participation is expected of all students. *It is necessary to attend class, take notes, and engage in all activities to succeed in this course.*

Due to the nature of this course, we will discuss controversial and potentially sensitive topics. I will do my best to provide a heads-up before especially sensitive topics, but I also encourage you to step out of the classroom or contact me privately if you have any concerns about the material in this class. I am here to support you!

Furthermore, all students are expected to be **open-minded** and **respectful** towards their classmates and the instructor. I welcome diverse viewpoints and opinions in our conversations, as long as they are respectful. Please talk to me if you have concerns about this.

Materials

Good news! **You are not required to purchase any materials for this course.** All assigned readings will be available on Moodle ahead of class. Readings provide important background knowledge for the topics discussed in class, so *all assigned readings should be completed prior to attending class.* PowerPoint slides used in class will be posted to Moodle after the class period (if I forget, please remind me!)

Optional: Throughout this course, I will cite content from the textbook *Child Development Worldwide: A Cultural Approach* by Jensen and Arnett (2018). ISBN: 9780137497317

While this textbook is **not required** to succeed in this course, you may find it helpful to purchase a copy for review and studying purposes. You can rent a copy of the e-book for \$10.99/month on the Pearson website, or purchase from a third-party retailer.



Feel free to call me “Erika”!

If you prefer to be more formal, Dr. DeAngelis, Professor Erika, or another similar combination works too!

Participation

All students are expected to actively participate in class on a regular basis. Participation is comprised of attendance and in-class activities, which constitute 20% of your final grade. **You must regularly attend class to earn a good participation grade.** See the assignments page for more information.

Excused Absences

Macalester College authorizes absences for college-sponsored activities (e.g., athletic or club events). If you anticipate missing class for a college-sponsored activity, *you are responsible to communicate with me in advance* to make the necessary arrangements. I also count emergency absences (e.g., illness/medical conditions, family emergencies, religious observances) as excused absences. Please contact me as soon as possible to make arrangements. In some cases, I may request verification of absences (e.g., multiple medical absences).

Health & Wellbeing

Your physical and mental health should *always* be a priority (in both this course and in general)! Please make sure you are taking care of yourself, both inside and outside of the classroom. I encourage you to eat and drink, use the restroom, or step outside and take a break whenever you need it.

Assignments

Point Breakdown

World Issues (WI) Project	200 points	40%
Reaction Papers (x3)	150 points	30%
Quizzes (x5)	50 points	10%
Class Participation	100 points	20%
Total	500 points	100%

World Issues (WI) Project

A critical skill for developmental scientists is learning how to **evaluate** empirical evidence and **communicate** key ideas with a variety of audiences. In this project, you will select a current world issue directly impacting development. You will search for relevant empirical articles, critically evaluate their methods and findings, and synthesize the main takeaways in a summary report on the topic. This summary report will also include professional recommendations related to addressing the world issue. Finally, you will create and present an infographic (accessible to a variety of audiences) related to your summary report. You will also have the opportunity to complete a peer review of your classmates' report outlines in class.

This writing assignment is broken up into 7 steps throughout the semester. Additional details and rubrics for each step is available on our Moodle page. Please see our course schedule for all assignment deadlines. In total, this project is worth 200 points (40% of your final grade).

Step 1: Topic Selection and Literature Search (due 2/1)

Step 2: Article Summaries (due 2/15)

Step 3: Report Outline (due 3/1)

Step 4: Peer Review (completed 3/5 **in class**)

Step 5: Final Report (due 4/5)

Step 6: Infographic (due 4/19)

Step 7: Presentation (completed 4/28 & 4/30 **in class**)

Reaction Papers

You will complete **3** reaction papers over the course of the semester. For each paper, you will consume non-academic content relevant to development (e.g., YouTube videos, podcasts, popular press articles) and analyze that content through the lens of a developmental psychologist. Specific instructions for each paper and a rubric will be available on Moodle.

Each paper is worth 50 points and should be roughly 3-4 pages double-spaced. You are permitted to use late points on reaction papers (please see Late Point policy below). In sum, reaction papers are worth 30% of your final grade.

Quizzes

Over the course of the semester, there will be 7 quizzes consisting of approximately 10 multiple choice questions and/or short answer prompts.

Only 5 will count towards your final grade, so you can skip or drop your lowest 2 quiz scores. These quizzes will be completed on **Moodle**. All quizzes are due on Moodle by **11:59pm CST on Sundays** (see Moodle page for full schedule). You will have **~30 minutes** to complete each quiz.

Quizzes are open-note but must be completed **independently**. Late submissions will not be accepted and will receive 0 points. In sum, quizzes are worth 10% of your final grade.

Class Participation

Your participation grade (worth 20% of final grade) is based on two components:

1. **Attendance:** Self-recorded via Moodle for each class period. To provide some flexibility, you may miss up to **two** days of class without penalty. Over two unexcused absences will lead to point deductions.
2. **In-Class Activities (ICAs):** You will complete **5** ICAs throughout the semester (each worth 10 points). ICAs are completed in small groups and are designed to promote active participation and facilitate critical thinking. Unless otherwise specified, these activities will be **graded for effort and completion, not accuracy**. ICAs are completed in class but may be made up for **excused absences only**. You must contact the instructor **before the scheduled class period** to arrange a make-up assignment. Late points cannot be used on ICA assignments.

Grading Policies

Late Points

We are all busy people with other academic and non-academic commitments! To provide some flexibility, all students will receive **six “late points”** at the beginning of the semester. Each late point corresponds to one 24-hour extension on a writing assignment (either a step of the WI project or a reaction paper)*. You may choose how many late points you wish to use on each assignment (e.g., 2 late points = 48-hour extension). To redeem late points, **you must email me at least 24 hours before the original assignment deadline** (no explanation needed!).

If you choose not to use late points, the default late submission penalty of 5% per day will apply (see late submissions section for more detail). **Note:** late points are *not* intended to replace disability accommodations or other needed extensions. In case of emergency (e.g., illness, family emergency), please contact me for an extension!

*Late points may **ONLY** be used on World Issue Project assignments (except for WI steps completed during class) and Reaction Papers. Late points cannot be used on quizzes or in-class activities.

Late Submission Penalty

Late submissions are NOT accepted for quizzes. Late or missing quizzes will receive a “0”. Late **ICAs** are only allowed for excused absences and require prior instructor consent.

Late writing assignments (i.e., WI project steps and reaction papers) without late points will receive a 5% penalty per day late (e.g., 3 days late = 15% penalty), with a maximum 50% penalty.

Incompletes

Macalester College **strongly discourages** incomplete grades. Unless over 75% of assigned coursework has already been submitted, an incomplete will not be granted. In the case of an extenuating circumstance, I will direct you to the Dean of Students. I will consider the Dean’s advice and department policy when making decisions about incompletes.

If you are worried that you are getting behind in this course, please come talk to me! I am happy to work with you to think about a plan to help you catch up on missing assignments.

Grade Disputes

If you notice any errors in your grade on Moodle, please contact me immediately! If you believe that points were deducted incorrectly or unfairly, please email me to request a re-grade. In your email, please explain why you believe that the grade was incorrect, and any additional information or materials that supports your argument. You must email me with a re-grade request within one week of receiving your original grade. Disputing a grade does not guarantee that your grade will be changed. I will review your original assignment and your justification and determine whether to adjust your grade.

Grade Scale

Your final grade will be determined according to the scale below. There is no curve for this course – your grade will not be adjusted relative to your peers. I reserve the right to round up final grades in the case of exemplary participation and effort. After the class is over, I will not change the grade you have earned. Please see me before the end of the semester if you are concerned about your grade.

A	93 – 100%	C	73 – 76.9%
A-	90 – 92.9%	C-	70 – 72.9%
B+	87 – 89.9%	D+	67 – 69.9%
B	83 – 86.9%	D	63 – 66.9%
B-	80 – 82.9%	D-	60 – 62.9%
C+	77 – 79.9%	F	0 – 59.9%

Plagiarism and Academic Integrity

You are expected to do your own academic work in this class, and to cite your sources when appropriate. Presenting other people's thoughts, ideas, or words as your own constitutes plagiarism, which directly violates Macalester College's academic integrity expectation. **Plagiarizing, cheating, unauthorized use of artificial intelligence, or engaging in unauthorized collaborations is strictly prohibited in this class.** If you are unsure what constitutes plagiarism, please come talk to me! If I suspect that you have violated this academic integrity policy, I will ask you to meet with me to discuss the work. After we meet, I will determine next steps, which may include a 0 on the assignment or referral to the Director of Academic Programs. If you have additional questions, come see me or refer to the webpage below.

www.macalester.edu/academicprograms/academicpolicies/academicintegrity/

Technology

Please silence your phones and put them away when possible (unless you are requested to take your phone out for a class activity). If you must take a phone call, please quietly exit the classroom to avoid distracting the instructor and other students. Laptops and tablets are permitted for note taking or course activities. However, please avoid using personal devices for external activities (e.g., answering emails, social media). I reserve the right to restrict technology use in the classroom if it becomes too much of a learning distraction.

Artificial intelligence can be a wonderful educational tool, but it can also interfere with the development of creativity and critical thinking skills. In specific circumstances, I will allow you to use AI to help you generate and brainstorm ideas. If you choose to use AI for this purpose, I expect you to clearly indicate how you used AI in your submission. However, the following uses of AI are **strictly prohibited**:

- Using AI for quizzes;
- Incorporating any component of an AI-generated response in any course assignment;
- Using AI to summarize and/or interpret course materials (including sources for the WI project).

Instances of unauthorized AI use will be considered a breach of academic honesty and will be addressed accordingly.

Diversity & Accessibility



Diversity & Inclusion

I strive to prioritize diversity and inclusion throughout this course. Throughout the semester, we will consider development from many backgrounds and perspectives. However, I acknowledge that the field of psychology has historically been written by White males on a small subset of individuals from predominately White, Western, middle- to upper-class backgrounds. I encourage you to think critically about how these biases may impact our current understanding of development. Additionally, please reach out to me if you have any suggestions for how to improve the diversity of the materials in this course.

Additionally, I aim for our classroom to be a safe space where students from diverse backgrounds can comfortably learn from and contribute to our learning environment. I believe that diversity of backgrounds and perspectives is an incredible strength for learning and growth. Thus, I welcome all viewpoints as long as they are expressed **appropriately** and **respectfully**.

If you have any suggestions for how to improve our class culture, let me know! If anything in this course makes you upset or uncomfortable, please reach out to me or contact another member of the department for support.

Accessibility

I am committed to making this course as accessible as possible for all students. If there is anything I can do to maximize your participation and learning in this class, please reach out to me! I am happy to meet privately to discuss accessibility suggestions and/or concerns.

My commitments:

- Post all WI project assignments and rubrics on Moodle at the beginning of the semester
- Share PowerPoints and other lecture materials after class (please remind me if I forget!)
- Meet with you individually to support your learning
- Facilitate your connection to external supports on campus (e.g., Academic Success center)
- Be flexible and understanding in the event of an emergency

Disability Services

If you have a disability that affects your learning, I highly encourage you to reach out to Macalester's Disability Services in order to receive accommodations (see link below). Disability Services will send me a confidential letter with your accommodations, and then we can meet to discuss a plan to address your needs.

Without a letter from Disability Services, I cannot offer flexible assignment deadlines or a flexible attendance policy. If you think you may need additional support, don't wait! **Be proactive** – I cannot retroactively apply any accommodations, so it is best to plan in advance!

Center for Disability Resources: <https://www.macalester.edu/disability-resources/>

Land Acknowledgement

From the Macalester College Office for Institutional Equity:

“Macalester College is located on the homeland of the Dakota people – Mni Sota Makoce [Mini SOta Ma-KOH-chay], which translates to Land Where the Waters Reflect the Clouds. Although they were forcibly exiled by aggressive and persistent settler colonialism, the Dakota people still flourish despite this painful history. We make this acknowledgment to honor the Dakota people, ancestors, and descendants, as well as the land itself. Macalester engages in ongoing work toward repair and partnership with the Dakota people and the land, as well as to support Indigenous members of our campus community.”

Sexual Misconduct & Title IX

From the Serie Center for Scholarship and Teaching: “Macalester is committed to providing a safe and open learning and living environment for all students, staff, and faculty. Any community member experiencing sexual misconduct including sexual harassment, sexual assault, sexual exploitation, dating/domestic violence, or stalking, is encouraged to seek help and support.

Please be aware that as a faculty member, it is my responsibility to report disclosure about sexual misconduct, to the Title IX Office. The purpose of this report is to ensure that anyone who may be impacted receives the resources and support they need. I will keep this information *private* and I will not share beyond this required report.

You may also contact Laura Creech, Macalester’s Title IX Coordinator, directly (phone: 651-696-6258; e-mail: titleixcordinator@macalester.edu); she will provide you with your rights and options as well as information about supportive measures, resources, and referrals. Additional information about how to file a report (including anonymously) is available on the [Title IX website](#).

If you prefer to speak with someone confidentially, or need 24/7 support, there are resources available on- and off-campus to assist you:

- [Counseling Services](#) at the Hamre Center – on-campus counseling resource for students
 - **Free, Urgent, Phone Counseling (Press 2) is available to Macalester students anywhere in the world, 24/7/365.** Speak to a licensed mental health counselor 24 hours a day by calling Hamre Center at 651-696-6275, then press or say option 2 when prompted.
- [Center for Religious and Spiritual Life](#) – chaplains may be reached via 651-696-6298 or email religiouslife@macalester.edu
- [SOS Sexual Violence Services of Ramsey County](#) 651-266-1000 (24-Hour Crisis Hotline staffed by trained advocates) On-Campus Office Hours: Wednesdays from 1- 4 pm in the Hamre Wellness Lounge
- [Saint Paul Intervention Project \(SPIP\): Domestic Abuse Intervention](#) 651-645-2824 (24-Hour Crisis Hotline) On-Campus Office Hours: Tuesdays from 1:30 – 4:30 pm in the Hamre Wellness Lounge
- [Rape, Assault, and Incest National Network \(RAINN\)](#) 1-800-656-4673 (24-Hour Hotline and Live Chat)
- Additional local and national resources can be found at <https://www.macalester.edu/title-ix/find-support/> “

Course Schedule

Week	Dates	Topic	Key Deadlines
1	1/22	Welcome & Developmental Themes	Welcome Survey due 1/26
2	1/27 & 1/29	Developmental Methods & Genetics	WI Step 1
3	2/3 & 2/5	Prenatal Development & Birth	Reaction Paper 1; Quiz 1; ICA 1 on 2/5
4	2/10 & 2/12	The Brain & Physical Health	WI Step 2
5	2/17 & 2/19	Sensation/Perception & Motor Development	Quiz 2; ICA 2 on 2/19
6	2/24 & 2/26	Cognitive Development	WI Step 3; ICA 3 on 2/26
7	3/3 & 3/5	Language Development & Numeracy	WI Step 4 in class on 3/5; Quiz 3
8	3/10 & 3/12	Emotion & Identity	
9	3/17 & 3/19	NO CLASS – SPRING BREAK	
10	3/24 & 3/26	Family	Reaction Paper 2; Quiz 4
11	3/31 & 4/2	Peers & School	WI Step 5; ICA 4 on 3/31
12	4/7 & 4/9	Media & Guest Lecture w/ Keira Leneman	Reaction Paper 3; Quiz 5
13	4/14 & 4/16	Aging & DP	WI Step 6
14	4/21 & 4/23	Mental Health	Quiz 6; ICA 5 on 4/23
15	4/28 & 4/30	WI Step 7 Presentations & Course Wrap-Up	WI Step 7 in class ; Quiz 7

Note: This schedule is subject to change at my discretion. If a change is made, you will be notified via Moodle and in class. Schedule changes may affect in-class activities (ICAs) but will not affect WI project deadlines (except for extenuating circumstances). Any changes affecting activities or assignments will be announced as early as possible.

All assignments are due on **Sundays at 11:59pm CT** unless otherwise specified.