Instructor: Dr. Brian Ragsdale  
Phone: email: drbragsdale@sbcglobal.net, or cell phone, 773-480-1981  
Office: TBD  
Office Hours: by appointment, typically right before or after class  
Class: M-W, 5:00 pm to 6:20 pm, Harris 205


“All children--whether white, black, or brown; Native American or Asian; male or female; urban or rural--have one thing in common: it is their most important characteristic. It is that they are children and must depend on adults to help them. The question we must confront is the extent to which children can depend on us, and how we organize our society, our government, to help meet children’s needs. This question must be considered in contexts that demolish the perception that most of the children needing and getting our help are poor and black.” – (p. 27) Families in Peril: An agenda for social change by Marian Wright Edelman.

Overview: This course will provide an introduction to the theories and methods used to understand and investigate child development. We will explore the development of children and adolescents using various theories including psychological, socio-cultural, developmental, and systemic perspectives. We will also address important issues and current research in the field.

Course Learning Goals:

1. identify and describe methods of studying changes over age and to apply these methods in analyzing human behavior;  
2. describe characteristics of different theories and apply the theories to your observations of children’s behavior;  
3. describe changes in children's physical, cognitive, and social-emotional development over the course of childhood;  
4. identify genetic and environmental factors related to changes with age;  
5. ability to recognize how the interaction of age with gender and ethnic backgrounds influences child development; and  
6. identify implications of the scientific study of childhood for parents and for societal decisions related to children.

Requirements:

1. Learning Culture: Students are encouraged to complete the required reading(s) prior to the date we will discuss them in class. We strive to value and respect the perceptions and ideas of everyone in our learning environment.
2. **Academic Integrity:** Students are expected to comply with the policies found in the booklet, “Academic Integrity at Northwestern University: A basic guide”. All papers submitted for credit in this course may be required to be sent as email attachments as well as delivered in printed form. Your written work may be electronically tested for plagiarized content. For details regarding academic integrity, please review: [http://www.northwestern.edu/uacc/](http://www.northwestern.edu/uacc/).

If you would like a copy of the brochure please visit the SESP student affairs office.

3. **Invisible and Visible Differences:** The American with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal, anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe that you have a disability requiring accommodation, please contact the office of Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) at 467-5530 or ssd@northwestern.edu. SSD is located in the basement of Scott Hall. SSD also has a website at [http://www.stuaff.northwestern.edu/ssd/](http://www.stuaff.northwestern.edu/ssd/).

4. **Teaching Style:** A variety of teaching methods and strategies will be used to encourage students to think about, analyze, and apply the information being learned. These may include: discussions, written or oral analysis of behavior, and application of theoretical perspectives to observing children and adolescents in various settings.

5. **Exams:** There will be two exams and they may cover material presented in the textbook, lectures, and class discussions. Taken together, the exams will be worth approximately 65% of your final grade. Exams may include multiple choice, short answers, and/or essay questions. You are expected to take the exams on the scheduled date and time. There are no make-up exams except under verifiable emergencies, or prior permission from the instructor. If a make-up exam is required it will be made during the final exam period. A student may make up only ONE exam at that time. Make-up exams are given for missed exams only, not for poor performance on an exam. Incompletes are strongly discouraged and will only be granted in situations that are extremely rare or unusual.

**Written and Reading Assignments:** You will write one, 6 to 8 page, typed and double spaced paper (font size no less than 12 point) on a particular topic covered in your text, and should include at least 5 references. This paper should be written in American Psychological Association Publication Manual Style (5th edition). This paper must address (one of the following three or combination of) multicultural perspectives (e.g., ethnic diversity: Native American, Asian American, African American, or Biracial; differently abled, or gay, lesbian, or transgendered youth). In writing your papers, feel free to express your own ideas, but support your opinions using social science research findings. Your paper must be your own work and written specifically for this class. The subject topic must be approved at least three weeks (Oct. 31) before the due date by Professor Ragsdale. This written assignment will account for 35 points or approximately 20% of your final grade. Additional reading assignments (between 3 to 5 research reports or media items) which will be announced during class and/or accessed through Blackboard.
**Grading:** The total possible points for this course is 150 points.

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**Course Schedule (subject to changes, depending on how the quarter proceeds):**

**September**

21  Introduction; Course Overview;  
26  Chapter 1

**September**

28  2/Heredity

**October**

3   3/ Prenatal pages 82 - 99  
5   3/ Prenatal 99 to end  
10  4/Sensation and learning  
12  5/Brain, Body and Motor Development  
17  Review for Mid Term, in class  
19  *(Mid Term Exam, Chapters 1 through 5)*  
24  6/Emotional Development  
26  7/Language Communication  *One page paper due*  
31  8/ Cognitive Development, and 9/only 365 to 379

**November**

2   10/ Intelligence and Achievement  
7   10/ Intelligence and Achievement  
9   11/Family  
14  12/Peers and friends  
16  13/Gender Roles  *One page paper due*  
23  No class—Enjoy your holiday  
28  14/Morality  
30  15/Developmental Psychopathology

**December**

5   *(Final Exam, 7 to 9 pm, Harris 205)*

*Revision: 11/7/2005 12:13:14 PM*