

Psychology 4115 (29310): Infancy
University of Florida
Spring 2026



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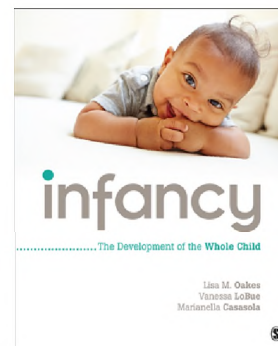
Time: Tuesday | Period (9:35 PM– 12:35 PM)

Location: Antevy 0215

Course Textbook: Infancy: The Development of the Whole Child
(Oakes, LoBue, Casasola), Sage Publications.

<https://collegepublishing.sagepub.com/products/infancy-1-275470>

Preferred Mode of Communication: Please contact me via CANVAS or email. I aim to respond to emails within 24-48 hours, but if I do not, please resend your email. I receive upwards of a 60-100 emails a day and sometimes miss responding.



Purpose and Goals

Using an interdisciplinary approach, we will explore social, cognitive, physical, and biological factors that can shape the course of infant development. The course will be designed around answering and discussing the following questions:

How do babies develop and learn? Why is studying infant development important? What are the methods that researchers use to study infants? What role do parents play? How does the brain develop? What do parents, education, and health care professionals need to know about the development of infants starting prenatally and until 3 years of age? How does development differ within and across cultures? How can society and policy support infant development? Special emphasis will be placed on issues and debates that have dominated the field and continue to be a source of controversy and impetus for research.

I design all my classes around developing skills that I see as important for careers in early child development, education, healthcare, policy, and nonprofit work. To this end, every week we will have a workshop designed around honing these skills. These workshops may include research, presentations, group work, and computer work. **Please check CANVAS each week to make sure you have the materials and information needed to fully participate in the workshops.**

Course Requirements

This course will be conducted in person and there is not a remote attendance option. Most weeks will include a 30 minute to 1 hour presentation and discussion followed by a workshop. This course has been designed to enable you to continually sharpen your skills in critical reading, discussing, conceptualizing, presenting, and writing. As an instructor, I aim to help you develop these skills and create several products for you to use to showcase your skills in the future. **High**

value will be placed on students who thoughtfully and actively contribute to these projects as well as discussions that take place in class.

Due to the nature of this course, approximately 3-5 hours of reading per week is required. I find programs and apps, including “Natural Reader” and “Speechify”, are sometimes helpful for getting large amounts of reading completed. Reading times vary by individual, but students should expect to spend at least 3 hours preparing for class each week in addition to time spent on assignments and projects. As a reminder, instructors at UF are required by federal law to assign at least 2 hours of work outside of class for every contact hour (credit hour). Work done in these hours may include reading/viewing assigned material and doing explicitly assigned individual or group work, as well as reviewing notes from class, synthesizing information for an exam or writing assignments, and other self-determined study tasks. Weeks may differ in the amount of work, given the design and structure of the course. **I encourage you to look through the syllabus and add important deadlines to your calendars.**

Students will be required to have access to a computer with internet, canvas, word, powerpoint, and excel (or the google equivalents) for some of the assignments and activities. Please ensure you have access to these programs on your computer (all should be provided by UF or can be found free online). If you are concerned about any aspect of your access, please contact the instructor before the end of the second week of class so that alternates can be arranged.

In-Class Discussions and Group Work:

Do:

- Be explanatory and justify your opinions. Credit the ideas of others through citing and linking to scholarly resources.
- Respect privacy, diversity and opinions of others. Communicate tactfully and base disagreements on scholarly ideas or research evidence.
- Be truthful and accurate and indicate if you are uncertain or expressing an opinion.
- Address others by name and be mindful of your tone.
- Take the time to get to know your colleagues in this class so that you can take into account differences in lived experiences when contributing in class.

Avoid:

- Misinforming others when you may not know the answer. If you are guessing about something, clearly state that you do not know the answer.
- Sharing another person's professional or personal information.
- Using profanity or participating in hostile interactions.
- Using sarcasm or being rude.
- Interrupting people when they talk.

STUDENTS CAN SHOW MASTERY OF THE MATERIALS IN THE FOLLOWING WAYS:

1. Workshops. There will be in-class workshops throughout the semester that require group work and/or short presentations to the class. **9 out of 10 of these activities will contribute to**

your grade and each one will be worth 7 points for a total of 63 points. Therefore, you can miss one of them or the lowest grade will be dropped when calculating your final grade. These activities will often be based on the readings and aim to facilitate translation from research and theory to current events relevant to policy, health or education.

2. Weekly Response Posts. Each week a chapter is assigned from the Oakes, LoBue, and Casasola book, you should pick one of the critical thinking questions at the end of the chapter to answer and submit via canvas. There will be no response posts due for weeks that don't include readings from the book, and you may pick 1 question even when there are 2 chapters assigned for that week. These response posts will not be graded for content but you will get credit for completing them, and some of these questions (the same questions) will show up on the midterm and end of the semester take-home tests (which will be graded), so it is in your best interest to pick one to answer carefully as it may save you time on the tests. **Answering 1 question each week (you will be graded on 9/10 total, you can drop one) will be worth 4 points each for a total of 36 points.**

3. Design a Toy Project 40 points (20 points written proposal; 20 points presentation).

For this project, you will design a toy that will benefit or support infant development based on what we know about perceptual, cognitive, language, and/or social development from the readings. You will work in groups of 2-3 people and propose a toy design. You will have two weeks of in-class time (1 hour each) to work with your group. You will submit your written proposal give a 6-8 minute presentation about the toy.

Written Proposal: Your toy description can be an image that you design and should include a written description with references (citations of research papers) about what aspects of development it supports and why. You should also include a targeted age and describe why that age is targeted and a description of the information that will be used to describe the benefits of this toy to parents on the box. Based on the readings for this class, you should explicitly discuss how the toy will benefit infants' social, cognitive, language, sensory/perceptual, and/or physical development. You don't need to design something that supports all these areas, but you should support at least one and clearly describe why (including citations of studies). Finally, you should add information for parents about how to engage the infant with your toy. Your written description should be 2-3 pages, including the labeled picture.

Oral Presentation: Each group will present their toy proposal to the class. Your group will present your Design a Toy Project in detail with 8-12 slides that include the following:

Background Literature Related to your Toy (4 points)

Visual/Design of the Toy (4 Points)

Boxing and Marketing Proposal (4 Points)

Information for Parents about why it will be important/helpful (4 points)

Presentation Style and Clarity (4 Points)

4. Take Home Exams. There will be two (non-cumulative) take-home exams that will be based on the Critical Thinking Questions at the end of each chapter in the Oakes, LoBue, and Casasola

book. Each Exam will include 5-7 Essay Questions taken from the Critical Thinking Questions at the end of each chapter. Each exam will be worth 30 points.

Assignment/Grade Summary

1. Workshops	63 points
2. Reading Responses	36 points
3. Design a Toy Assignment	40 points
4) Exams	60 points
5) Bonus Point	1 point

Total:	200 points

Percentages

A: 186-200
A-: 180-185
B+: 174 – 179
B: 166 – 173
B-: 160 – 165
C+: 156-159
C: 146-155
C-: 140-145
D+: 134-139
D: 126-133
D-: 120-125
F: lower than 120

Course Schedule and Assigned Readings and Due Dates (please see CANVAS for updates)

Week 1 (January 13th): Why and How We Study Infant Development

Reading: Chapter 1

Due By Monday, January 19th at 12 pm via Canvas: Chapter 1 Critical Thinking Question

Workshop: Getting to know each other

Week 2 (January 20th): Biological and Brain Development 1:

Reading: Chapter 2

Due: Chapter 2 Critical Thinking Question

Workshop: Interactive Brain Atlas/Design a Brain Presentation

Week 3 (January 27th): Prenatal, Sensory Development and the Newborn

Reading: Chapter 3

Due: Chapter 3 Critical Thinking Question

Workshop: Teratogens: Timing, Dose, Duration (How does Smoking, Alcohol, Cocaine, Lead, Zika, Opioids, COVID19, Marijuana impact the developing fetus). Be prepared to break into groups and do online searches, and present your findings.

Week 4 (February 3rd): Biological and Brain Development 2: Methods and Techniques

Reading: Olsen et al., 2025

Workshop: UF BCD Lab Visit. If your last name begins with an A-M you will arrive at the BCD lab on the 3rd floor of the Psychology Building (Room 333) at 9:35. If your last name begins with N-Z you will arrive at the lab at 10:45.

Week 5 (February 10th): Perceptual Development

Reading: Chapter 4

Due: Chapter 4 Critical Thinking Question

Workshop: Visual and Auditory Screening: Create an Infographic

Week 6 (February 17th): Physical and Motor Development (Exam 1 Assigned)

Reading: Chapter 5 Science News Piece to read:

<https://www.sciencenews.org/article/culture-helps-shape-when-babies-learn-walk>

Due: Chapter 5 Critical Thinking Question

Workshop: Exam 1 Jeopardy

Week 7 (February 24): The Development of Cognitive Skills and Understanding of the World

Reading: Chapters 6 & 7

Due Chapters 6 & 7 Critical Thinking Question

Due: Exam 1 (Chapters 1-5) on Feb. 23rd at 12 pm

Week 8 (March 3rd): The Development of Play and Symbols

Reading: Chapters 8

Due: Chapter 8 Critical Thinking Question

Workshop: AI and Screen Debate

Week 9 (March 10th): and Language Development

Reading: Chapter 9

Due: Chapter 9 Critical Thinking Question

Workshop: Design a Toy Project and Proposal

Spring Break No Class (March 14th-22nd)

Week 10 (March 24th): Attachment, Emotional and Social Development

Reading: Chapters 10 & 11

Due: Chapter 10 & 11 Critical Thinking Question

Workshop: CONT Design a Toy

Week 11: (March 31st) The Context of Infant Development: Parenting, Peers, and Community

Reading: Chapter 12

Due: Chapter 12 Critical Thinking Question

Workshop: Design a Parent Centered Prevention Program

Week 12 (April 7th) Child Care, Parental Leave, and the Role of Government

Reading: Scott, L.S., Brito, N. (2022). Supporting healthy brain and behavioral development during infancy. *Policy Insights from the Behavioral and Brain Sciences*, 9(1) 129–136 DOI: 10.1177/23727322211068172

Workshop: Policy Discussion

Week 12 (April 14th): Design a Toy Presentations

Due: Design a Toy Slides and Written Proposal

Week 13 (April 21st): NO IN-PERSON CLASS, Complete Exam 2

Take Home Exam Due (Content from Weeks 7-12; Chapters 6-12): April 21st

Academic Resources and Course Policies

This course complies with all UF academic policies. For information on those policies and for resources for students, please see: <https://syllabus.ufl.edu/syllabus-policy/uf-syllabus-policy-links/>.

Course Specific ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE POLICY:

Generative artificial intelligence (AI), specifically the kind based on Large Language Models (LLMs) like ChatGPT, has become a transformative force in many fields. Scholarly writing and publishing are no different, and generative AI has begun to have an impact on scholarly work. When using generative AI, we follow APA's policies:

- When a generative AI model is used in the drafting of a manuscript, the use of AI must be disclosed in the methods section and cited.
- When AI is cited, you must specify in the methods section how, when, and to what extent AI was used.
- You must upload the full output of the AI as supplemental material.
- When AI is used in a presentation (e.g., to generate an image, chart, etc.) it should be cited at the bottom of the slide (e.g., "Generated by AI").

Note that if there is any reason to suspect that generative AI has been used inappropriately (i.e., not in accordance with the policy stated above), an AI detector (e.g., Copyleaks) will be used to evaluate the assignment. If inappropriate use of AI is detected, the student may receive a zero for the assignment.

Attendance and Late Assignment Submissions:

Students will not receive credit for workshops if they do not attend class. That said, 1 workshop grade will be dropped, and so students can miss 1 workshop without it impacting their grade. For late assignments, **10% of the total available points is deducted per day late**. An assignment is considered 1 day late if it is turned in after the CANVAS deadline, even if it is turned in before class. If a student misses more than 2 classes due to a medical or personal issue (and can document this issue), students should contact Dr. Scott to plan for making up the work.

Sexual Harassment

Sexual Harassment is not tolerated in this class, in the Department of Psychology, or at the University of Florida. Sexual harassment includes: the inappropriate introduction of sexual activities or comments in a situation where sex would otherwise be irrelevant. Sexual harassment is a form of sex discrimination and a violation of state and federal laws as well as of the policies and regulations of the university. All UF employees and students must adhere to UF's sexual harassment policy, which can be found here <https://titleix.ufl.edu/about/title-ix-rights/>. Please review this policy and contact a university official if you have any questions about the policy. As mandatory reporters, university employees (e.g., administrators, managers, supervisors, faculty, teaching assistants, staff) are required to report knowledge of sexual harassment to UF. If you disclose this information, please keep this in mind and seek advice before disclosing to a mandatory reporter. You might consider consulting with someone outside of UF before discussing with a mandatory reporter. If you would like help finding someone else outside of UF, I would be happy to help.

Inclusive Learning Environment

Civility and respect for the opinions and backgrounds of others are very important in an academic environment. Likely, you may not agree with everything that is said or discussed in this course. However, courteous behavior and responses are always expected. When you disagree with someone, be sure that you make a distinction between criticizing an idea and criticizing the person. Expressions or actions that disparage a person's race, ethnicity, nationality, culture, gender, gender identity/expression, religion, sexual orientation, age, disability, or marital, parental, or veteran status are contrary to the mission of this course and will not be tolerated.

In this course, we will engage and collaborate in scholarship that may challenge opinions about infant and child development and the role of government or policymakers in supporting development. Throughout this class, we will work to understand the factors that impact infant development based on scientific investigations. These discussions aim to empower students towards understanding how to best support infant development, based on data, as a society. Often, sensitive topics come up in class that were not planned by the instructor. When this occurs, it is Dr. Scott's policy to engage in a discussion and ask everyone to make clear when statements and topics are based on scientific data, when the data is unclear, and when opinions are being expressed.

Additional UF Policies and Resources

University Police: 352-392-1111 (or 9-1-1 for emergencies) <http://www.police.ufl.edu/>.

Health and Wellness

U Matter, We Care: If you or someone you know is in distress, please contact umatter@ufl.edu, 352-392-1575, or visit [U Matter, We Care website](#) to refer or report a concern and a team member will reach out to the student in distress.

Counseling and Wellness Center: [Visit the Counseling and Wellness Center website](#) or call 352-392-1575 for information on crisis services as well as non-crisis services.

Student Health Care Center: Call 352-392-1161 for 24/7 information to help you find the care you need, or [visit the Student Health Care Center website](#).

University Police Department: Visit [UF Police Department website](#) or call 352-392-1111 (or 9-1-1 for emergencies).

UF Health Shands Emergency Room / Trauma Center: For immediate medical care call 352-733-0111 or go to the emergency room at 1515 SW Archer Road, Gainesville, FL 32608; Visit the [UF Health Emergency Room and Trauma Center website](#).

GatorWell Health Promotion Services: For prevention services focused on optimal wellbeing, including Wellness Coaching for Academic Success, visit the [GatorWell website](#) or call 352-273-4450.

Sexual Assault Recovery Services (SARS), Student Health Care Center, 352-392-1161.

Academic Resources

E-learning technical support, 352-392-4357 (select option 2) or e-mail to Learning-support@ufl.edu. [e-Learning Supported Services Policies](#) includes links to relevant policies including Acceptable Use, Privacy, and many more.

Library Support, <http://cms.uflib.ufl.edu/ask>. Various ways to receive assistance with respect to using the libraries or finding resources.

Teaching Center, Broward Hall, 352-392-2010 or 352-392-6420. General study skills and tutoring. <https://teachingcenter.ufl.edu/>.

Writing Studio, 302 Tigert Hall, 352-846-1138. Help brainstorming, formatting, and writing papers. <https://writing.ufl.edu/writing-studio/>.

ONE.UF is the home of all the student self-service applications, including access to: [Advising](#); [Bursar](#) (352-392-0181); [Financial Aid](#) (352-392-1275); [Registrar](#) (352-392-1374).

Career Connections Center: Reitz Union Suite 1300, 352-392-1601. Career assistance and counseling services.

******This syllabus is subject to change by the instructor. Announcements of changes will be made in class and posted on Canvas. Please check CANVAS daily.**