

INFANCY 3520 – Faculty of Health – Fall Semester, 2013
Section A and B: Tuesday (14:30-17:30) RS 137
and Wednesdays 11:30-2:30 CLH-A

PREREQUISITES: PSY 1010 AND 2110

Course Instructor: Maria Legerstee, Ph. D. – Office visits by Appointment
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How to get in touch with us

The professor and TA's each have office hours. Please use office hours to get clarification on material taught in class and written in the book. You can also ask questions during and after class.

Please check information about the course on Moodle.

Correspondence by email

In order to correspond by email you need a York e-mail address. No answers will be provided to students with other e-mail names.

Please write the course number in the subject line of your e-mail when corresponding with us and give your student number as well.

Be considerate when using email to contact us. You may have **ONE** message, but we have **300 students**.

Purpose of the course

In Developmental Psychology you learned about the infant's physical, social, emotional and cognitive development. Thus, questions that focused on how the infant grows, and begins to feel and think. In this course we study how infants get to know **other** people, their feelings, emotions and their thoughts. This is a developmental process. The most important thing that infants acquire during the first year of life is how infants become aware that other people have a mind, or 'mental states' and that these mental states, such as goals and intentions drive their actions. Because **the developmental changes** through which children develop in their understanding of people's minds (mental states) mimics actual theory changes, this phenomenon has been called the child's Theory of Mind. To get to know **HOW** infants acquire an understanding of other people and to reveal the developmental process and the mechanism that affect this process we will examine **how infants communicate with people** during the first two years of life.

The development of communication has traditionally been divided into three major areas, each signaling an important **developmental milestones** in the child's awareness of the mental states of people.

During the **first developmental phase (0 –4 months)**, infants engage in **dyadic interactions** that are typified by proto-communications (social interaction with emotional content and turn-taking structure). Infants have a special attraction for people because they communicate with people and not with inanimate objects. Infants also appear to have expectations about the structure of communication, because they get upset when people violate these expectations. These early attention biases for people would seem prerequisites for the development of a theory of mind.

During the **second developmental phase** infants engage in triadic interactions. Infants begin to coordinate attention between people and objects, enabling them to communicate about things in the environment. During these interactions 5-7 month-old infants monitor people's gazes to disambiguate people's goals, and use people's gazes and facial expressions as cues to infer when people are teasing in humorous interactions. Such an understanding can be seen as a foundation to the infant's later understanding that others are behaving in ways that does not match with reality.

From **9 and 12 months**, infants use facial expressions and gazes as cues to infer what people want. This kind of primitive understanding of desires of others is a first step in understanding how such cues may be used to predict other's actions and potentially their internal mental states.

During the third developmental phase in the ontogeny of communication is called symbolic communication where infants use **symbolic gestures or words** to direct people's attention to events. We will examine experimental findings that show that between **12 and 14 months** infants begin to point to affect another's mental state. Finally between **12 and 18 months** infants engage in pretense!

Infants do not live in a vacuum, the environment is **important for learning and constructing knowledge**. We will look at how the **quality of maternal interactions** influences the infants' inclination to monitor gazes and emotional expression of others in the context of face to face interaction at 1 and 3 months; engage in joint attention between 5 and 7 months, and reference people's attention and emotions in order to infer what they want (primitive-desires) by 12 months.

In summary, by studying how infants communicate we learn about the **DEVELOPMENTAL** process of how an awareness of mental states develops in infants, and by studying the interpersonal interactions and its effect on the development of communication, we learn about the mechanism that promotes the development of a Theory of Mind in infants.

Thus the course aims to foster discussion and critical evaluation of the contemporary research into the development of intentional nonverbal communication in human infants. We will examine in detail the **DEVELOPMENT** in the following content areas:

- Definition of Intentions and Theory of Mind
- Infants' preference for Human stimuli, (endogenous and exogenous factors)
- Animate/Inanimate distinction
- Development of an awareness of self
- Dyadic and Triadic Communication,
- The development of attention following and sharing
- The development of Pointing and Pretense
- The influence of maternal affective behavior

These areas will be discussed from various theoretical perspectives such as: Classical Developmental theories (Piaget, 1954), Nativist (Baron-Cohen, 1995), Learning theory (Skinner), Social Interactions theories (Fogel, 1993; Hobson, 2002, Reddy; 1991); Vygotsky, Trevarthen, 1979; Tronick, 1981), and Constraint Constructivism (Legerstee).

The text book used is written by Professor Maria Legerstee.
Legerstee, M. (2005). *Infants' Sense of people: Precursors to Theory of Mind*. Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press.

Copies of the book will be on reserve in the Scott Library (Call Number: BF 723 S6 L44 2005)

Evaluation

Two midterms (25% each = 1.5 hour exam). First midterm will be given before the drop date (Drop date is November 8, without receiving a grade), the 2nd exam is a month later and the final exam (50% = 2.5 hour exam) will be scheduled by the registrar.

EXAMS ARE BASED ON POWER POINT PRESENTATIONS, TEXTBOOK, ASSIGNED READINGS AND FILMS.

Each 1.5 hour exam will involve a choice of 4 out of 6 questions. Questions are in point form (from 4 to 10 points. Answers to questions can be short and should be answering only the questions asked. **EACH ANSWER CAN NOT EXCEED ONE PAGE.** The final 2.5 hour exam will be 6 out of 8 questions.

The grading scheme for the course conforms to the 9-point grading system used in undergraduate programs at York (e.g., A+ = 9, A = 8, B+ = 7, C+ = 6, etc.) Assignments and tests will bear either a letter grade designation or a corresponding number grade (e.g., A+ = 90 to 100, A = 80 to 90, B+ = 75 to 79, etc.) For a full description of the York grading system see the York University Undergraduate Calendar (http://calendars.registrar.yorku.ca/pdfs/ug2004cal/calug04_5_acadinfo.pdf)

Please refer to Moodle for instructions regarding missed exams. Make-up exams are possible according to the guidelines of the Senate (e.g., note from doctor, etc.), religious holidays etc as stipulated by Senate only. Make up exams will be scheduled at the end of the semester **after** the exam period. You can only write two make ups out of the three exams, and only on the same day.

Supplementary articles can be obtained on Moodle.

Academic Integrity

All students are expected to familiarize themselves with the following information, available on the Senate Committee on Curriculum & Academic Standards webpage (see Reports, Initiatives, Documents)

http://www.yorku.ca/secretariat/senate_cte_main_pages/ccas.htm

<https://w2prod.sis.yorku.ca/Apps/WebObjects/cdm.woa/wa/regobs>

- York's Academic Honesty Policy and Procedures/Academic Integrity website
- Ethics Review process for research involving human participants
- Course requirement accommodation for students with disabilities, including physical, medical, systemic, learning and psychiatric disabilities
- Student Conduct Standards and Religious Observance Accommodation

September 10 and 11, 2013

Introduction

September 17 and 18, 2013

Ch. 1: Brain, Mind, Theories of Piaget

Theories: Piaget vs. Constraint Constructivism vs. Nativism

PPT: Do Intentions Matter – 2006 – Kyoto

September 22 last day to enroll without permission of instructor

Wednesday, September 24 and 25, 2013

Ch. 2: Biological underpinnings of socio-cognition:

Endogenous and exogenous processes

Film: Infant Methodology

October 1 and 2, 2013

Ch. 3: The animate/inanimate distinction

PPT: – Variation in imitation

Film: Person-object differentiation in normally developing infants and infants with Down syndrome

October 4 – last day to enroll with permission of instructor

Wednesday, October 8 and 9, 2013

EXAM I – 1.5 hour exam covering chapters 1-3

October 14, 2013, Thanksgiving - No classes

Wednesday, October 15 and 16, 2013

Ch 4: Self and consciousness

Article: [Legerstee, M. Anderson, D. & Schaffer, M. \(1998\). Five and eight month-old infants recognize their faces and voices as familiar and social stimuli, *Child Development*, 69, 37-50.](#)

Film: first 6 months and self

Wednesday, October 22 and 23, 2013

Ch. 5: Dyadic interactions

Ch. 6: Triadic interactions

Article: Trevarthen, C. (2004). The human brain: Adapted for learning meanings from other people.

PPT: Jealousy

Film: The baby's brain: Wider than the sky (Call Number: Video 6436)

(October 29-30 CoCurricular Days FOR Infancy 3520)

Wednesday, November 5 and 6, 2013

EXAM II – 1.5 hour exam covering chapters 4 - 6

(November 8, 2013 final day to drop course)

November 12 and 13, Ch. 7: Social influences on infants' developing sense of people

Attachment - Harris

Film: Harlow monkeys "Mother love" (Call number: Video 2319)

Wednesday, November 19-20, 2013

Chapter 8: Affect attunement and prelinguistic communication

PPT – Harris

Film: Out of the Mouth of Babes (Call number: Video 3529)

Wednesday, November 26 and 27, 2013

Chapter 9: The quality of social interaction affects infants' primitive desire reasoning

Chapter 10: Social cognition, affect attunement, and imitation

Overview of the Course

Dec 3rd 2013 END OF CLASSES

FINAL 2 hour exam is during the exam period (which falls between December 10-11, 2013), as scheduled by registrar – covers chapters 7-10.