



PSY195 H1 S – The Science of Babies and Children

Contact Information

Instructor:	Jessica Sommerville
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Class Time:	Mondays, 2pm to 4pm
Office Hours:	End of class and after class
Location:	SS 2114

Course Description, Goals, and Prerequisites

Up until roughly 4 decades ago, infants were seen as cute, clueless creatures. In fact, it was William James who claimed that infants entered the world in a state of “blooming, buzzing confusion”. Yet, research from a range of fields has led to a radical consideration of this claim; infants may be cute but they are not clueless!

In this class, we will consider and discuss the science of babies. In particular, we will take a second look at long held beliefs about the nature of infants and their knowledge. Indeed, we will learn that studying infants’ perception, cognition and behavior can offer us critical insights into long-standing philosophical questions.

The class will require reading of scientific articles and book chapters as well as analyzing popular press and media depictions of infants. The only prerequisite is a curious and critical mind. The course puts great emphasis on writing and on starting to read primary scientific literature.

Upon successful completion of this course, students will:

1. Have overview knowledge of aspects of Infancy as it relates to perception, cognition and behavior
2. Be able to use exploratory writing to develop arguments and develop their understanding of subject matter.
3. Begin to be able to read and summarize a scientific research paper in Developmental Psychology.

Reading Material/Textbook(s)

Gopnik, A. (2009). *The philosophical baby: What children's minds tell us about truth, love & the meaning of life*. Random House.

Throughout the semester I will assign additional readings to compliment the text; these will be made available on Quercus or via online links.

Course Evaluation/Marking Scheme

You can earn up to 100 points in this class. Your grade will be based on the following three components. They are described in detail below.

Class participation	25 points = 25%
Reading reflections	36 points = 36%
Handout and brief in-class Summary	39 points = 39%

These components encourage you to work toward and eventually demonstrate your mastery of the course objectives. Their respective alignment with the course objectives is as follows:

	Course Objective					
	Overview knowledge of aspects Developmental Psychology.		Use exploratory writing		Begin to read and summarize academic papers.	
	Practice	Demonstrate	Practice	Demonstrate	Practice	Demonstrate
Class participation	X				X	
Reading Reflections		X	X	X		
Handout and brief in-class Summary						X

Class Participation (25 points)

Every week your participation in the class will be scored. Your score will be based on the (1) quality (relevance, insight added), (2) quantity (not too much, not too little), and (3) conciseness (making good use of everybody's time) of your contributions. Listening carefully to your classmates' contributions is essential. Questions that spark a class discussion or that help us clarify understanding can be significant contributions, too. In making this assessment, I am answering the question "how different would the class have been if that student would not have been present?" Your score will be 0 (absent, silent, non-relevant), 1 (ok), 2 (good), or 3 (outstanding) points. No more than 25 points can be earned over the course of the term. Missed class periods cannot be made up.

Reading reflections (36 points)

Over the course of this semester, 10 chapters from “The Philosophical Baby” will be assigned reading (see course schedule below). In addition, from time-to-time I will ask you to complete additional readings to supplement your text reading; these sources will be announced through course announcements and you will be either able to access them directly via Quercus or via a link.

You will be responsible for completing an exploratory (unconstrained) writing exercise and submitting your writing on Quercus **by Sunday 10pm before the respective class**. I will introduce you to the technique of unconstrained writing, and you will have a chance to practice it in our first class.

You will earn 2 points for each of nine submitted writing pieces. Three times this term, your writing will be randomly selected for detailed grading based on these aspects:

1. written with an authentic voice (2 points)
2. related to the assigned chapter (2 points)
3. exploring topics related to the science of babies (2 points)

Paper handout and in-class paper summary (39 points)

Every student will select a topic covered in class and find a relevant research article (we will discuss how to search for research articles using databases in class). You will then give a five-minute in-class summary about your selected paper in week 11 or 12 of this term, and prepare a handout summarizing key aspects of this paper. We will discuss the structure of papers, how to approach them, as well as how to prepare a handout and a summary in class. I will provide you with a handout template.

You will submit and receive feedback on your selected article during/following week 5 (3 points), and you should submit two intermittent drafts of your handout in weeks 7 and 9 (3 points each, grading based on effort). The final version of your handout is due by 3pm on the Monday of Week 11. Handout (25 points) and presentation (5 points) are judged based on:

1. accurately conveying the idea and content of the paper
2. explaining the relevance of the paper’s insights, to the topic of choice
3. making good use of space/ time
4. satisfying the format requirements and being of professional quality.

Number of points	Step	Due date
3	Submit selected article	Week 5 – Between Sunday and Friday
3	First page draft of handout	Week 7 – Between Sunday and Friday
3	Complete draft of handout	Week 9 – Between Sunday and Friday
25	Final version of the handout	By 3pm Monday of Week 11
5	In-class presentation of the handout	Weeks 11/12

There will be no midterm or final exam for this class.

Course Webpage/Quercus

The website associated with this course is accessible via <http://q.utoronto.ca>

Course Policies

Grading Policy

I strictly follow the official U of T grading scheme:

<http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/advice/general/grading-policy>

Penalties for Lateness

Late submission of all assignments will be penalized with a 5% deduction per day or fraction of a day.

Email Policy

Please check the syllabus and the class materials posted on Quercus before sending an email. You will find answers to most of your questions there.

I am available to answer questions about lecture material during the break, right after class and during office hours.

Please do not send email to tell me that you have to miss class, to inquire about your grade (it's on Quercus), to ask questions about class material (come to class or office hours) or any question answered in the syllabus or on Quercus. You may send a polite follow-up email if you haven't received a response within 48 hours.

Finally, please **consider email as professional correspondence**. Send email only to the email address listed in the syllabus. Use a meaningful subject line, start it with "Psy 195". Use a proper greeting and sign with your name. State your concern clearly and succinctly. Proof read your email for spelling and grammar. Do not use short-hands and abbreviations. Remember, **emails last forever and cannot be unsent**.

Religious Accommodation

As a student at the University of Toronto, you are part of a diverse community that welcomes and includes students and faculty from a wide range of backgrounds, cultural traditions, and spiritual beliefs. For my part, I will make every reasonable effort to avoid scheduling compulsory activities on religious holy days not captured by statutory holidays. Further to University Policy, if you anticipate being absent from class or missing a major course activity (like a test, or in-class assignment) due to a religious observance, please let me know as early in the course as possible, and with sufficient notice (at least two to three weeks), so that we can work together to make alternate arrangements.

Academic Resources

Accessibility Needs:

Students with diverse learning styles and needs are welcome in this course. If you have an acute or ongoing disability issue or accommodation need, you should register with Accessibility Services (AS) (www.accessibility.utoronto.ca) at the beginning of the academic year. Without registration, you will not be able to verify your situation with your instructors, and instructors will not be advised about your accommodation needs. AS will assess your medical situation, develop an accommodation plan with you, and support you in requesting accommodation for your course work. Remember that the process of accommodation is private: AS will not share details of your condition with any instructor, and your instructors will not reveal that you are registered with AS.

Writing:

As a student here at the University of Toronto, you are expected to write well. The university provides its students with a number of resources to help them achieve this. For more information on campus writing centres and writing courses, please visit <http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/>.

Academic Integrity and Plagiarism:

All students, faculty and staff are expected to follow the University's guidelines and policies on academic integrity. For students, this means following the standards of academic honesty when writing assignments, collaborating with fellow students, and writing tests and exams. Ensure that the work you submit for grading represents your own honest efforts. Plagiarism—representing someone else's work as your own or submitting work that you have previously submitted for marks in another class or program—is a serious offence that can result in sanctions. Speak to me or your TA for advice on anything that you find unclear. To learn more about how to cite and use source material appropriately and for other writing support, see the U of T writing support website at www.writing.utoronto.ca/. Consult the Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters for a complete outline of the University's policy and expectations. For more information, please see <http://www.artsci.utoronto.ca/osai> and <http://academicintegrity.utoronto.ca/>

Other Resources (*optional*)

Student Life Programs and Services (<http://www.studentlife.utoronto.ca/>)

Academic Success Services (<http://www.studentlife.utoronto.ca/asc>)

Counselling and Psychological Services (<http://www.studentlife.utoronto.ca/hwc>)

Course Outline/Schedule

***Please note that I will also assign additional on-line readings from time-to-time to accompany your text reading. These readings will be sent via emails/announcements and you will be able to directly access them either through Quercus or online.**

Date	Topic	Assignments
Week 1	Introduction	Introduction*
Week 2	Possibility	Chapter 1*
Week 3	Imagination	Chapter 2*
Week 4	Discovery	Chapter 3*
Week 5	Consciousness	Chapter 4* Article selection due
Week 6	Memory and the Self	Chapter 5*
Week 7	Early life/later life	Chapter 6* Handout draft 1 due
Week 8	Attachment	Chapter 7*
Week 9	Morality	Chapter 8* Handout draft 2 due
Week 10	Babies and the meaning of life	Chapter 9*
Week 11	Student presentations	Final handout due (by 2pm Monday)
Week 12	Student presentations	