



## PSY 312H1 S – Cognitive Development

### Contact Information

<b>Instructor:</b> Jessica Sommerville jessica.sommerville@utoronto.ca	<b>Teaching Assistant(s):</b> Xiao Min Chang xiaomin.chang@mail.utoronto.ca
<b>Office Hours:</b> Last part of class + after class	<b>Office hours:</b> Xiao Min will have “just-in-time” office hours before and after assignment deadlines and for exam review.

### Course Description, Goals, and Prerequisites

This course will provide participants with a foundational understanding of key issues in cognitive and language development, as well as opportunities to read and discuss both classical and recent empirical and theoretical work on these topics. The course covers infancy through the early school years. Major theories of cognitive development will be explored. Emphasis is placed on both classic and current experimental findings, and on how they address centuries-old debates surrounding the origin and nature of human knowledge.

The primary objective of this course is to give you a deeper understanding of cognitive development, and to foster critical thinking about the field. We will treat cognitive development as a way to answer fundamental questions about the origins and nature of knowledge. To examine these topics, we will investigate some of the major theories of cognitive development, and we will attempt to evaluate those theories in light of the available psychological data. You should expect to gain an understanding of the questions that motivate developmental research, and you will be pushed to think critically about the methods, results, conclusions, and theories in the field.

#### Prerequisites

PSY201H1/ ECO220Y1/ EEB225H1/ GGR270H1/ IRW220H1/ POL222H1/ SOC202H1/ STA220H1/ STA238H1/ STA248H1/ STA288H1/ PSY201H5/ STA215H5/ STA220H5/ PSYB07H3/ STAB22H3/ STAB23H3/ STAB57H3, AND PSY210H1/ PSY210H5/ PSYB20H3

#### Recommended Preparation

PSY270H1/ PSY270H5/ PSYB57H3/ COG250Y1

#### Exclusions

PSY312H5

**Note about prerequisites:** It is your responsibility to ensure that you have met **all** prerequisites listed in the Psychology section of the A&S Calendar for this course. If you lack any prerequisites you WILL BE REMOVED. No waivers will be granted.

### Reading Material/Textbook(s)

Reading Material/Textbook(s)

All classes have assigned readings associated with them (see Course Outline/Schedule and Quercus). These readings will be made available directly on Quercus. You are responsible for announcements and material posted to Quercus: <https://q.utoronto.ca/>. There is no textbook for this class.

**Lecture Videos and Slides**

I will post a pdf of my lecture slides under Quercus > Modules. Slides will be posted by the start of class. In addition, my lecture slides will often be sparse in text or missing key graphs, because research has found that this facilitates critical thinking. I will expect you to understand material beyond what is presented on the slides. Lectures will be video recorded and posted after class (typically by the Friday following class).

**Course Evaluation/Marking Scheme**

There is no Final Exam in this class.

Appraisal tool	Points	Dates
Public Information Brochure	14%	Monday January 29 <sup>th</sup> (by 1pm)
Term Test I (weeks 1-5)	25%	Monday Feb. 12 <sup>th</sup> , in class
Book proposal	5%	Monday Feb. 26 <sup>th</sup> (by 1pm)
Children’s book & appendix	30%	Monday March 11 <sup>th</sup> (by 1pm)
Term Test II (weeks 7-11)	25%	Monday April 1 <sup>st</sup> , in class
Book reading and meet and greet	1%	Monday April 1 <sup>st</sup> , 4pm to 6pm

All assignments must be submitted both on Quercus. Further details will be posted in Quercus > Modules > Assignments when these assignments go out to the class.

**Public information brochure (14%):**

You will be given a question a parent might pose on cognitive development, as well as one assigned article you can use to craft your answer. You are expected to find and read an additional 2-3 empirical papers on the topic (**BUT NOT MORE**). You will then synthesize the findings into a public information brochure of 750 words or less. Further details will be posted on Quercus > Modules > Assignments.

**Term Tests (25% each, 50% total):**

There will be two term tests. Term tests will be held in class (contingent upon Public Health guidelines) on the scheduled dates.

The first test will focus on material presented in the first half of the semester. The second test will focus on material presented in the second half of the semester.

Both tests will be made up of multiple-choice questions, along with a short essay question or questions.

**Children’s book step assignment:**

The goal of this assignment is for you to write a children’s book, intended to promote at least one aspect of cognitive development in children. I want you to use what you have learned about the science of children’s cognitive development to inform the creation of your book.

As part of this assignment, you will be randomly paired with a child in the community, and provided key details about the child to work with (such as their favorite toys, activities, food etc). Your goal is to incorporate your target child into your book in a meaningful way (i.e., as a character in your book, by incorporating their interests and activities, etc.).

#### *Topic Proposal (5%)*

You will submit a 2-page description of your children's book. This proposal should contain information about what aspect of children's cognitive development you have chosen to focus on, a brief description of your book, and justification of its format/content based on the appropriate literature in cognitive development. In addition, you should discuss how you intend to incorporate your target child into the book itself. You should include at least one peer-reviewed journal article that you have drawn on to inform your decisions.

#### *Children's book and Appendix (30%):*

1. Children's book. Your book should be between 8 and 12 pages. (21%)
2. A 500- to 750-word Appendix (essay) in which you explain how you used the literature on children's cognitive development to make decisions regarding the structure and content of your book. The final page of this essay should be an APA-formatted list of sources that you drew on to create your book (citations not included in word limit; 9%).

#### *Book reading and meet and greet (1%)*

The final part of this assignment is to attend a book reading and meet and greet. The purpose of this event is to allow you to meet with your target child/family and to read your book out loud to the child/family (or the class if your family cannot attend this event). This event will be held from 4pm to 6pm on Monday April 1<sup>st</sup>.

#### **Use of Generative AI (such as ChatGPT and similar)**

The permissibility of Generative AI in this class varies by assessment:

##### *Term Tests*

The use of Generative AI is NOT PERMITTED for Term Tests.

##### *Public information brochure, children's book assignments (proposal, book, appendix)*

For these assignments, students are required to create initial drafts without the use of Generative AI. Once a draft has been created, it is permissible to use Generative AI to improve the draft. Another way of putting this is that the CONTENT of any handouts and presentations should be originally conceived by students (without Generative AI), but Generative AI can be used as an editor to help a. improve the quality of the writing, and b. streamline the content of the handout/presentation, c. increase clarity in the presentation of your ideas.

For the children's book specifically: Generative AI can be used in any way, shape, or form to create IMAGES for your book (although note that the restrictions above still apply to the text of your book).

Please note that use of Generative AI is optional. If you choose to use generative artificial intelligence tools to assist you in the assignments in this course, this use must be documented in an appendix for each assignment. The documentation should include what tool(s) were used, how they were used (e.g., include your prompts), and how the results from the AI were incorporated into the submitted work.

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## Office Hours, Email and Course Communication

**The last ~ 30 minutes of class will be devoted to office hours.** This is a great opportunity to ask questions about course content. Questions pertaining to the syllabus, course material, and assignments are best shared with the class. You should be prepared to ask these questions during class or on the Quercus discussion board. This way, all students will benefit from the reply, whether from the instructor, TA, or your fellow students.

The TA's office hours will be focused on helping you prepare for assignments and will be concentrated in the weeks leading up to assignments. If you have specific questions about an assignment (e.g., about your brochure sources or about your book), you should attend the TA's office hours, or request a meeting. TA hours will be announced in class and on Quercus at least a week in advance.

### Email Policy

I limit the use of email in my teaching, because I believe that encouraging you to meet with me and the TA in person will foster a more collegial atmosphere and improve learning. Use e-mail only to ask simple questions requiring a reply of 2 sentences or less. If your email requires a longer response, we will ask you to schedule a meeting or visit office hours. Inquiries about grading should be directed to the TA ([elizabeth.cox@mail.utoronto.ca](mailto:elizabeth.cox@mail.utoronto.ca)). Any other emails should be sent to both the TA and the instructor ([jessica.sommerville@utoronto.ca](mailto:jessica.sommerville@utoronto.ca)). Please allow a minimum of 2 business days response time.

Please help us to respond quickly and effectively to your emails by using the subject line PSY312: Reason for Email (e.g., "PSY312: Question about the brochure assignment"). This will also help prevent your email from being accidentally labeled as spam. Finally, all U of T students are required to have a valid U of T email address. You are responsible for ensuring that your U of T email address is set up AND properly entered in the ROSI system. You are also responsible for checking your U of T email account on a regular basis. Emails not sent from a U of T account are not guaranteed an answer.

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## Late/Sick policy and Free days

### Specific Medical Circumstances

If you become ill and it affects your ability to do your academic work, consult me right away. Normally, I will ask you for documentation in support of your specific medical circumstances. This documentation can be an Absence Declaration (via ACORN) or the University's Verification of Student Illness or Injury (VOI) form. The VOI indicates the impact and severity of the illness, while protecting your privacy about the details of the nature of the illness. You can submit a different form (like a letter from a doctor), as long as it is an original document, and it contains the same information as the VOI. For more information on the VOI, please see <http://www.illnessverification.utoronto.ca>. For information on Absence Declaration Tool for A&S students, please see <https://www.artsci.utoronto.ca/absence>. If you get a concussion, break your hand, or suffer some other acute injury, you should register with Accessibility Services as soon as possible.

### Free Days

Everyone gets **three** free late days which can be used at your discretion on the brochure, topic proposal, children's book, or appendix (**NOT the Term Tests**). A free day will be used for each 24 hours (or portion thereof) that an assignment is late; e.g., handing in assignments any time after midnight on the due date counts as 1 day late, etc. If you are using a free day (or more than 1) for a given assignment, please email the TA after you have submitted the assignment with the number of free days you believe you have used; she will confirm your free day use to avoid any confusion. **Students who do not use any free days will receive 1% extra credit.**

### **Late Assignments**

Since free days provide you with a great deal of flexibility, I will not accept any late assignments even with documentation of illness the day the assignment is due. If you have exceptional circumstances, please see above.

### **Missed Term Tests**

If a student misses a term test and can provide acceptable documentation, their remaining term test will be reweighted. Exceptional circumstances that lead to missing both term tests will be handled on a case-by-case basis, with input from the student's registrar. Students have one week to contact me you after date of the missed test (and to declare their absence on ACORN, provide a VOI form (Verification of Illness), or a College Registrar's letter/email, or an Accessibility Services letter/email in lieu of an ACORN absence declaration).

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## **Re-grade Requests**

The TA and I work very hard to grade assignments fairly and thoughtfully. If you believe an assignment has received a grade in error, you may submit an appeal. I will ask you to first meet with the TA to go over the assignment. If you still have concerns about your mark, write a brief cover letter explaining your concern and deliver it to me along with the assignment in question. An appeal must be submitted within 14 days after the graded assignment is made available to students. **Assignments submitted for an appeal will be re-graded in their entirety; your grade may increase, but it may also decrease.** Results of a regrade are final and cannot be further appealed.

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## **Academic Integrity**

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Normally, students will be required to submit their course essays to the University's plagiarism detection tool for a review of textual similarity and detection of possible plagiarism. In doing so, students will allow their essays to be included as source documents in the tool's reference database, where they will be used solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism. The terms that apply to the University's use of this tool are described on the Centre for Teaching Support & Innovation web site (<https://uoft.me/pdt-faq>).

### **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, citing and using source material appropriately, 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 words 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/](http://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/>

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## 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](http://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.

### 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 tests, examinations, or other 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.

### 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/>.

### Other Resources:

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

Date	Topic	Readings	Assignments
January 8th	Introduction	Bjorklund, pp. 1-22	Brochure assigned
January 15th	Theories	Galotti, pp. 18-77	Children's book step exercise assigned
January 22nd	Methods and Perception	Flavell et al., pp 29-62 Meltzoff & Borton (1979)	
January 29th	Object knowledge	Flavell et al., pp. 63-86 Wynn (1992)	<b>Brochure assignment due</b>
February 5th	Representations and Concepts	Goswami, pp. 109-138 DeLoache (1987)	End of Term 1 test material
February 12th	TERM TEST 1	NA	<b>TERM 1 TEST</b>
<i>February 19th</i>	<i>READING WEEK</i>	NA	<b>NA</b>
February 26th	Language development	Galotti, pp. 137-169 Saffran et al., (1996)	<b>Book proposal due</b>
March 4th	Social Cognition	Sommerville (2022) Sommerville et al., (2005)	
March 11th	Memory	Goswami, pp. 251-269 Moher et al. (2012)	<b>Children's book + appendix due</b>
March 18th	Higher Cognitive Processes I	Goswami, pp. 183-216 Goupil et al., (2016)	
March 25th	Higher Cognitive Processes 2	Goswami, pp. 295-317 Diamond & Lee (2011)	End of Term 2 test material
April 1st	TERM TEST 2	NA	<b>TERM 2 TEST; BOOK READING (4-6pm)</b>