



## PSY319S Developmental Psychology Lab

Winter 2022

Tuesdays 12:00 – 3:00 pm, Sidney Smith 560 and online for January, Zoom link:  
<https://utoronto.zoom.us/j/89172432641>

### Contact Information

**Professor: Amy Finn**

email: [amy.finn@utoronto.ca](mailto:amy.finn@utoronto.ca)

**Office Hours:** Mondays, 3:00 to 4:00pm; <https://utoronto.zoom.us/j/86758877199>

**Teaching Assistant: Erika Wharton-Shukster**

email: [e.wharton.shukster@mail.utoronto.ca](mailto:e.wharton.shukster@mail.utoronto.ca)

### Description

This course is designed to develop key skills used by researchers in developmental psychology and in psychology more broadly. Many of these skills are also useful in non-academic contexts. The course is designed to be driven by your own interests and provide experience designing studies, conducting literature searches, collecting and interpreting data, and presenting findings. **Prerequisites:** PSY202H1 (or equivalent) and PSY210H1

**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.

### Goals and Learning objectives

The goal of this course is to give you the opportunity to learn about how to conduct research with children in the “[possibly virtual] real world”. This includes **honing in on a specific research question, performing studies** that can provide answers to these questions, **interpreting data**, and effectively **writing about and presenting research**.

### Requirements

Students will be asked to 1) actively participate in discussions, and 2) conduct, analyze and present both observational and experimental studies.

### Marking Scheme

<i>% of Grade</i>	<i>Assignment/Task</i>
20	Participation
5	Statement of interest

15	Open-ended observation & reflection paper
20	Replication of a developmental study & paper
30	Experiment and paper
10	Experiment poster and presentation

### Participation (20%)

This lab class is a great opportunity to engage with your peers! You will get the most out of it if you come to class and come prepared. 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 understand concepts 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, for a maximum of 24 points (getting a 2 each day will therefore result in full credit: 100%). This will make up 20% of your grade overall.

If in class participation is difficult, opportunities to participate in online forums will be made available, but coming to class (when healthy if class is in person) will still be needed to get full participation marks. If class must be missed due to health (especially when in person), you are welcome to comment on the online discussion board to receive participation marks for the day, making sure to go beyond what you note in your weekly response paper for that day.

### Statement of interests (5%)

For this assignment, you will be asked to describe a topic that you might be interested in investigating as a Developmental Psychologist. This might be a topic you've always been interested in, one you heard about in a class, or maybe something you just think about in trying to write the assignment. It does not need to be an established topic. Beyond saying what the topic is, you should specify why you find it interesting, and what you'd want to discover about it. Please also discuss the possible impact that learning more about this topic would have on the world. This should be **no longer than 1-page, double-spaced in 12-point font, Times New Roman**.

### Open-ended observation and reflection paper (15%)

You will be asked to observe a recording (each student will be provided with their own 30-45 minute video) of children's free play and then write a reflection paper describing something you observed, and reflecting on its significance. This should be no longer **2-pages, double-spaced in 12-point font, Times New Roman**.

You could write about something that happened in the span of one minute, some repeated event, or a general feature of children's play that you noticed. The topic depends on what catches your attention and interest. But the paper should not be merely descriptive, so please do not just describe events. You could also discuss why the thing you observed is interesting or important, and discuss questions that your observation raises.

### Replication of a developmental study & paper (20%)

The purpose of this research project is to provide you with the experience of collecting data from a young child and evaluating how these data fit with existing data and theories in the literature. The project requires that you (1) observe and interact with a child either virtually or in person (if you are able to **safely**) in the context of one of three classic developmental studies, and (2) write up your results according to the instructions provided for

the study that you choose.

The three studies are (1) object permanence in an infant aged (roughly) 8 to 14 months, (2) language development in a child aged roughly 18 months to 4 years, or (3) conservation in a child aged 4 to 7 years. After reviewing the three studies on more detail, you will be asked to **pick one** and follow the instructions for that study.

You must obtain the services of a child in the appropriate age range, and that may limit which study you can actually conduct. If you have a child in your life that you are bubbled with (i.e., are able to interact with safely), you should choose the study that is appropriate for their age. Otherwise, we will arrange to provide you with a child you can zoom with to complete your study.

Once you've completed the data collection, you will be asked to provide write ups that describe the child's behavior and how this fits with (or does not) previous work. You will also be asked for reflections in the form of specific prompts per experiment. This should be no longer **2-pages, double-spaced in 12-point font, Times New Roman**.

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### Experiment and paper (30%)

You will be asked to **design, conduct** and **write up** an experiment.

Your task is to identify a specific issue in this field of developmental psychology that remains unresolved or requires further investigation (they all do 😊) **and turn this into a testable question**. This question may be based on an issue from class discussion, but this is not required. However, because this is a developmental lab, it should relate to child development. *The most important part of this assignment is your ability to identify a specific and important experimental question and to design an experiment that address this question.*

After identifying the question, you will be asked to design the study to test the question and then collect data. Due to COVID restrictions, this will be data collected via zoom from your classmates who are graciously pretending to be children. You will then analyze the data and write it up in a formal report which will be no longer than **4 pages, double-spaced in 12-point font with 1 inch margins not including references** and include the following sections:

*Title and Abstract:* This is the most frequently read section of any research article, so it is worth making it good! It should be 200 – 250 words and convey the research question/background, methods, results *and their significance*. This section is usually written last.

*Introduction:* The introduction should describe the problem and cite relevant studies from the literature that inform your hypothesis (these should go beyond what has been covered in class). Clearly state your hypothesis and your predictions at the end of this section.

*Methods:* Describe the experimental methods you used to test your hypothesis. These should be sufficiently detailed to address the question at hand. For instance, if you are investigating the development of nonverbal memory processing it is not sufficient to say “subjects were tested on a nonverbal memory task.” Your paper should include a discussion of why your particular choice of experimental methodology is best for testing the hypothesis you present.

*Results:* Present your findings clearly and succinctly using the appropriate statistics and make sure to visualize your central findings. 1-2 Figures are ideal.

*Discussion/Significance:* Finally, discuss the results of your experiment, and what bearing these results have on your hypothesis. If an outcome different from the one you predicted occurred, what are the possible reasons for this outcome and what this might mean for your hypothesis? Importantly, be sure to address the broader significance of your findings. Imagine that you are trying to convince a granting

agency that they should fund this research. Why is the research important? Will it change existing theories? Might it have some clinical application?

### ***There are six important deadlines for your Experiment and Paper***

1. **Submit your idea as a research abstract** with **1)** a clear statement of the research question, **2)** a figure depicting the task or design and **3)** a figure depicting anticipated results. You will spend time in class giving each other feedback on your ideas. ***This is due Feb 8<sup>th</sup>***.
2. **Meet with Professor or TA one on one to discuss project proposal.** Time will be allocated for this during class ***on Feb 8<sup>th</sup>***.
3. **Submit testing materials and data output format/data sheet.** ***This is due March 1<sup>st</sup>***.
4. **Conduct experiment on members of class on *March 8<sup>th</sup> or 15<sup>th</sup>***.
5. **Submit a first draft of your research paper.** This draft of your proposal is due ***on March 22<sup>nd</sup>***. After submitting your proposal you will have one week to provide feedback to 2 peers via Quercus on their drafts. Writing is an inherently social and iterative processes that is greatly improved by both giving and receiving such feedback!
6. **Submit a final draft of your research paper: *due April 5<sup>th</sup>***.

### **Experiment poster and presentation (10%)**

Finally, you will be asked to construct a poster based on your findings and present this to the class during one of our last two class periods together. Creating a **clear poster** will be evaluated (5%) separately from the **presentation** (5%) and we will go over how to do this in class with multiple examples.

You will then be asked to present your poster during a blitz. The “data blitz” talk is a staple of many scientific conferences and is an opportunity to express your ideas convincingly and succinctly. In the last two classes, each student will briefly present their experiment and findings to the class. I anticipate that each student will have approximately 10-15 minutes to with 8-10 minutes for discussion.

### **Writing Help**

Book an appointment online with the Writing Centres on St. George Campus:

<http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/writing-centres/arts-and-science>

English is not your first language? Take a look at these resources:

<http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/faqs/english-as-second-language>

<http://www.artsci.utoronto.ca/current/advising/ell>

### **Plagiarism**

Plagiarism is using another writer’s words or ideas without the proper acknowledgement.

Know what plagiarism is so you can avoid it: <http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/advice/using-sources/how-not-to-plagiarize> If you have any questions about whether what you are doing constitutes plagiarism, contact the instructor.

### **Academic Integrity**

The University of Toronto takes cases of academic misconduct seriously. The UofT Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters (<http://www.artsci.utoronto.ca/osai/code/the-code-ofbehaviour-on-academic-matters>) is a detailed document describing policies regarding misconduct, which includes:

- quoting another person’s ideas in your work without clear acknowledgement

- using or possessing an unauthorized aid or obtaining unauthorized assistance in taking an exam or writing a paper
- submitting forged or altered documentation for excuses for missed exams

Any of these offenses will result in referral to the central academic integrity office and consequences that the University deems appropriate after investigation.

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## Accessibility

University of Toronto is committed to accessibility. If you require accommodations for a disability or have an accessibility concern about this course, please contact Accessibility Services as soon as possible:  
<http://www.studentlife.utoronto.ca/as>

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## That Other Kind of Psychology

These years can be challenging, both in and out of the classroom. University of Toronto offers services to assist students facing a wide range of emotional and psychological challenges:

<http://www.studentlife.utoronto.ca/hwc>

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## Schedule, Topic, Questions, Reading and Sign up

You are responsible for announcements and material posted to Quercus: [q.utoronto.ca/](http://q.utoronto.ca/).

Readings will be assigned via Quercus at least a week in advance. In addition to the assigned readings, conducting research includes identifying and reading papers as you need, depending on the topics and ideas you pursue in your assignments, as well as identifying resources to help with experiment design and data analysis.

Date	Topic, Question, Reading & Sign up
Jan. 11	<b>Course introduction</b> Overview and welcome, interests and assignments overview
Jan. 18	<b>Thinking about development</b> Overview re: conducting developmental research; overview of <u>open-ended observation and reflection paper</u> ; assignment of groups to replication study  <i>Statement of interest due</i>
Jan. 25	<b>Methods for replication study &amp; group work</b> overview of <u>replication study and paper</u> ; group methods development + presentation
Feb. 1	<b>Literature searches &amp; methods/design cont.</b> <i>Open-ended observation and reflection paper due</i>
Feb. 8	<b>Project meetings + peer work</b> <i>Experiment idea abstract due</i>
Feb. 15	<b>Data organization and analysis</b> <i>Replication study and paper due</i>
Feb. 22	<b>Reading week</b>
March 1	<b>Writing about research</b> <i>Experiment testing materials due</i>
March 8	<b>Experiment Running</b> Half the class runs experiments on everyone
March 15	<b>Experiment Running</b> Half the class runs experiments on everyone
March 22	<b>Presenting research (poster and blitz)</b> <i>First draft of research paper due</i>
March 29	<b>Data blitz #1</b> <i>Peer feedback on their research paper (2) due</i>
April 5	<b>Data blitz #2</b> <i>Final draft of research paper due</i>