

# Infant and Child Development Lab

## Syllabus – Summer 2007

Course: 01:830:332  
Class: Tues, Thurs 10:15 – 12:05pm  
Tillett 205

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### Course Objectives

- Students will conduct three in-depth studies in the field of child psychology.
- This experience should acquaint you with scientific research in infant and child development, in particular the methods used to design a study, collect and code data, analyze and interpret data, and present your research report in a professional format.

### Structure of the course

Throughout the course, students should adopt a scientist's approach to research experiences. The course is designed around three hands-on studies in child development. The three units in the course progress from simpler to more complex research designs and statistical analyses (observations and correlations at first, to experiments and ANOVA's later on).

Mirroring the progressive structure of the course content, the assignments slowly build APA report-writing skills and give the student increasing autonomy to use these skills in their writing. You will have the chance to write three full research reports, one for each research unit, throughout the course.

For the first two units, you will work with partners. Social contexts promote learning at least as much as the teacher-student context. For this reason, most of your assignments for the first two units will be done in the lab, during class hours. Please use this time to learn from each other and to ask for my help too. APA report writing is not an innate skill!

For the third unit, you will work alone and you will be asked to apply what you learned so far in the course to demonstrate you know how to write a scientific APA style report.

### Course Policies and Evaluation

Evaluations are based on the content as well as the format of the written assignments. A penalty of one point per day late is assessed for overdue assignments. No assignment will be accepted more than one day late, unless special arrangements are made *in advance*.

Participation in class discussions will account for 10 points of your final grade.

A total of 150 points may be earned, with the grading scale as follows:

A	135-150	C+	115-119
B+	130-135	C	105-114
B	120-129	D	90-104

As the class is designed to give you experience with methodology in our field, *your presence at all lab meetings is also required*. In all cases, an absence must be justified with written documentation from the Dean's office.

Please type all assignments in 12 point font, and use double spacing. Also, 'spell check' and 'grammar check' your work.

Students requiring special accommodations should contact me as soon as possible.

Lab partners : I will assign lab partners for the first two units of the course. During this time, when you prepare a joint assignment, you should consult with your lab partner as much as possible. You will both receive the same grade for every joint assignment you submit. For the third unit, you will work independently to write an APA lab report. At that time, feel free to *talk* to others about their work and ask me questions, but please do not share your written work with anyone else in the class.

Grading rubrics : When preparing an assignment you should read the appropriate grading rubric given below and check your work to be sure it complies with this rubric. When you are editing someone else's assignment, again refer to the grading rubric below and make your comments based on this rubric.

The grading rubrics should be a constant point of reference for you to determine whether you are on track to acquiring the report writing skills that are a crucial part of this course.

### **General grading rubric**

#### **Form**

- *Organized presentation of work*
- *Appropriate use of specialized notation*

#### **Content**

- *Appropriate use of specialized vocabulary*
- *Thoughtful answers*
- *Clear written expression*
- *Overall tone*

Let me explain the criteria in more detail:

## **Form**

Form includes the way you present your work overall. It's important to appear professional, and apply techniques that make your writing have more impact.

### **Organized presentation of work-**

This includes general presentation of your written work.

Use paragraphs where appropriate; use punctuation properly; use titles for sections of your work and a title page for your final report.

### **Appropriate use of specialized notation-**

This may not be relevant to every single assignment.

This includes applying APA style to your work.

Use specialized notation for reporting statistical tests, and references to other research papers (where appropriate: italics, commas, parentheses, etc).

## **Content**

Content includes the ideas you express in your work. It's important to be clear, specific and well spoken. Don't use expressions you're not sure about: it's always better to use a simple expression properly than a fancy expression improperly!

### **Appropriate use of specialized vocabulary-**

I'll evaluate your effort to use technical terms we learn in lab meetings. Use them appropriately, but don't overuse them. Sometimes, simple language is better.

Examples: variable, effect, control, statistical significance, sample size, protocol...

### **Thoughtful answers-**

This may not be relevant to every single assignment.

This includes your grasp of the essentials, that is, how well you demonstrate your understanding of important concepts and how well you put these ideas together in a coherent fashion in your written work.

Important criteria here: coherence; originality; insight; validity of arguments and examples...

### **Clear written expression-**

Please re-read and edit your own work before turning it in. It's a skill you will use no matter what you do after graduation.

Eliminate unnecessary words; Conjugate verbs properly (don't mix past and present, use the proper participle...); write full sentences; avoid run-on sentences; chose your vocabulary to be as specific as possible.

### **Overall tone-**

You will practice writing like a professional. Adopt a professional tone, and avoid all casual expressions. This doesn't mean you can't make a joke here or there, but always be professional.

Don't explain unnecessary things (like what a p-value means); be direct and humble at the same time when discussing results from a study.

## Academic Integrity

As students and teachers, we are the guardians of knowledge for future generations. An implicit condition for your participation in this course is your acceptance of the principles defining academic integrity. Please familiarize yourselves with Rutgers' Policy on Academic Integrity.

Rutgers' Official Policy on Academic Integrity: <http://teachx.rutgers.edu/integrity/policy.html>

## Course Schedule

- July 9:** Introduction to course  
*Topics:* Overview of syllabus, class assignments, and expectations
- July 10:** The Scientific Method  
*Topics:* Goals and techniques of science; SRCD ethics; APA style & lab reports
- Assignment 1:* Read an out-of-order research report. Re-order the paragraphs and identify the sections of the report (Introduction, Method, Results, Discussion, References) (10 points)

### Observational Research Designs

#### **UNIT 1: Peer interactions in preschoolers**

##### *Assign lab partners for Unit 1*

- July 12:** Infant-mother interactions and peer interactions  
*Topics:* Correlational studies; Infant-mother interactions; SPSS; Prepare DCSC observation of peer interactions; Determining hypotheses
- Assignment 2:* Write the Method section for our study on peer interactions to be conducted next week - **TO BE COMPLETED IN LAB WITH PARTNER** (10 points)
- July 17:** DCSC observation of peer interaction (**MEET AT DAYCARE – remember to bring coding sheets!**)
- Assignment 3:* Read two papers and give short answers to questions constituting an Introduction, including hypotheses (10 points)
- July 19:** Peer interaction data analysis  
*Topics:* Peer interactions in preschoolers; Correlations in SPSS; Writing Results and Discussion sections in APA style
- Assignment 4:* Rewrite Method section with feedback. **TO BE COMPLETED IN**

LAB WITH PARTNER (10 points).

*Assignment 5:* Write Results and Discussion sections for peer interaction report.  
TO BE COMPLETED IN LAB WITH PARTNER (10 points).

### Experimental Research Designs

#### **UNIT 2: Theory of mind in preschoolers**

*Assign lab partners for Unit 2*

**July 24:** Pretend play and theory of mind  
*Topics:* Prepare DCSC experiment on preschoolers' theory of mind; PsycINFO

*Assignment 6:* Intro and Method sections for Theory of Mind report. TO BE COMPLETED IN LAB WITH PARTNER (10 points)

**July 26:** DCSC experiment on theory of mind (MEET AT DAYCARE)

*Assignment 7:* Read two articles (find one on PsycINFO) and submit outline of Introduction based on work in Assignment 3 (15 points)

**July 31:** Theory of mind data analysis  
*Topics:* Theory of mind in preschoolers; ANOVA; reporting ANOVA in APA style

*Assignment 8:* Write Results and Discussion sections for Theory of Mind lab report. TO BE COMPLETED IN LAB WITH PARTNER (15 points)

#### **UNIT 3: Concept of Disease Transmission**

*Begin working independently without lab partners.*

**Aug 2:** Disease Transmission  
*Topics:* Children's concept of disease transmission; Prepare DCSC experiment; review of statistics and when they are used

*Assignment 9:* Write Method section of Sickness and Germs research report (10 points)

**Aug 7:** DCSC experiment on Sickness and Germs

*Assignment 10:* Read Gelman (1979) and Wynn (1995) and write outline of Intro section for Sickness and Germs report (10 points)

**Aug 9:** Analysis of Sickness and Germs data  
*Topics:* Children's concept of number; ANOVA; interaction effects; review APA style for research reports; guidelines for final report

*Assignment 11:* Write full Sickness & Germs research report (30 points)

Standardized Testing

**Aug 14:** Standardized assessments, Intelligence Testing  
*Topics:* Intelligence testing; examples of standardized intelligence tests: Bayley, WPPSI, WISC

10 points for overall participation