

NOVA COLLEGE-WIDE COURSE CONTENT SUMMARY
PSY 235 - CHILD PSYCHOLOGY (3 CR.)

Course Description

Studies development of the child from conception to adolescence. Investigates physical, intellectual, social, and emotional factors involved in the child's growth. Lecture 3 hours per week. (Students who take PSY 235 cannot receive credit for PSY 231.)

General Course Purpose

The purpose of the course is to provide the student with a comprehensive understanding of the methods, theories and main concepts related to child development. The course offers scientific and practical guidance to those who 1) work with, care for, or raise children, 2) design prevention and health promotion programs for children and 3) provide opportunities for children to thrive. There will be a special emphasis on the theories of development, offering descriptions and explanations of cognitive, motor, social, linguistic, emotional, personality, and moral development. The conditions and environments within which development takes place will be discussed, including an emphasis on those factors which promote positive development. A major goal of the course is for students to demonstrate an understanding of the interaction between the developing child and a continually changing world.

Course Prerequisites/Corequisites

None

Course Objectives

Upon completion of the course, the student will be able to:

- Summarize and explain the major theories of child development (e.g., behavioral, cognitive)
- Identify and explain important topical issues (e.g. family relationships, academic achievement, morality and aggression, and school readiness) in modern child development
- Describe the basic biological and contextual/cultural influences on child development
- Explain the bidirectional interactions between the developing child and a dynamic environment
- Describe and interpret typical and atypical development in cognitive, emotional, social, and moral domains
- Identify the factors that foster development as well as be able to identify factors that are related to less than optimal development
- Articulate how social and cultural differences impact child development

Major Topics to be Included

- Developmental Research- methods and problems.
- Physiological development – genetics, conception, prenatal, and maturation.
- Theoretical approaches – age/stage vs. topological; major theorists.
- Periods – prenatal, infancy, early childhood, middle childhood.
- Topics within each period – cognitive, emotional, linguistic, moral, motor, personality, social.
- Social and cultural perspectives.
- Related concerns – nature/nurture interaction, socialization processes within the family, peers, education, media, society, culture.
- Social and cultural influences on development

Optional Topics

- Child-rearing practices
- Child care in home, nursery, day care
- Exceptional and abnormal development