Issues in Infancy: Walking, Talking and Imitating
PSYC 301
Whitman College – Spring 2013
Tuesdays & Thursdays, 1-2:20pm
Maxey 301

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office hours: Tues 11-12 & Thurs 2:30-3:50

Overview
This seminar will investigate current thinking and research about selected aspects of early motor, cognitive and social development. We will look in depth at three selected topics, reading original research articles and theory papers on each and trying to weigh the evidence. The topics for this semester include learning to walk, early word learning, and imitation as a mechanism for early learning. Each of these topics is of long-standing interest in the field of infant development and raises a variety of issues that are currently being actively researched. Course work will involve reading original source materials, and class sessions will include discussion, debate, videos, and student presentations.

Readings
All of the assigned readings for the course are available through CLEO. You can login to the CLEO site from the main Students’ webpage. The readings can be found in the “Resources” tab. All readings are subject to change.

Summary of Requirements and Grading

Class Participation — 20% of your total grade
Our class meetings will primarily focus on conversation about the readings and the larger issues that they suggest. You are expected to be an active and productive participant in our conversations. To do this, you must:
- carefully read (and often re-read) the assigned texts before class,
- take notes on the reading, and
- come to our meetings with questions, themes, and ideas to discuss.
Guidelines for participation grades are at the end of the syllabus, and you will receive feedback throughout the semester on your participation.

On occasion throughout the semester, we will jigsaw articles. This means the class will divide up many articles to be read by one or two classmates, and then you will all report back to the class on what you read. When we do that, be prepared to present more than just a summary of the article – you should also establish the article’s importance, note its special contribution to the topic we are working on, identify further interesting questions it raises, relate it to other concepts and materials we have been working on in class, etc. When we do this, there will be at least 2 of you responsible for the same article; in addition to teaching your article to the class, presenters will prepare a 1 page write-up of their presentation to distribute to the rest of the class (and to me), so everyone ends up with a collection of these to refer to later, as part of the course material on a given topic, for incorporating into the papers. You should work on those handouts together with the other student(s) reading the same article. The quality of hand-outs and reporting to the class will contribute to your participation grade, but you will not be graded on these components separately.

Papers — 60% of your total grade (20% each)
During the course of the semester, you will write 3 3-5 page papers, one on each of our 3 topics. These essays do not involve any additional reading or library research – they are intended to help you integrate across the several class sessions we have devoted to each of our major topics. The questions for the essays will be handed out towards the end of each unit.
Final Exam— 20% of your total grade
At the end of the semester, you will write a take-home final exam where you synthesize across the 3 topics. You will be given the specific prompt on the last day of classes and the exam is due at the beginning of our scheduled final exam period, 9am Tuesday May 14.

**NOTE** You cannot receive a passing grade for the course if:
- You miss or fail any of the mid-semester papers, for any reason; or
- You miss or fail the final exam, for any reason.

Extensions and Late Policies

1. Mid-Semester Papers
   Every student should have a chance to manage her schedule and submit her best work. Hence, anyone can get a brief extension for any reason, according to the following stipulations:
   a) All requests for extensions must be made at least 24 hours before the paper is due.
   b) You must propose a new due date and time (no more than 1 full week).
   c) You may only receive 1 extension per paper (i.e. no extensions of extensions).

   **Late assignments will not be accepted.** If you do not turn in your paper by the due date (original or extended), then you will fail the paper (and hence the class). Exceptions to these policies will be made only if you have had a real catastrophe. (We hope not!) In that case, you should first talk to the Dean of Students or one of the other Powers That Be, and we will make every reasonable accommodation.

2. Final Exam
   There will be absolutely no extensions on the final exam. If there is a legitimate reason why you cannot complete the assignment on time, you will need to talk with the Dean of Students to arrange for an Incomplete.

Academic Honesty

All of the work that you submit in this course must be entirely your own. Of course, you can seek help in a variety of ways to prepare your papers. So it is permitted (and even recommended!) for you to: consult additional readings, search for material on the internet, discuss your ideas with other students, exchange notes with other students, and read and discuss drafts of each other’s papers. If you do use someone else’s words or specific ideas in your written work, you must provide a proper citation to the source.

Plagiarism will not be tolerated in any form. You have signed a statement indicating that you understand and will abide by the College policy on plagiarism. Any student caught plagiarizing will automatically fail the course, and may face more severe penalties from the College. (For more details, see the Student Handbook.)

Students with Disabilities

If you have a documented disability and will need accommodation in this course, please meet with Juli Dunn, Director of Academic Resources (Mem 205, x5213, dunnjl@whitman.edu) for assistance in developing a plan to address your academic needs. We will work together to come up with an appropriate plan. All information about disabilities is private; if I receive notification from ARC that you are eligible for accommodation, I will provide it as discretely as possible.
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Reading</th>
<th>Due</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tues, 1/15</td>
<td>Intro to course and infant research</td>
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<td>Tues, 1/22</td>
<td>Fundamentals of Walking</td>
<td>Thelen (1984)</td>
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<td>Tues, 1/29</td>
<td>Nuts and Bolts of Walking</td>
<td>Adolph et al (2012)</td>
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<td>Thurs, 1/31</td>
<td>Responses to locomotor challenges</td>
<td>Jigsaw</td>
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<td>Tues, 2/5</td>
<td>Culture effects</td>
<td>Jigsaw</td>
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<td>Thurs, 2/14</td>
<td>Infant imitation</td>
<td>Barr et al (1996)</td>
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<td>Tues, 2/19</td>
<td>What exactly is being learned?</td>
<td>Want &amp; Harris (2002) &amp; Byrne (1999)</td>
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<td>Tues, 2/26</td>
<td>Theory 2: Associative Learning</td>
<td>Ray and Heyes (2011) and Jones (2006)</td>
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<td>Tues, 3/5</td>
<td>Where do mirror neurons come from?</td>
<td>Heyes (2010)</td>
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<td>Thurs, 3/7</td>
<td>Imitation and autism</td>
<td>Rogers (1999)</td>
<td>Paper #2 Due Friday 3/8</td>
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<td><strong>Spring Break</strong></td>
<td><strong>March 8-24</strong></td>
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<td>Tues, 3/26</td>
<td>Thinking about language and how to study it</td>
<td>Pinker (1994), Ch.2 Karmiloff &amp; Karmiloff-Smith (2001)</td>
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<td>Date</td>
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<td>Thurs, 3/28</td>
<td>Language learning is constrained</td>
<td>Markman (1992)</td>
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<td>Tues, 4/2</td>
<td>Links between object categorization and naming</td>
<td>Waxman (2003)</td>
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<td>Tues, 4/9</td>
<td>NO CLASS: UNDERGRADUATE CONFERENCE</td>
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<td>Tues, 4/16</td>
<td>Neural basis of intentions</td>
<td>Sabbaugh et al (2007)</td>
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<td>Thurs, 4/18</td>
<td>NO CLASS – MC at SRCD</td>
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<td>Tues, 4/23</td>
<td>Memory, attention &amp; the body in word-learning</td>
<td>Samuelson &amp; Smith (1998)</td>
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<td>Tues, 4/30</td>
<td>The role of the body</td>
<td>Smith et al (2007)</td>
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<td>Thurs, 5/2</td>
<td>Hand, Mouth and Brain</td>
<td>Iverson &amp; Thelen (1999)</td>
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<td>Tues, 5/7</td>
<td>Wrap Up</td>
<td>Paper #3 Due in class</td>
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<td>Tues 5/14</td>
<td>Final Exam Due at 9am</td>
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Reading List

**Walking**


Locomotor Challenge Jigsaw options
Traversing Deformable Surfaces (i.e., walking over waterbeds)

Moving Room

Friction and slopes

Weighted Backpacks

**Culture Jigsaw options**


**Imitating**


Talking


Class Participation: Standards & Expectations

An **OUTSTANDING** (A-level) participant typically:
- Displays genuine enthusiasm and engagement with the readings.
- Advances the conversation to new levels.
- Contributes complex insights into the texts and issues.
- Draws connections among different texts and issues.
- Takes intellectual risks.
- Enhances the participation of others by questioning, actively listening, and sharing time.

A **GOOD** (B-level) participant typically:
- Shows genuine effort.
- Actively listens and volunteers.
- Asks good questions about the texts and issues.
- Stays on-topic and furthers the conversation.
- Makes significant observations, comments, or other points.
- Engages other students, not just the professors.

An **ADEQUATE** (C-level) participant typically:
- Listens but does not volunteer.
- Shows acquaintance with the texts and signs of preparation if called on.
- Offers opinions on the texts, but without support.

**UNACCEPTABLE** (failing) behavior includes:
- Frequent absence.
- Signs of total disengagement at our meetings: sleeping, writing letters, reading, etc.
- No evidence of preparation.
- “Toxic” or hostile behavior that undermines our collective learning.