



Adolescent Psychology

Course Details

Course Designator & Number: MONT 4303

Number of Credits: 3

Language of Instruction: English

Contact Hours: 45

Instructor: Dr. Olga den Besten

Course Description

This course is designed to provide an introduction to the science of development during the period known as “adolescence”—from the beginnings of the biological processes involved in puberty to sociocultural adulthood—and applications of that knowledge in practice and policy. Students will gain a foundational understanding of what is currently known about the transformational processes that shape human development as children mature into adults.

Course Objectives

This course will review what has been learned about the biological, cognitive, and social development of adolescents in the context of their multiple worlds and the issues and challenges that adolescents confront along the way. At the conclusion of this course, students will understand major theories of adolescent development and be able to define central concepts, such as puberty, identity, emerging adulthood, and cliques. Students will understand the basic biological, cognitive, and social changes of adolescence and how these may influence each other, as well as the roles of family, peers, schools, work, media, and culture.

In particular, students will understand how factors in an adolescent’s environment outside of school, including family circumstances, community, health, and economic conditions, may influence adolescent life and learning.

Students will be able to delineate the major developmental tasks of adolescence and the risks and protective factors that contribute to success or failures in those tasks, and common problems of human behavior that often emerge during the second decade of life.

Methodology

Classes will include a combination of lecture, active learning, video, and discussion. Classroom discussions will highlight important content from the text but also cover material not in the textbook. Final essays will cover readings and class content. Therefore, it is crucial to attend class and take notes. With the exception of students who have explicit permission from the instructor, students are expected to take their own notes in class. In the event that an emergency prevents you from coming to class, it is advisable to get notes from another student taking the class.

This course will consider controversial and sensitive issues. A variety of historical and contemporary perspectives on issues of adolescence will be considered. Debate and disagreement are a key component of active and critical learning; however, discussions will be held in the spirit of tolerance and mutual respect for different points of view.

Course Prerequisites

Some background in psychology or developmental science is required.

Required Reading / Materials

- L. Steinberg (2017). *Adolescence*, 11th edition (NY: Mc Graw-Hill). Hardcover, paperback, or e-book;
- Copies of articles or other materials distributed by the instructor in advance of the session in question

Grading

Grading Rubric

Letter Grade	Score or Percentage	Description
A	93–100	Achievement that is outstanding relative to the level necessary to meet course requirements.
A-	90–92	Achievement that is significantly above the level necessary to meet course requirements.
B+	87–89	

Letter Grade	Score or Percentage	Description
B	83–86	
B-	80–82	
C+	77–79	Achievement that meets the course requirements in every respect.
C	73–76	
C-	70–72	
D+	67–69	Achievement that is worthy of credit even though it fails to fully meet the course requirements.
D	60–66	
F	0–59	

Summary of How Grades Are Weighted

Assignments	Percentage of Grade
Participation in class	10%
Essay on the given topic	40%
Film/fiction literature essay assignment	25%
Active Learning Assignments (ALAs)	25%
Overall grade	100%

Assessment Details

Participation in class

Attendance and active participation in class is very important to your success in this course. Students should be present at all classes and come prepared to discuss the readings as outlined in the syllabus

Essay

Students will write a 4-page paper on the topic "Youth Participation/Activism/Civic Engagement". Each student should find their own angle of dealing with this topic and develop one major storyline/argument. Students are encouraged to find sources from the press, examples from real life, and talk about concrete adolescent/youth movement or initiative. Students should connect this with the textbook/psychological theory on issues like identity, autonomy, schools, and/or others. The required number of direct citations is 5, references - 10.

Film/fiction literature essay assignment

Students will write an essay discussing adolescence as illustrated by the film or the book of their choice. They give citations from their fiction source and describe at least one scene from it. Students should connect their argument to at least one topic of adolescence from the textbook/psychological theory. This essay should be 2,5 page-long. The required number of direct citations and references is 5 each.

Active Learning Assignments (ALAs)

These are either short written assignments (approximately half-page-long) to be completed in class for active learning points or a group project. For example, each student may be asked to write out and hand in a brief response to a class film or an issue discussed in class. Other ALAs will require discussion with classmates seated nearby.

Course Content

Unit 1

- Introduction to the course and review of syllabus. The boundaries of adolescence and the impact of their legal recognition. A framework for studying adolescence and present-day theoretical perspectives

Unit 2

- Fundamental changes happening in adolescence. Biological changes: puberty and somatic development in puberty. Obesity and eating disorders. Physical health and health care in adolescence.
- Assignment: Chapter 1, pp.13-41.

Unit 3

- Cognitive changes and the peculiarities of brain development during this developmental stage. Theoretical perspectives on adolescent thinking.
- Assignment: Chapter 2, pp.42-68.

Unit 4

- Social changes in adolescence: the transition into adulthood in contemporary society. Adolescence as a social invention. Changes in status during adolescence
- Assignment: Chapter 3, pp. 69-94.

Unit 5

- Young people in the context of family relationships: Is conflict between teenagers and parents inevitable? The generation gap: fact and fiction. Parenting practices and styles and their effect. The adolescent's family in a changing society.
- Assignment: Chapter 4, pp.95-121.

Unit 6

- The social map of adolescence: peer groups and youth culture(s), cliques and crowds. Popularity and rejection; bullying
- Assignment: Chapter 5, pp. 122-151.

Unit 7

- Adolescence in the context of the education system(s) and everyday school life. Educational achievement and occupational choices.
- Assignment: Chapter 6, pp. 152-180; Chapter 12, pp. 320-346.

Unit 8

Theme

- Young people at leisure and work: patterns of adolescent time use in different cultures. Teenage employment and leisure activities. Media and Internet use. The adolescent consumer.
- Assignment: Chapter 7, pp. 181-207.

Unit 9

- The issues of identity in adolescence. Changes in self-conceptions and self-esteem. The adolescent identity crisis and its resolution. Identity, ethnicity, and gender
- Assignment: Chapter 8, pp. 208-234.

Unit 10

- The development of emotional, behavioural, and cognitive autonomy. When do adolescents make decisions as well as adults? Political thinking and religious beliefs
- Assignment: Chapter 9, pp.235-259.

Unit 11

- Intimacy, friendship, romantic relationships, and dating in adolescence
- Assignment: Chapter 10, pp. 260-289.

Unit 12

- Sexuality as an adolescent issue and sexual activity during adolescence. Sex education.
- Assignment: Chapter 11, pp. 290-319.

Unit 13

- Psychopathology in adolescence. Substance use and abuse. Externalizing problems: antisocial behavior. Internalizing problems: depression and suicidal tendencies, treatment and prevention. Stress and coping
- Assignment: Chapter 13, pp. 347-379.

Policies

Attendance Policy

Students are expected to be on time and attend all classes while abroad. Many instructors assess both attendance and participation when assigning a final course grade. Attendance alone does not guarantee a positive participation grade; the student should be prepared for class and engage in class discussion. See the on-site syllabus for specific class requirements.

University of Minnesota Policies & Procedures

Academic integrity is essential to a positive teaching and learning environment. All students enrolled in University courses are expected to complete coursework responsibilities with fairness and honesty. Failure to do so by seeking unfair advantage over others or misrepresenting someone else's work as your own can result in disciplinary action. The University Student Conduct Code defines scholastic dishonesty as follows:

Scholastic Dishonesty

Scholastic dishonesty means plagiarizing; cheating on assignments or examinations; engaging in unauthorized collaboration on academic work; taking, acquiring, or using test materials without faculty permission; submitting false or incomplete records of academic achievement; acting alone or in cooperation with another to falsify records or to obtain dishonestly grades, honors, awards, or professional endorsement; altering forging, or misusing a University academic record; or fabricating or falsifying data, research procedures, or data analysis.

Within this course, a student responsible for scholastic dishonesty can be assigned a penalty up to and including an "F" or "N" for the course. If you have any questions regarding the expectations for a specific assignment or exam, ask.

Student Conduct

The University of Minnesota has specific policies concerning student conduct. This information can be found [on the Learning Abroad Center website](#).

