

**PSY 421**  
**COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT**  
**Fall 2020**

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<b>Time &amp; Venue:</b>	Class meets online on Tuesdays 16:40-18:30	
	Meeting ID:	972 5351 5054
	Password:	firstweek

### **Course Description and Objectives**

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This course focuses on development of cognitive processes –in a social world. How do humans acquire knowledge about the world they live in? What are the neurological, cognitive, and social processes involved? The discussion will focus mostly on the first first half of human life however we will integrate evidence from the aging brain and mind. Having said that cognition does not happen in isolation of other processes so social and emotional developmental issues will be included in the discussion.

The semester is structured in the following way: We first review empirical evidence (typical development) in several cognitive domains, memory, theory of mind, language etc. Next, we focus on a domain of atypical development; such as dyslexia, language disorders or autism. Finally, we turn to existing theories of development, and discuss whether recent developmental evidence challenge or confirm those theories.

### **Course Format**

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The course will take place online. The format is hybrid; meaning that most parts will be synchronous - the instructor and the students will be **online at the same time**- and some parts will be asynchronous - the instructor will provide brief background information about that week's topic or direct the students' attention to particular online interviews, podcasts and websites. Since there will also be frequent posts by class members as well as the instructor, the course website will be a dynamic, live space. The students are responsible for keeping themselves up-to-date. This syllabus will not update itself but the website will.

### **Structure**

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Since this is a senior level course, we will follow a seminar-class format. The instructor may provide a brief background either in the form of video recordings or live at the beginning of each class. These will be uploaded to the course website each week by the instructor. Students will be responsible for the discussion of the material via three outlets: (1) using the discussion board (forum) on the course website (2) a presentation (or discussion; whichever name that you prefer), (3) thought questions submitted for the presenter for that week.

### **Learning Objectives**

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In this course students develop a number of skills. The course aims to help:

- understanding the fundamentals, major concepts, theoretical perspectives, and empirical findings in major areas of cognitive development.
- developing skills to formulate an empirical evidence-guided research question.
- applying research findings to human behavior in everyday life.
- transfer the acquired scientific knowledge to different audience types.

## Readings

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There is no required textbook. We will read select chapters from various books. We will use them to give us some sort of a structure. Additional (more recent) articles will be assigned by the instructor and your classmates. Articles and other readings will be uploaded to the course page.

We will take advantage of having an online class and students will be asked to examine online resources; such as websites, podcasts and video series.

## Evaluation

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### Leading the discussion/ Presentation.

- After the first couple of weeks into the semester, each student is expected to lead the discussion for an assigned week.
- Each presenter for that week will first present a general question, and then see if the assigned article was successful in answering that question; state what additional research questions the piece generates etc. More information on this will be provided later.

### Exams

- There will be two exams; a midterm and a final. The midterm will be on **Nov. 23**, and the final exam date will be determined centrally by the University. The midterm and final exams will be practically similar in terms of format. The final will focus on material presented in the second half of the semester. A portion of the final will require you to integrate material from the first half of the semester –hence, the slightly higher percentage of the final exam.
- Both exams will be “take-home exams”, and they need to be submitted within a short time frame (e.g., within 2 hours).

### Class participation

- Please note that this item has an actual defined weight in the grade break-down. Participation could be through (1) active participation in the discussion (class discussion or forum discussion), and (2) posting thought questions\* for that week’s discussion. Your participation and thought questions will make up 10% of your grade.
- **Thought questions:** Class members are expected to post questions about that week’s topic/reading on SuCourse+. They are due each Sunday at 6 PM. They will be graded out of 2 (0 = no submission, 1 = questions submitted simply for the sake of submitting, 2 = actual thought questions). These questions may be used by that week’s presenters or by other class members in the discussion thread.

**Grading Summary:**

Presentation/Discussion	20%
Exam 1	30%
Exam 2	40%
Participation & TQs	10%

A	90-100
A-	85-89
B+	80-84
B	75-79
B-	70-74
C+	65-69
C	60-64
C-	55-59
D+	50-54
D	45-49
F	0-44

**WEEKLY CLASS SCHEDULE**

WEEK	DATE	TOPIC	READINGS
1	Oct 6	Why developmental science? Theories of cognitive development	Gopnik (2016). What babies know Johnson & Munakata (2005) Bjorklund (2013) up to p. 13
2	Oct 13	Theories of cognitive development	Newcombe (2013) Spelke & Kinzler (2007)
3	Oct 20	Core Knowledge Imitation, Empathy & Theory of Mind	Spelke & Kinzler Meltzoff
4	Oct 27	Theory of Mind & Social Cognition	Carpenter Wellman
5	Nov 3	Memory I	Bauer
6	Nov 10	Memory II	Ceci, Fitneva, Aydin & Chernyak (2011)

7	Nov 17	REVIEW / Q&A	
8	<b>Nov 24</b>	<b>Exam</b>	
9	Dec 1	Language I	Goldin-Meadow (2020)
10	Dec 8	Language II	Recent work
11	Dec 15	Moral Reasoning & Fairness	Nucci & Gingo
12	Dec 22	Technology & Cognitive Development	TBA
13	Dec 29	Autism	Baron-Cohen
14	<b>Jan 5</b>	<b>RECAP</b>	

### Classroom Etiquette

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You are expected to show up on time, participate honestly in class activities and discussions, and treat your fellow students with tolerance and respect. Sleeping during the online portion of the class, texting, using your cell phone or computer for purposes other than the class activities are not allowed.

All online meetings or their links will be uploaded on the course website. As the meetings will be recorded and shared, if you have any concerns about privacy issues you may turn off your cameras during class time. I also ask you to mute your microphones and unmute when you will speak.

### Disability Accommodations

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If you need accommodations because of a disability, please contact me as soon as possible so that we can schedule a time to meet privately and discuss arrangements.

### Academic Dishonesty

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Short version: Don't cheat.

Long version: Student Code of Conduct

All individual assignments must be completed by the student himself/herself, and all team assignments must be completed by the members of the team, without the aid of other individuals. If a team member does not contribute to the written documents or participate in the activities of the team, his/her name should not appear on the work submitted for evaluation.

Plagiarism is defined as ‘borrowing or using someone else’s written statements or ideas without giving written acknowledgement to the author’. Students are encouraged to conduct research beyond the course material, but they must not use any documents prepared by current or previous students, or notes prepared by instructors at Sabancı University or other universities without properly citing the source. Furthermore, students are expected to adhere to the Classroom Code of Conduct and to refrain from all forms of unacceptable behavior during lectures. Failure to adhere to expected behavior may result in disciplinary action.

**There are two kinds of plagiarism:** Intentional and accidental.

Intentional plagiarism (Example: Using anyone’s work –friend or firm- as one’s own because the student does not want to spend time working on that homework) is considered intellectual theft, and there is no need to emphasize the wrongfulness of this act.

Accidental plagiarism, on the other hand, may be considered as a ‘more acceptable’ form of plagiarism by some students, which is certainly not how it is perceived by the University administration and faculty. The student is responsible from properly citing a source if he/she is making use of another person’s work. For an example on accidental plagiarism, please refer to the document titled “An Example on Accidental Plagiarism” below.

### **An Example on Accidental Plagiarism**

This example is taken from a document prepared by the City University of New York. The following text is taken from Elaine Tyler May’s ‘Myths and Realities of the American Family’:

*“Because women's wages often continue to reflect the fiction that men earn the family wage, single mothers rarely earn enough to support themselves and their children adequately. And because work is still organized around the assumption that mothers stay home with children, even though few mothers can afford to do so, child-care facilities in the United States remain woefully inadequate.”*

Below, there is an excerpt from a student’s homework, who made use of May’s original text:

“As Elaine Tyler May points out, “women's wages often continue to reflect the fiction that men earn the family wage” (588). Thus many single mothers cannot support themselves and their children adequately. Furthermore, since work is based on the assumption that mothers stay home with children, facilities for day care in this country are still “woefully inadequate” (May 589)”.

You may think that there is no plagiarism here since the student is citing the original author. However, this is an instance of accidental plagiarism. Although the student cites May and uses quotation marks occasionally, the rest of the sentences, more specifically the following section: “*Thus many single mothers cannot support themselves and their children adequately. Furthermore, since work is based on the assumption that mothers stay home with children, facilities for day care in this country are still “woefully inadequate.” (May 589)*” almost exactly duplicates May’s original language. So, in order to avoid plagiarism, the student either had to use quotation marks for the rest of

the sentences as well, or he/she had to paraphrase May's ideas by using not only his/her own words, but his/her own original ideas as well.

You should keep in mind that accidental plagiarism often occurs when the student does not really understand the original text but still tries to make use of it. Understanding the original text and understanding why you agree or disagree with the ideas proposed in that text is crucial both for avoiding plagiarism and for your intellectual development.

*Reference(s):*

Avoiding and Detecting Plagiarism: A Guide for Graduate Students and Faculty.

The Graduate Center. City University of New York, 2012. Web.  
[http://www.gc.cuny.edu/CUNY\\_GC/media/CUNY-Graduate-Center/PDF/Publications/AvoidingPlagiarism.pdf](http://www.gc.cuny.edu/CUNY_GC/media/CUNY-Graduate-Center/PDF/Publications/AvoidingPlagiarism.pdf)