Developmental Psychology Syllabus

Department of Psychology and Neuroscience

PSYO 2090 - Fall 2026

Dalhousie University operates in the unceded territories of the Mi'kmaw, Wolastoqey, and Peskotomuhkati Peoples. These sovereign nations hold inherent rights as the original peoples of these lands, and we each carry collective obligations under the Peace and Friendship Treaties. Section 35 of the Constitution Act, 1982, recognizes and affirms Aboriginal and Treaty rights in Canada.

We recognize that African Nova Scotians are a distinct people whose histories, legacies, and contributions have enriched the part of Mi'kma'ki known as Nova Scotia for over 400 years.

Course Instructor(s)

Name	Email	Office Hours (MS Teams)
Daniel Basso	Daniel.Basso@dal.ca	Mondays, 5:30pm-6:30pm (Until Oct 2) Mondays, 11:30-12:30pm (After Oct 2) *or by appointment*
TA: Olivia Eisner	*Please contact Daniel for matters related to PSYO 2090*	

To ensure a prompt response to your email, kindly start the **subject line** with "**PSYO 2090**" and use your **Dalhousie email** so it passes spam filters! Please do not message through Brightspace.

Course Structure

Lectures & Course Delivery

Lectures will be **in-person** and **synchronous**.

Days	Time	Location
Mondays & Wednesdays	10:05am-11:25am	LSC-COMMON AREA C242

Access to Lecture Materials / Missed Lectures

Personal **recording** of lectures **is not permitted** without an approved accommodation to do so.

Prior to each lecture, I will upload **unannotated** slides to the **PSYO 2090 Brightspace**. After each lecture, I will upload **annotated** slides to the **PSYO 2090 Brightspace.**

Course Description

People change with age. This course examines the changes that occur in humans from conception through adolescence. Biological, social, cognitive, and linguistic aspects of development are considered. Theory, research, and practical implications are integrated throughout the course.

Course Prerequisites

PSYO 1011.03 (or PSYO 1021.03 or PSYO 1031.03) **AND** PSYO 1012.03 (or PSYO 1022.03 or PSYO 1032.03)	**OR**	SCIE 1506.09/1507.09 (or SCIE1505X/Y.18)

All prerequisite courses must have a grade of B- or better.

Conversion of numerical grades to final letter grades follows the **undergraduate*** Dalhousie Grade Scale

A+ (90-100)	B+ (77-79)	C+ (65-69)	D (50-54)
A (85-89)	B (73-76)	C (60-64)	F (0-49)
A- (80-84)	B- (70-72)	C- (55-59)	

Learning Objectives

After successfully completing this course, you should be able to…

1. Discuss the historical foundations and major theoretical perspectives of child development.
2. Identify and explain key physical, cognitive, and socioemotional changes that occur across development, up to and including adolescence.
3. Recognize typical versus atypical development in children and adolescents.
4. Explain the bidirectional interplay between genetic and environmental factors on children's development.
5. Critically evaluate and reflect on developmental issues and research findings.
6. Apply your knowledge of child development to naturalistic settings such as working with children, parenting, or policy development.

Course Materials

I have designed this iteration of PSYO 2090 to incorporate Open Educational Resources (i.e., **you do not need to purchase a textbook, nor any access codes**). Readings (e.g., written works, video links, infographics) will be posted on the PSYO 2090 Brightspace page throughout the semester.

The PSYO 2090 Brightspace page will also host all required information and materials for the course (e.g., lecture slides, readings, assessment details). Course announcements, assignment submissions, and grades will all be hosted on the PSYO 2090 Brightspace page.

Assessment

Assessment Overview & Schedule

Assignments

will be **submitted through the PSYO 2090 Brightspace page** and **will have a deadline of 11:59pm (Atlantic)**. **See also: Course Content Calendar.**

Component		Weight	Date(s)
Video Essay		**15%**	**Oct 15**
Developmental Scavenger Hunt		**16% total (4% each)**	**Oct 23** (Mini-Assignment 1)
			Nov 6 (Mini-Assignment 2)
			Nov 20 (Mini-Assignment 3)
			Dec 4 (Mini-Assignment 4)
Review Quizzes		**4% total (2%) each**	**Sept 27** (Quiz 1) *Opens Sept 24 at 6am*
			Nov 1 (Quiz 2) *Opens Oct 29 at 6am*
Exams	Midterm 1	**15%**	**Sept 28** – IN-CLASS
	Midterm 2	**20%**	**Nov 2** – IN-CLASS
	Final Exam	**30%**	**Scheduled by Registrar**

Visual Weight of Assessments



Assessment Descriptions

Video Essay

*The goal of this assignment is to distill your knowledge into a brief, captivating oral presentation. You will record a **3-minute** video essay about either **parenting styles** OR **attachment styles.** This is intended to be a video of you speaking to the camera, as if you are giving a mini-lecture.*

A detailed description of the assignment will be provided on the PSYO 2090 Brightspace page, along with an assignment rubric. General guidelines for the assignment are as follows:

- *You must be visible in the video and speaking in real-time (i.e., no voice-overs).*
- *If you would like to incorporate visuals, you may only use a **physical** chalkboard/whiteboard **in real-time**.*
- ***Video editing is optional,** but if you choose to do so, your edits must be limited to:*
    - *Basic cuts/transitions (i.e., the video does not need to be one-take);*
    - *Closed captioning (manual or auto-generated).*
- *You must be the only person visible and speaking in the video.*
    - *You will **not** be penalized for background noise, **if** we can still understand you.*
- *You must submit an APA 7 style reference list along with your video.*

You may discuss **approaches** to this assignment with your PSYO 2090 classmates, and you are permitted to **share equipment/resources.** However, **the content of this assignment** (e.g., video script, structure, and delivery) must be your **own, original work**.

Developmental Scavenger Hunt

*The developmental scavenger hunt is a series of 4 mini-assignments (see dates above). The goal of the Developmental Scavenger Hunt is to apply course concepts to **real-life aspects of our community**. Over the course of the semester, you will be tasked to identify physical objects (e.g., products, signs, building layouts) that **help** or **harm** certain aspects of development. You will **not** be given a specific object to find, but rather a broad topic to look for as you navigate public spaces in your day-to-day life.*

A detailed description of each mini-assignment will be provided on the PSYO 2090 Brightspace page, along with a rubric and a template for the overall assignment series. General guidelines for the assignment are as follows:

a. *Provide an **original photograph** of the object (i.e., a photograph that you took).*
b. *State **where you found the object** (it must be in a public place).*
c. *In 2-4 sentences, describe **how features of the object help/harm the assigned aspect of development.***

***You are encouraged to collaborate with your PSYO 2090 classmates** on these mini-assignments**; however,** the content of each mini-assignment must be **your own, original work** (i.e., you may not use the same photograph or description).*

Review Quizzes

*Prior to each midterm, you will complete a **12-question Brightspace quiz**. These quizzes are **intended to help you prepare for the midterm**. Questions will be in the same style as the midterm (~5:1 ratio of multiple choice and true-false questions). Quizzes will be **open-book** with **unlimited time**. **You are permitted to collaborate with your PSYO 2090 classmates on these quizzes** (have a study session!).*

*Each quiz will **open at 6am** on the **Thursday before the midterm,** and will **close at 11:59pm** on the **Sunday before the midterm** (see dates above).*

Exams

*You will have **3 in-person exams:** 2 midterms and 1 final**. Exams will be closed-book.***

***Each midterm will be held in-class** (see dates above). The midterms will consist of 40 questions (~5:1 ratio of multiple choice to true-false questions). Midterm 2 will be cumulative, but will emphasize content not covered in Midterm 1. You will have 1-hour to complete each midterm.*

***The final exam will be held during the exam period and scheduled by the Registrar.** The final exam will be cumulative, with an emphasis on content not covered in the midterms (~5:1 ratio of multiple choice to true-false questions). More information on the duration and number of questions will be provided after the exam has been scheduled by the Registrar.*

Course Policies on Missed or Late Academic Requirements

Student Declaration of Absence (SDA)

Per Dalousie's University Policy, a student may submit a maximum of **two (2)** separate Student Declaration of Absence forms **per course during a term** in the case of **short-term absence**.

Under the aforementioned policy, "Short-term absence" refers to absences of **three (3) consecutive days or fewer** due to minor physical or mental health conditions, or other extenuating circumstances such as caregiving duties; immediate family illness, injury or death; involvement in an accident; legal proceedings or being a victim of a crime, domestic or intimate partner violence.

Students who provide false or fraudulent medical or other evidentiary documentation for their absences are subject to University discipline under the Code of Student Conduct.

SDA Procedure for PSYO 2090

Students experiencing short-term absences of three (3) consecutive days or fewer resulting in missed or late academic requirements must:

- Email me prior to the academic requirement deadline or scheduled time and;
- Send me a completed Student Declaration of Absence form via Email within three (3) calendar days following the last day of absence.

Late Penalties

A penalty of **5% per day** will be applied to assignments submitted late (i.e., without an approved SDA or other agreed-upon extension). To account for technological difficulties, a **15-minute grace period** will automatically applied to all assignments (i.e., until **12:15:59am** on the date following the submission deadline for that assignment). With the exception of previously agreed-upon arrangements, **no additional leeway will be given for submission delays due to technology.**

To illustrate, if the assignment deadline is **11:59pm** on **Oct 3** and the assignment is submitted…

- at **12:15:59am** on **Oct 4**, no late penalty would apply, since this is within the grace period
- at **12:16:00am** on **Oct 4**, the assignment would receive a 5% penalty
- at **12:00:00am** on **Oct 5**, the assignment would receive a 10% penalty
- Anytime after **12:00:00am** on **Oct 23,** would receive an automatic grade of 0%.

Timestamps will be based on those recorded by Brightspace.

Course Policies for Academic Integrity & Artificial Intelligence

Policies on student collaboration vary by assignment (see Assessment Descriptions for each assignment's policy).

The use of generative Artificial Intelligence (Gen AI) and/or large language models (LLMs) is **prohibited for all assignments in this course.** This prohibition includes, but is not limited to, using Gen AI and/or LLMs for: source discovery, brainstorming, outlining, editing, translating, and producing assessed work. You are **strongly discouraged against** using Gen AI and/or LLMs as a study tool; however, should you choose to do so, you are **only permitted to use** the Dalhousie-licensed version of Copilot, to help ensure privacy and security.

PSYO 2090 is a course about developmental psychology. Throughout the course**, I encourage you to reflect on why and how the use of Gen AI and LLMs may interfere with the aspects of development that we discuss**—perhaps we can revisit this as one of our "Special Topics" lectures at the end of the term, should there be an interest.

You are **strictly prohibited** from uploading and/or sharing **any course materials or course correspondences** to Copilot, LLMs, third-party websites, etc. This includes, but is not limited to: lectures (recorded without or without permission), lecture slides, the syllabus, course announcements, assignments, quiz/exam questions, etc. **Course materials constitute the intellectual property of the instructor.**

Non-generative AI is **allowed** for the purposes of **transcribing and closed captioning** (i.e., for the video essay assignment, or for students who have an approved accommodation to record lectures).

If a student is expected of violating the policies outline above, further steps with be taken in line with Dalhousie's Academic Integrity Policy.

Course Accessibility

Refer to the **Student Accommodation Policy** for information on how Dalhousie instructors and staff work collaboratively with students to create and sustain an accessible educational environment.

- **If there are aspects of this course, including but not limited to its design, teaching approaches, learning activities, and assessments, that result in barriers to your learning or do not align with your formal academic accommodations, reach out to me to collaboratively find a solution that meets your needs.**
- You are eligible for accommodations based on **protected characteristics** such as religion. If you have **religious, cultural, or community-significant observances** that conflict with course requirements, reach out to me to collaboratively find alternatives for completing the course requirements.
- To begin the process of requesting a formal academic accommodation, contact the **Student Accessibility Centre**
- Your classroom may contain accessible furniture and equipment. It is important that these items remain in the classroom, undisturbed and unused, so that classmates who require their use will be able to fully participate in the course.
- See Dalhousie's **Accessibility and Accommodations Website** for more information

Course Content

The 3-page calendar below includes lecture topics and their planned delivery date. The delivery date of lecture topics may change, depending on the overall progression of the course. If course content is delayed (e.g., due to inclement weather), Special Topics I & II will be used as catch-up days. This calendar also includes the dates of course assessments. Readings will be posted on Brightspace.

September 2026

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9 **Lecture 1** – Introduction to Developmental Psychology	10	11	12
13	14 **Lecture 2 –** Research Methods Overview; Biology & Behaviour	15	16 **Lecture 3 –** Prenatal Development & Newborns	17	18	19
20	21 **Lecture 4 –** The World as an Infant	22	23 **Lecture 5** – Attachment Styles & Parenting Styles (Video Essay Topics)	24 **Review Quiz 1 OPENS at 6am**	25	26
27 **Review Quiz 1 CLOSES at 11:59pm**	28 **IN-CLASS MIDTERM 1**	29	30 **NO CLASS** National Day of Truth and Reconciliation	Oct 1	Oct 2	Oct 3

October 2026

Sunday	Monday	Sunday	Monday	Sunday	Monday	Sunday
Sept 27	Sept 28	Sept 29	Sept 30	1	2	3
Review Quiz 1 CLOSES at 11:59pm	**IN-CLASS MIDTERM 1**		**NO CLASS** National Day of Truth and Reconciliation			
4	5 **Lecture 6 –** Cognitive Development (Part 1)	6	7 **Lecture 7 –** Cognitive Development (Part 2)	8	9	10
11	12 **NO CLASS** Thanksgiving Day	13	14 **Lecture 8 –** Language & Communication	15 **VIDEO ESSAY DUE at 11:59pm**	16	17
18	19 **Lecture 9 –** Conceptual Development	20	21 **Lecture 10 –** Intelligence	22	23 **Developmental Scavenger Hunt 1 Due at 11:59pm**	24
25	26 **Lecture 11 –** Social Development	27	28 **Lecture 12 –** Emotional Development	29 **Review Quiz 2 OPENS at 6am**	30	31

November (& December) 2026

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 **Review Quiz 2 CLOSES at 11:59pm**	2 **IN-CLASS MIDTERM 2**	3	4 **Lecture 13** – Atypical Development	5	6 **Developmental Scavenger Hunt 2 Due at 11:59pm**	7
8	9	10	11 **FALL BREAK**	12	13	14
15	16 **Lecture 15** – Self & Identity	17	18 **Lecture 15** – Moral Development	19	20 **Developmental Scavenger Hunt 3 Due at 11:59pm**	21
22	23 **Lecture 16 –** Social Relationships	24	25 **Lecture 17 –** Gender & Development	26	27	28
29	30 **Lecture 18 –** Other Considerations: Inequality	Dec 1	Dec 2 **Lecture 19** – Other Considerations: Mental Health & Substance Use	Dec 3	Dec 4 **Developmental Scavenger Hunt 4 Due at 11:59pm**	Dec 5
Dec 6	Dec 7 **Lecture 20 –** Special Topics I (class vote)	Dec 8 *****LIEU DAY***** **Lecture 21 –** Special Topics II (class vote)	Dec 9 *****LIEU DAY***** **Student-Led Exam Review** (in-class)	Dec 10 **Break Before Exams**	Dec 11 **Examination Period Begins**	Dec 12