Social Development in Urban Contexts
EDPSY 582A, Fall, 1999
Wednesdays 2:00-4:20 pm, Miller 104

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Purpose
Exploring a wide range of tensions that exist in urban contexts, participants in this course will collaborate to construct a sense of how intra- and inter-personal differences should be treated in urban schools. We will start by exploring the child’s sense of self and move to how this is connected to their understanding of family, peers, school, and society. We will explore issues like:

- How does ethnic diversity influence identity development? Are students more comfortable with themselves if they learn in ethnically homogeneous or heterogeneous settings?
- How do social stereotypes about urban life affect development in family contexts?
- How are peer relations affected by school size, population diversity, and diverging sociocultural values?
- How do children’s primary relationships affect their academic and social behavior in school settings?
- To what extent is it ethical to raise issues of victimization and power in educational settings where social inequalities are readily apparent and intractable?

Readings
We will rely heavily on readings that you choose and will work to identify important themes across papers. However, each of you will be asked to choose at least one of the following books and become the “class expert” on its content.


Assignments
Attached is a bibliography of readings that you might use as a starting point for identifying your own topic of inquiry. It is important that you complete assigned readings and before coming to class so that our discussions can be "meaty" and well-informed. The most important criteria for grades will involve the extent to which you participate in class activities and contribute to our struggle to understand the lives of urban children.
Though papers (semi-structured writing assignments) will be assigned at various points in the semester. Instructions for each assignment will be given in class. More information about these tasks will be provided as we go.

Each student will also complete a final project. Early in the semester everyone will be asked to select an ethnic group they do not have direct experience with and propose a plan for developing a richer understanding of the how such individuals see themselves and their social worlds.

We will be working to construct a general working model for organizing our research and for representing the major conclusions we draw about social development in urban contexts. Therefore, it is students’ responsibility to volunteer information about how their project relates to the general model, ask for assistance from the group, and give us an indication of interesting experiences and findings they might have.

### Tentative Schedule

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<tr>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Topics</th>
<th>Suggested Readings</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sept. 29th</td>
<td>Developing a Sense of Context</td>
<td>Brown, Kotlowitz, Bing</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oct. 6th</td>
<td>How Valid is the Research?</td>
<td>Washington &amp; Mcloyd; Mcloyd &amp; Randolph; Spencer &amp; Dornbusch; Fisher et al.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oct. 13th</td>
<td>The Developing Sense of Self</td>
<td>Spencer &amp; Markstrom-Adams, Cross</td>
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<td>Oct. 20th</td>
<td>The Developing Sense of Difference</td>
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<td>Oct. 27th</td>
<td>Youth and Families</td>
<td>Huston</td>
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<td>Nov. 3rd</td>
<td>Youth and Peers</td>
<td>Cairns &amp; Cairns</td>
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<td>Nov. 10th</td>
<td>Youth and Schooling: Factors Influencing Achievement</td>
<td>Spencer &amp; Dornbusch</td>
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<td>Nov. 17th</td>
<td>Youth and Schooling: Factors Influencing Social Adjustment</td>
<td>Nicholls &amp; Thorkildsen</td>
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<td>Nov. 24th</td>
<td>Youth and Society</td>
<td>Youniss &amp; Yates</td>
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<td>Dec. 1st</td>
<td>Student Presentations</td>
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<td>Dec. 8th</td>
<td>Student Presentations</td>
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<td>Dec. 15th</td>
<td>Final Projects Due</td>
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The Social Development in Urban Contexts: Sample Readings

Developing a Sense of Context

How Valid is the Research?

The Developing Sense of Self

*Ethnic Identity Formation*


**Ego Development**


**Racial Attitudes**


Aggression

Youth and Their Parents
The Impact of Economic and Sociological Factors on Development


**Parenting Strategies and Discipline**


Youth and Their Peers

Gang Life

Friendship

Youth and Their School
Achievement Motivation


Social Relations


Achievement


Timberlake, C. H. (1982). Demographic factors and personal resources that Black female students identified as being supportive in attaining their high school diplomas. Adolescence, 17 (65), 107.

Youth and Society


Other Materials

Newspaper Articles & Book Reviews


Gregory, S. S. (1992). The hidden hurdle: Talent black students find that one of the most insidious obstacles to achievement comes from a surprising source: their own peers. Time, March 16, 44-46.


**Other Books Influencing Class Discussions**


