Characteristics of Early Adolescence
EPSY 446/ PSCH 423
Spring, 2017, Lecture Center A 007
Thursdays 5:00-8:00 pm,

Instructor: Dr. Theresa (Terri) Thorkildsen
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Purpose
This course focuses on common dilemmas faced by young people who are making the transition from childhood into adolescence. To highlight this period in human development, we will draw age-related comparisons between children and adolescents and theorize about how to construct stimulating environments that account for this developmental transition. Representations of adolescence in the media and in research will be compared, calling attention to common stereotypes that limit or support development. Research findings will also be compared with the details of lives in progress to explore individual differences in adolescents’ social and intellectual functioning. Ideally, students who finish the course will have a greater understanding of the common stress and strain as well as the thrill and excitement associated with the transition into adolescence.

This course is designed to allow students to fulfill one of the requirements for the Illinois State Board of Education and addresses the following learning outcomes. It includes educational psychology focusing on the developmental characteristics of early adolescents, the nature and needs of early adolescents, and the role of the middle-grade teacher in assessment, coordination and referral of students to health and social services. Nevertheless, the course also offers a strong foundation in key developmental issues that occur in early adolescence and so students from all program levels (undergraduates, masters, and doctoral) enrolled in professional schools. Click here to see how the specific learning outcomes are aligned with assessments.

Readings
The readings will come primarily from journals and book chapters. A new book, designed for this course is available at the UIC bookstore and in online sources.


Suggested articles can be found online using the library databases at no cost. Everyone should take advantage of online journal services and to master the technology needed to find course readings. For students who do not have their own computers, the ETL on the second floor of ETMSW is available along with other labs on campus.

Format
Students are expected to read and critique all assigned readings before coming to class. Class time will be spent clarifying misunderstandings and/or controversies associated with the material and drawing connections between theory and empirical research. We will also use research findings to generate useful activities that may be completed with youth. Obviously, these forms of knowledge cannot be generated if students come to class unprepared or fail to collect and study the appropriate readings. This is a course in which procrastination often leads to failure.
Assignments
To remain responsive to the ebb and flow of the discussion, assignments will not require a fixed set of readings and students are encouraged to share suitable materials with the class. The syllabus is posted online and changes will occur across the course. To comply with programmatic needs, a predetermined set of topics has been established and are listed in the tentative schedule. Those topics are sufficiently broad to cover the requirements established for this course.

Assignments measure the degree to which you may construct general relationships between topics and back up your ideas with research and practical evidence. Five assessments will be combined in your final grade: (a) weekly reading summaries and regular written reflections, (b) a group discussion log, (c) a midterm exam, (d) a group-planned presentation, (e) a final written account of what you learned from interviewing at least one middle school student. These are designed to assess how well you integrate the research information about adolescent development with practical plans for nurturing adolescents’ growth. Assignments are also designed to encourage you to use multiple types of technology across the course.

If someone should miss a class, he or she is responsible for contributing to the group discussion by adding a response either to the readings or to the discussion that is represented in the notes. I will look for signs of your intellectual growth over time and the degree to which you are coordinating information from research, media sources, and lives in progress in your discussions.

Reading summaries and written reflections. To ensure that we cover a wide range of topics during our time together, the course will rely heavily on jigsaw learning. This means that each student in the course must remain responsible for their own learning and for communicating their knowledge with the class. You will be assigned to small groups based on your interests and reasons for exploring early adolescence. Each week, groups will meet during class time to discuss the readings and imagine ways to use the information in practice. Everyone will want access to article and chapter summaries written by group members as well as their own to build a strong evidence-based midterm and final. Therefore, you are encouraged to use e-mail, Google+, or Box.com to keep track of your work as well as the work of your group members. Article summaries and reflections should be posted in a Google drive folder so that all group members, and the professor can read them across the semester. On the rare occasion when you find yourself unable to attend class, you are responsible for submitting your article summaries to everyone in your group soon as is practical. It is also your responsibility to obtain any assigned readings and procedural information that might have occurred in class while you were away. When crafting your article summaries, try include at least one extension question in the summary to enhance your comprehension of the material.

Discussion activities. Along with the article summaries and in-class reflections, you will be asked to create a discussion log, an activity that is like generating minutes in a business meeting. To assist you in connecting the research information with details of lives in progress and youth development activities, we will complete a range of activities in class. Weekly, group members will ideally take turns recording minutes depicting your group discussion. In each set of minutes, note-takers should record the gist of what each person says and document who offered each contribution. Some groups may prefer to record the discussion and transcribe their conversation, but an accurate gist is perfectly acceptable. To ensure fairness in grading for the course, it is important to document where each group member has contributed to the discussion. Serving as a note-taker teaches you how to fully listen to the views of others in a careful manner—essential for trust-building in any conversation. The notes should be typed up for critique by group members in the following class. Members may edit these
notes, add amendments, or delete any material they do not feel is accurate. Like qualitative investigators, it is helpful to regularly evaluate the accuracy of the transcript from the previous week as well as a new conversation. Once notes are approved by the group, the final notes will be included in the log that will be collected and evaluated at various points in the semester. Labeling participants in each conversation ensures that your grade is not caused by variation in group dynamics.

Activity demonstration. Across the semester, each group will choose one week in which to design an activity that might be used in an educational context with youth and to demonstrate that activity to the class. Rather than lump this task at the end of the semester, we will pepper group presentations across the semester. Looking at the topics in the timetable below, we will negotiate a schedule of group presentations so that activities align with the themes of the week. This assignment is designed to help you think deeply about how you might use the information from our course as you work with youth in face-to-face settings.

Midterm paper. A short-answer midterm will be distributed two weeks prior to its due date. In this assessment, you will be asked to use research findings to help you imagine the general perspectives of adolescents. The structure of the midterm aligns with the outline of topics in the timetable. To prepare for this open-book take-home task, you will want to review the reading summaries generated by yourself and the members of your group, chapters from the book, and what you know about lives in progress. The template for the papers will be made available by February 23rd and midterms will ideally be about 5 pages in length. The short answer format lends itself to the use of bullets and short paragraphs to use a policy report format to convey your ideas. Half the points on this assignment will reflect your ability to use research findings to justify your beliefs about working with youth in this age group.

Final project. A final project consisting of a written paper and an interview with at least one person in early adolescence will be used to determine if you have coordinated the information on early adolescent development with some practical plans for working with such students. We will use class time within groups to identify interesting questions and to build the interview schedule. Today, you can begin thinking about how you will find at least one adolescent in our target age group to interview about how they understand their life experiences.

Resources for students who need extra help
UIC also offers a wide range of resources for students who need extra help. Doctoral students may want to pay attention to the resources available at the UIC Writing Center. It is essential that students get in the habit of writing at least something as often as possible, preferably every day. More details on support services can be found at: http://www.uic.edu/academics/student-support

Accessibility
UIC strives to ensure the accessibility of programs, classes, and services to students with disabilities. Reasonable accommodations can be arranged for students with various types of disabilities, such as documented learning disabilities, vision or hearing impairments, and emotional or physical disabilities. All students should know that the University of Illinois at Chicago is committed to maintaining a barrier-free environment so that individuals with disabilities can fully access programs, courses, services, and activities at UIC. Students with disabilities who require accommodations for full access and participation in UIC Programs must be registered with the Disability Resource Center (DRC). Please contact DRC at (312) 413-2183 (voice) or (312) 413-0212 (TDD)

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Academic honesty
Academic dishonesty, intentional or accidental, seems to be cropping up across classes at UIC. Two issues seem especially important to discuss as part of our course activities: plagiarism and the use of assignments for more than one course.

Avoid plagiarism. Your article summaries should represent your version of the main information you obtained from the readings. You do not need to quote information from the articles, but may want to do so on a rare occasion. This is an acceptable practice IF you accurately cite the place in the article you are quoting from; including the last name of all the authors, the year of the publication, and the page number where the language appears. You will also be asked to support all your ideas with evidence in both the midterm and the final paper. There is a wide variety of information that would qualify as evidence and a set of formal rules for citing these sources properly. You can find the rules that we use in the field of Education in the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association. Failure to cite your sources for borrowed ideas is an act of plagiarism.

Avoid repurposing the same assignment. In this course, you are free to use materials from other courses if that information helps you better understand the developmental processes that occur in early adolescence. That sort of sharing is very helpful among professionals. In addition, it will be important for you to use information from the article summaries and discussion group logs as well as the grading rubric for your final paper. Grading rubrics offer an outline of how to meet the requirements of the assignments. However, even when general topics are similar across courses, assignments are crafted to allow you to develop specific skills and a repurposing of the same paper prohibits such practice.

We will discuss academic dishonesty further as part of the course. More information on UIC's Disciplinary Policies can be found at: http://www.uic.edu/depts/dos/conductforstudents.shtml
## Tentative Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Social Sphere</th>
<th>Common Issues</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jan 12th</td>
<td>Characteristics in Context</td>
<td>Development is pan-contextual Stage-environment fit</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Survey</td>
<td>Guiding questions</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jan 19th</td>
<td>Selves and discourse</td>
<td>Identity</td>
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<td>Q-sort activity</td>
<td>Guiding questions</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jan. 26th</td>
<td>Selves</td>
<td>Brain growth, puberty and body image</td>
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<td>Inside the Teenage Brain</td>
<td>Guiding questions</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Free-write</td>
<td>Group logs due for review</td>
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<tr>
<td>Feb 2nd</td>
<td>Families</td>
<td>Attachment</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Guiding questions</td>
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<tr>
<td>Feb 9th</td>
<td>Families</td>
<td>Siblings and structure</td>
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<td>Field Trip</td>
<td>Guiding questions</td>
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<td>Feb. 16th</td>
<td>Peers</td>
<td>Intimacy (friendship/romance)</td>
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<td>Guiding questions</td>
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<tr>
<td>Feb. 23rd</td>
<td>Peers</td>
<td>Exchange (acquaintanceship/aggression)</td>
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<td>Middle School Confessions</td>
<td>Guiding questions</td>
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<td>Group logs due for review</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mar. 2nd</td>
<td>Schools &amp; Internships</td>
<td>Motivation and Achievement</td>
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<td>Free-write</td>
<td>Guiding questions</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mar. 9th</td>
<td>Community-based Organizations</td>
<td>Character and moral decision-making</td>
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<td>Midterms Due</td>
<td>Guiding questions</td>
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<td>Mar. 16th</td>
<td>Multi-Age Settings</td>
<td>Civic engagement/Free-time activities</td>
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<td>Final Project rubric distributed</td>
<td>Guiding questions</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mar. 23rd</td>
<td>SPRING BREAK—NO CLASS</td>
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<td>Mar. 30th</td>
<td>National Activities</td>
<td>Civic engagement/Media and citizenship</td>
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<td>Guiding questions</td>
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<td>Apr. 6th</td>
<td>SRCD—NO CLASS</td>
<td>Surveys</td>
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<td>Apr. 13th</td>
<td>Transnational Activities</td>
<td>Civil engagement/Global awareness</td>
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<td>Youth summit planning</td>
<td>Guiding questions</td>
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<td>Apr. 20th</td>
<td>Discovering Human Rights</td>
<td>Balancing discourse opportunities</td>
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<td>Free-write</td>
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<td>Apr. 27th</td>
<td>AERA—NO CLASS</td>
<td>Final group logs and free-write papers due</td>
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<td>May 5th</td>
<td>Final Papers Due</td>
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Readings

Jan 12th Characteristics in context
Thorkildsen—Introduction

Jan. 19th Discourse and the Self system
Thorkildsen—Introduction


Jan. 26th Self system: Physical changes

*Thorkildsen—Chapter 1*


Feb 2nd Family system: Attachment

Thorkildsen—Chapter 2


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**Feb 9th Family system: Siblings and structure**

**Thorkildsen—Chapter 2**


Feb. 16th Peer systems: Intimacy (friendship and romance)

**Thorkildsen—Chapter 3**


Feb. 23rd Peer systems: Exchange (acquaintanceship and aggression)
Thorkildsen—Chapter 3


Mar. 2nd Schools & Internships: Motivation and achievement

Thorkildsen—Chapter 4


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**Mar. 9th Community-based Organizations: Character and moral decision-making**

**Thorkildsen—Chapter 4**


**Mar. 16th Multi-Age Settings: Civic engagement/Free-time activities**

**Thorkildsen—Chapter 5**


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**Mar. 30th National Activities: Civic engagement/Media and citizenship**

**Thorkildsen—Chapter 6**


Apr. 13th  Transnational Activities: Civil engagement/Global awareness

**Thorkildsen—Chapter 7**


Apr. 20th  Discovering Human Rights: Civil engagement/Enacting human rights

**Thorkildsen—Chapter 8**

Sample websites

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Civil_and_political_rights

http://transnationaldiscourse.weebly.com/


Apr. 27th  Youth Leadership Summits: Balancing discourse opportunities

**Thorkildsen—Chapter 9 and Epilogue**