Meeting time: Monday, 4-6:30PM  
Location: BPS 1112

Instructor: Jonathan Beier  
Office hours: By appointment, BPS 2147A  
Telephone: (301) 405-8765

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Telephone: (301) 405-4227

Instructor: Yi Ting Huang  
Office hours: By appointment, LFH 0141A

Email: ythuang1@umd.edu

Website: The course website is listed on ELMS (http://myelms.umd.edu). All readings, course documents, and announcements will be posted on the website. All assignments will also be submitted through the website.

Overview: What accounts for the human capacity to perceive and reason about the world? This course will explore the origins and development of human knowledge in the individual child. We will review in detail conceptual development within a number of different domains: knowledge of the physical world, of the social world, of language, and of abstract notions such as number and causality. In each case, we will consider the initial stock of conceptual primitives available to the child, including similarities and dissimilarities with those of other species. We will also explore the many ways in which learning and experience impact cognition, from individual exploration to language and culture. We will draw evidence primarily from studies of cognitive development, but we will also incorporate insights from the fields of adult cognitive psychology, linguistics, cultural anthropology, behavioral ecology, comparative psychology, and the history of science.

Evaluation: Your performance in this course will be assessed in three parts.

- Attendance and participation (20%): Our primary goal is to have an active and illuminating discussion of the readings, so we will be grading you on participation. Be prepared and be engaged! Your grade will be based on whether you come prepared to discuss the readings, the relevance of your comments to the ongoing discussion, and your ability to integrate the readings and comments made by other seminar participants.

- Weekly discussion posts (20%): To help you prepare and to help us track participation, we ask that before each seminar, you jot down 200 words or less: 1) any clarification questions you might have or notes about material that you found confusing or worth reviewing and/or 2) any substantive questions about the interpretation of the data, the theoretical claims being made, or how the findings can be reconciled with other data. Please post these on the Discussion Board on ELMS by 5PM on the Sunday before we meet. Also feel free to browse and reply to other people’s comments before class.

- Presentations (20%). Presentations for each session will be assigned across the group on the first day of class. Please check in with the instructors during the week prior to your scheduled discussion leading day, to talk briefly about points of emphasis and possible supplementary readings. You will not be required to “teach” the course, as all members of the group will be expected to participate. However, your role will be to direct the discussion to pertinent and interesting issues. Ideally you should begin with a short review of the day’s articles and then introduce questions for discussion (see QALMRI as a helpful guide for how to do this). Be sure to incorporate the comments and questions raised in the online discussion posts. Powerpoint-guided presentations are not allowed. Instead you should make copies of your outline or notes for the other participants and upload these to ELMS prior to the class you lead. You may also use computers to display study images and videos if doing so will enhance the discussion. Auditors will be required to lead a discussion.

- Final papers (40%). A final paper is due at the end of the semester (approximately 15 double-spaced pages). The goal of this paper is for you to expand on the issues that come up during our discussions of the readings. It will provide a chance for you to develop an argument more systematically and incorporate relevant empirical and theoretical work, beyond the assigned readings. If you would like the instructor(s) to read a draft, please
submit it at least two weeks before the deadline. Please submit your papers on ELMS by midnight on May 10 (Reading day).

Policies: Everyone is expected to come prepared to discuss the readings for the week. Class attendance is essential and if you cannot attend a particular session please let us know as soon as possible.

- Students with disabilities or special needs: If you have special needs with regards to this class, please contact us so that appropriate accommodations can be arranged.
- Academic honesty: All students are expected to adhere to campus policy on academic integrity. Cheating on academic work will not be tolerated in any form and will be subject to strong penalties in this class and the university system. If you cheat on a paper or assignment, you risk failing the class, as well as suspension or expulsion from the University as a whole. Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, misrepresenting someone else’s work as your own, falsifying any information in a citation or academic exercise, using unauthorized materials in any academic exercise, or helping another to commit academic dishonesty. You are expected to work independently on your papers.
- Feedback: This is the first time we will be teaching this class so any feedback you might have would be greatly appreciated. For example, perhaps you thought that some readings were engaging (and others were boring) or some topics were clear (or confusing) or some assignments were effective (or tedious). Please feel free to make your opinions known throughout the semester.

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<td>Feb 4</td>
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<td>May 6</td>
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<td>May 10</td>
<td>Final papers due at midnight</td>
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TENTATIVE READING LIST

We recommend that you engage the readings in the order that they are listed. Readings designated as optional are required for that week's discussant.

1. January 28: Introduction

2. February 4: Depth perception

3. February 11: Concepts and Theories

4. February 18: Objects


5. February 25: Intentional agents


6. March 4: Animal and Preverbal communication


7. March 11: Speech perception


8. March 18: Spring Break

9. March 25: Syntax


10. April 1: Language and thought


11. April 8: Spatial cognition


12. April 15: Number


13. April 22: Causal inference

14. April 29: Caring and culture
5. *Optional: TBD*

15. May 6: Adult knowledge
4. *Optional: TBD*

16. Paper due by midnight on May 10 (Reading day)