Psychology of Sesame Street

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Course Information:

- PSY 490: Seminar (Subtitle: Psychology of Sesame Street)
- Prerequisites: 110, 200, 300, AND CONS INSTR; 27 CR IN PSYCH
- Texts: Sesame Street: Ready for School!: A Parent's Guide to Playful Learning for Children Ages 2 to 5 by Rosemarie Truglio, Ph.D
- Course LMS: Canvas

Instructor Information:

- Erica Weisgram, Ph.D.
- Email: Erica.Weisgram@uwsp.edu
- Office Hours: 11-12 MW D235 Science or via Zoom; also by appointment

UWSP Capstone Experience in the Major Learning Outcomes:

A capstone experience is either a single seminar or a broader culminating experience designed to be offered near the completion of a student's program of study. It is meant to provide students the opportunity to make connections between the key learning objectives of their majors and the General Education Program Outcomes, and to consider how their educations have prepared them for the world beyond the university.

To fulfill this requirement, students will:

- Complete a project that integrates knowledge, skills, and experiences related to those General Education Program Outcomes appropriate to the discipline.
- Demonstrate skills, processes, and resources needed to make a successful transition from college to the world beyond

To fulfill the requirements outlined above, students enrolled in *Psychology of Sesame Street* will:
- Complete a research project that reviews and integrates literature from developmental psychology (and possibly other areas of psychology depending on the topic chosen); reviews what has been done related to the topic on segments of *Sesame Street*; identifies area for growth, development, and further programming; propose curriculum and content that could be created on *Sesame Street* related to a topic within developmental psychology; and uses research methods and statistics skills to design a study that would evaluate the effectiveness of the proposed programming.
- Demonstrate high-level writing skills to be honed through iterative writing assignments and professional speaking abilities to be developed through oral presentations related to research in the field of developmental psychology.

Course Description and Objectives

Since the inception of the television program, *Sesame Street* has used psychological principles to develop its curriculum and content in an effort to make children "Smarter, Stronger, and Kinder." The goal of this class is to examine the application of Developmental Psychology research and theories in the development of curriculum and content for *Sesame Street.* Specifically, we will be investigating major topics and themes in developmental psychology, how they are addressed or portrayed on *Sesame Street*, what role psychological/behavioral research has played in the development of *Sesame's* curriculum and content, and what could be addressed in the future. As we are delving into this content, we will also be sharpening our research, writing, and presenting skills that are needed to be a student-scholar in psychology and will be important in the workforce as students graduate.

At the conclusion of this semester, students will be able to:
- Identify and discuss major topics and themes in Developmental Psychology.
- Recognize connections between issues in developmental psychology and *Sesame Street* programming
- Find, read, understand, and summarize journal articles in the field
- Synthesize previous research and identify areas in which more work is needed
- Develop an evaluation plan for the creation of new *Sesame Street* content
- Write an APA style research paper
- Effectively communicate and teach a class on a topic within developmental psychology

Course Requirements (400pts total):

•	RSVPs -- 10 of 12	10pts each	100pts
•	Participation 10 of 12	5pts each	50pts total (5 pts each content week)
•	Midterm	50pts	50pts
•	Final	50pts	50pts
•	Annotated Bib	20pts	20pts
•	Lit Review Draft	25pts	25pts
•	Paper Draft	30 pts	30pts
•	Final Paper	50pts	50pts
•	Presentation	25pts	25pts

Final Course Grades

The total number of points possible for this course is 400

Therefore, final grades will be determined as follows:

A: 93%-100%	C: 73%-76%
A-: 90%-92%	C-: 70%-72%
B+: 87%-89%	D+: 67%-69%
B: 83%-86%	D: 60%-66%
B-: 80%-82%	F: 0%-59%
C+: 77%-79%	

RSVPs. Our weekly reading response papers will be called RSVPs! **R**ead, **S**ummarize, and e**V**aluate **P**apers. For each of the readings assigned, students will complete a thorough, in depth summary (1-2 solid single space paragraphs for each reading). In addition, students will evaluate the papers by creating TWO discussion questions (total across readings) generated from careful evaluation and consideration of the readings. **These RSVPs will be due by 10am on the Monday of the week indicated on the syllabus** so we can use those discussion questions during the class. **There are 12 content weeks and 12 RSVPs, the lowest two grades will be dropped. Because of this already generous opportunity, late papers will not be accepted.**

Exams. There will be two exams given throughout the semester with the last exam taking place during finals week. All exams will cover material presented in lecture, films, and the textbook. **The two exams will be multiple choice and short answer/essay in nature.** If a student is unable to take the exam on the scheduled date for a University-Approved Reason (with documentation or notice from the Dean of Students office), arrangements may be made *beforehand* to take a make-up the exam at another time. All No Shows (students who do not notify the instructor of an absence before the exam) will receive a 0 on the exam and will not be allowed to take the test at an alternate time. Exams will <u>not</u> be comprehensive.

Final Paper. The goal of this course is to complete an APA style paper on a topic in developmental psychology that is integrated into the Sesame Street programming. This will include reviewing the literature on the topic, reviewing what Sesame Street has done on this topic, identifying areas for growth and development, suggesting new curriculum and content, and developing an evaluation plan. This task includes writing an APA style paper that includes the following sections:

Title Page; Abstract; Introduction; Literature Review (4-6 pages); Review of Sesame Street's content; Identification of Areas of Potential Growth and Development; Suggested Content; Research Plan for Summative Evaluation; References; Possibly Tables or Figures

We will spend time in class learning about each section of the paper (e.g., how to conduct a literature review, how to write an introduction) and discussing the specifics of this project. While some of the work here will be done in pairs (e.g., developing an idea, collecting articles, collecting data), all of the writing of this project will be done on an individual basis. Drafts for the paper will be turned in midway through the semester, and frequent meetings and communication with the instructor are expected. Late papers will not receive full credit. **Papers will be turned in on Canvas by 11:59 pm the night that is indicated on the syllabus**.

Annotated Bibliograph and Integration Paragraph. In an effort to help students get started on their project and practice APA style writing, an annotated bibliography and integration paragraph will be completed. An annotated bibliography is a collection of short research summaries of articles related to a topic. This bibliography will contain at least FIVE journal articles summaries. In addition, students will be asked to write a paragraph that integrates the research discussed in the articles using a strong topic sentence, brief discussion of the articles, and a transition sentence. Late papers will not receive full credit. **Papers will be turned in on Canvas by 11:59 pm the night that is indicated on the syllabus.**

Lit Review Draft and Paper Drafts. Drafts of the research paper will be turned prior to the final draft. The purpose of these drafts will be to give students feedback on the content and style of their writing, thus improving the result of the final paper. To ensure that students are putting their best efforts into completing these drafts, the drafts will be graded. In addition, a component of the final paper grade will be how much student has responded to feedback on these drafts. It is in students' best interests to make these drafts as complete and high in quality as possible. Late papers will not receive full credit. **Papers will be turned in on Canvas by 11:59 pm the night that is indicated on the syllabus.**

Oral Presentations of Research Project. Students will be the "experts" on topic within Developmental Psychology. One way in which students will present this research is by leading a class related to this topic. Students will identify a reading to be assigned to the students, present current literature on the topic, discuss and present how Sesame Street has addressed the topic (max 10 min of video content), discuss areas of growth and development of new content, and present ideas for new content including evaluation plans. Oral presentations be completed in pairs (both individuals need to have speaking roles) and will be graded on the content, style, visual presentation and speaking abilities of the presenter.

Participation. Each content week, students will receive up to 5 participation points. Participation points are awarded on the basis of small group participation, participation in in-class activities, and participation in large group discussion. There are 12 content weeks in the course—only the top 10 participation points will count toward the final grades. Thus, if a student is having a difficult week or two or cannot attend classes every now and then, it will not affect their grade. However, extended absences, consistent lack of participation with classmates including research partners, etc. can negatively impact one's grade. I hope we can cultivate a classroom environment where students want to attend (even Fridays!), communicate effectively, and help each other to learn!

Potential Topics for Students: (Students lead class on a topic—this is completed in pairs)

- International Conflict
- Foster Care
- Military Families
- Autism
- LGBTQ+ Identities
- COVID-19
- Death and Dying
- Divorce
- Refugees
- AIDS
- Handwashing/Clean water in other countries
- Homelessness
- Incarceration
- Parental Addiction
- Healthy Eating
- Healthy Bodies—Movement and Exercise
- Cultural Appreciation

Date	Topic	Reading/Viewing	Assignment
Week 1 (Sept 7, 9)	Intro	Syllabus	Read Syllabus
Week 2 (Sept 12, 14, 16)	History	Davis (Chapter 1, 11, & 12) Street Gang documentary	RSVP #1
Week 3 (Sept 19, 21, 23)	Research	The Sesame Effect: Chapters 1 & 3	RSVP #2
Week 4 (Sept 26, 28, 30)	Academic Readiness	Truglio Chapters 1 & 2;	RSVP #3
Week 5 (Oct 3,5,7)	Academic Readiness	Truglio Chapters 3 & 4; Hustedt et al. (2017)	RSVP #4

Week 6 (Oct 10, 12, 14)	Preparing for your Project: Writing for Psychology	(Work on research and writing techniques in class; detailed information given about final paper expectations)	**ANNOTATED BIB with INTEGRATION PARAGRAPH DUE 10/14**
Week 7 (Oct 17, 19, 21)	Cognitive Development	Truglio Chapter 5; Diamond (2013)	RSVP #5
Week 8 (Oct 24, 26, 28)	Learning through Play	Yogman et al (2018); Bodrova & Leong (2019)	RSVP #6
Week 9 (Oct 31, Nov 2, 4)	Preparing for your Project: Leading a Class	(Work on presentation techniques in class; detailed information given about presentation expectations)	**MIDTERM 10/31; LIT REVIEW DUE 11/4**
Week 10 (Nov 7,9,11)	Social Development	Truglio Chapter 6; Streubel et al. (2020); Paulus & Moore (2014)	RSVP #7
Week 11 (Nov 14, 16, 18)	Social Identities: Gender and Race	Weisgram (2020); Cole & Dollard (2017); Cole et al. (2016)	RSVP #8
Week 12 (Nov 21, 23)	Student-Led Classes (Topics TBA)		RSVP #9 **PAPER DRAFT DUE 11/23**
Week 14 (Nov 28, 30, Dec 2)	Student-Led Classes (Topics TBA)		RSVP #10
Week 15 (Dec 5, 7, 9)	Student-Led Classes (Topics TBA)		RSVP #11
Week 16 (Dec 12, 14)	Student-Led Classes (Topics TBA)		RSVP #12
Finals Week			**FINAL PAPER DUE 12/16; FINAL EXAM 12/20**

Course Policies
- Students should arrive to class on time with cell phones turned off/on silent and stored in one's backpack as to not distract themselves or others. Please do not have the cell phone on your desk or table top or use the cell phone in class unless for course related usage.
- Students should read the appropriate readings assigned in the text and course readings before attending class and have their assignments completed on time
- Students should be open-minded to learning new information
- Students should demonstrate respect and professionalism toward fellow students and the instructor throughout the course.

Course Communication

E-mail will be the official mode of communication for this course. Students should feel free to e-mail me at any point with questions about course content. Students can generally expect a prompt response. (However, e-mails sent past 5pm may not be read until the business next day.) When e-mailing, please put "PSY 490" in the subject line to prevent being sorted into Junk Mail by the e-mail filter.

Withdrawal from Courses

See Registration and Records for more information and dates for withdrawing from courses this term: https://www.uwsp.edu/regrec/Pages/default.aspx

Academic Dishonesty

Academic dishonesty of any form (i.e., cheating, plagiarism, etc.) <u>will not be tolerated.</u> If a student is participating in any dishonest behavior, they will receive a "0" for the assignment or exam. It is important to uphold the academic integrity of this institution. Additional information about the consequences of academic dishonesty can be found here: http://www.uwsp.edu/dos/Pages/Academic-Misconduct.aspx. Please consult this website if you have any questions or concerns about academic plagiarism: http://library.uwsp.edu/guides/vrd/plagiarism.htm

Students with Disabilities

Students with disabilities will be appropriately accommodated. Please see Disability Services (http://www.uwsp.edu/disability/Pages/default.aspx) for further information and contact me with your form within the first two weeks of class.

Student Rights and Responsibilities

UWSP values a safe, honest, respectful, and inviting learning environment. In order to ensure that each student has the opportunity to succeed, a set of expectations has been developed for both students and professors (see https://www.uwsp.edu/stuaffairs/Documents/RightsRespons/rightsCommBillRights.pdf). *All students are expected to be familiar with and to abide by these expectations.*

Mandatory reporting

Under several federal and state laws, and according to several university guidelines, I am required to report acts of a criminal or offensive nature. This includes acts of sexual harassment and assault, bias and hate crimes, illicit drug use, and acts of violence. Any disclosure or description of these incidents – both current and in the past – may be reported to the Dean of Students office (http://www.uwsp.edu/dos/) or the local authorities. Due to recent legislation, if any disclosure of unreported neglect or abuse of a child, elder, or disabled individual is made to a University instructor, he or she is required to report such information to the appropriate administrative or law enforcement officials. This includes instances of sexual assault of an adult.

Use of Electronic Devices

Electronic Devices are not to be used during class time without permission from the instructor and/or documentation from Disability Services. Any student found distracting others or the instructor with their use of electronic devices will be asked to put said device away or leave the classroom. Students may not photograph, videotape, or audio record the instructor without the express permission of the instructor. To maintain the integrity of in-class exams, the use of electronic devices will not be permitted during exams without prior documented approval from the Disability Services office or other pertinent offices on campus. This includes, but is not limited to, requests to use cellular or wireless network-enabled mobile devices for foreign language translation assistance. Students who are found using these devices will be dismissed and receive a zero for their exams. Other penalties will be considered under the misconduct policy.

Emergency Procedures

In the event of a medical emergency call 911 or use Red Emergency Phone (List Location). Offer assistance if trained and willing to do so. Guide Emergency Responders to victim. In the event of a tornado warning, proceed to the lowest level interior room without window.). See www.uwsp.edu/rmgt/Pages/em/procedures/other/floor-plans.aspx for floor plans showing severe weather shelters on campus. Avoid wide-span rooms and buildings. In the event of a fire alarm, evacuate the building in a calm manner. Meet at the HEC Center. Notify instructor or emergency command personnel of any missing individuals. Active Shooter – Run/Escape, Hide, Fight. If trapped hide, lock doors, turn off lights, spread out and remain quiet. Follow instructions of Emergency Responders. See UW-Stevens Point Emergency Management Plan at www.uwsp.edu/rmgt for details on all emergency response at UW-Stevens Point

COVID-19 Policies

COVID-19 Policies are often enacted campus-wide and include testing, distancing, quarantine, and face coverings in addition to recommendations about vaccination. To read the most recent COVID-19 policies and announcements, please visit: Communications - Information on Coronavirus | UWSP

Resources for students:

- Tutoring-Learning Center: http://www.uwsp.edu/tlc/
        --Excellent resource for students who are in need of a little extra assistance.

- Counseling Center: http://www.uwsp.edu/counseling/Pages/default.aspx
      --Provides assistance for students for a number of issues including personal and academic concerns (including Time Management!)

- Psychology Club: http://www.uwsp.edu/psych/Pages/stuOrgs.aspx
        --Presentations, workshops, and meetings around the study of psychology

- Psi Chi: http://www.uwsp.edu/psych/Pages/stuOrgs.aspx
      -National Psychology Honor Society

- NAMI of UWSP : http://www.uwsp.edu/psych/Pages/stuOrgs.aspx
      -National Alliance for Mental Illness UWSP Chapter