



Adolescence and the Transition to Adulthood

Psych 217 Fall, 2005

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Please don't call before 8:00AM or after 10:00PM.

Office hours: Monday 1-2, Thursday 12:30-1:30 and by appointment. Or please drop by or drop me a note if you have a question or want to talk about the class. E-mail is always the best way to get ahold of me.

Required Text: Adolescence by Laurence Steinberg
Other required reading materials are available through Blackboard

Course Description:

Adolescence is a time of transition - when children are prepared to take on the roles they will fill as adults. Only in early infancy do minds, bodies, and abilities change as radically as they do during the teenage years. Psych 217 explores the developmental processes that shape our lives between puberty and the end of college. Although each life unfolds in its own unique pattern, we will explore the ways biological, psychological, and sociological influences systematically combine to shape its course. This class will help you to develop an understanding of the concepts, methods, and research findings central to the study of adolescent development.

Format and Goals:

This course has four primary goals:

1. to learn the factual information that is the basis of our scientific understanding of adolescent development;
2. to get a better grasp on the variability of adolescent experiences in the United States and around the world;
3. to develop the ability to communicate what you know clearly and accurately;
4. to encourage you to use empirical sources to support your arguments effectively.

Because this is a college level class, I expect you to take responsibility for your own learning, including keeping up with assignments and changes in schedule, doing the readings and participating in class discussions, and seeking help when you have questions about the material. Please make sure your Oberlin e-mail account is working so that you will receive any notes sent to the class as a whole or that I send you as an individual.

Course Requirements:

It is your responsibility to attend all classes and learn material presented during lectures, class discussions, and in assigned readings. Reading assignments should be completed before class on the dates indicated on the syllabus. I assume that all students in the class will have read the assigned materials before I begin discussing a topic. However, we are going to be covering a lot of ground, and you will (hopefully!) encounter many ideas, findings, and concepts that are new to you. If you become confused, or feel like I'm expecting you to understand a concept that I haven't introduced yet, PLEASE STOP ME AND ASK ME TO EXPLAIN! If you don't feel comfortable asking during class, drop by my office, send me an e-mail, or ask me after class. Remember, if you don't understand the material, other people in the class probably don't either, and they will be really grateful to you for asking.

Evaluation:

There are three major criteria on which you will be evaluated: your performance on exams, short essays, and an extended analytic essay.

Exams: Three exams will be given during the class: two preliminary exams, which will cover specific chapters from Steinberg's *Adolescence* in some detail, and a cumulative final, which will cover key points across the full semester. Preliminary exams will focus on content mastery and will be in multiple choice format. The final will include both a multiple choice and short essay questions.

Short Essays. During the semester, we will be doing several primary source readings, in which you read empirical scientific articles or autobiographical materials that are related to the Steinberg text. You will write short, one to two page essays in preparation for class discussions. Topics will be posted on Blackboard and announced in class. I have assigned six short essays. Your grades on the best five essays will count towards your final grade. Because the goal of these assignments is to prepare you for class discussion, no late essays will be accepted.

Extended Analytic Essay. The goal of this essay is to build on a major applied or policy issue and discuss the relevant literature on the biological, cognitive, and social characteristics of adolescents as it applies to that issue. The focus for your paper will be an analysis of biographical case material. Papers will be written in a concise format appropriate for communicating scientific information to an intelligent lay audience and will draw on material assigned for this class. I expect that it will be difficult to do a good job on this essay in less than 5-10 dense, typed pages.

Missed exams, late essays, and absences:

Because it is extremely difficult to evaluate the validity of excuses for missing a class, the general policy will be to permit make-up exams only for confirmed emergencies or an illness that requires confinement to the Health Center. No other rationale for postponing an exam will be accepted. Please notify me as soon as it is apparent that an exam will be missed (e-mail is probably the easiest way to do this). Failure to notify me promptly may result in refusal to administer a make-up, with a resultant 0 averaged into your final grade.

ALL WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS ARE DUE BY THE **BEGINNING** OF CLASS ON THE DAY INDICATED ON THE SYLLABUS. Long lines at the printer are not a legitimate excuse for a late essay, so PLAN YOUR TIME ACCORDINGLY! I expect you to turn in all written assignments on time. It is unfair to classmates who push themselves to complete their work by the due date for you to turn your work in late. *Everyone* could do a better job given a little more time. Short essays will not be

accepted late. All late extended essays will be dropped 10 points the first day and will not be accepted more than two days late. For example, if your paper is due on Friday at 11:00, it must be received by Sunday at 11:00 to be accepted. Papers turned in on Monday will be refused. If you know your extended essays will be late, you are responsible for informing me on or before the date it is due. Failure to do so may result in refusal to accept late work.

Please PRINT all of your work. It is simply very difficult for me to keep track of the many hundreds of e-mails and papers that students send to me. To avoid the disaster of my losing your paper, please print it out and hand it in during class or turn it in to me in my office.

A note on academic integrity:

One important skill that you need to develop is the ability to distinguish between your own ideas and those of other people. Although most obvious in cases where text is copied word for word, plagiarism also includes copying ideas or arguments from one source and presenting them as your own. Plagiarism can involve as little as copying a key phrase or sentence without acknowledging the source. It is easy to avoid. Use quotation marks to indicate direct quotes. If you are presenting an idea or an argument that you read somewhere else, give the person who first developed the idea credit for it. Remember, when in doubt, cite.

Your conduct during examinations and the preparation of written work are covered by the Oberlin College Honor Code. Please ask me if you have any questions about the application of the Honor Code to this class.

Each assignment and exam you turn in for grading must state "I affirm that I have adhered to the Honor Code in this assignment" with your signature.

A link to the full honor code is available from the *Academics* link on ***Oberlin On-Campus***:
<http://www.oberlin.edu/students/links-life/rules-regs.html#honor>

 **Schedule** 

Sept 6 Introduction

Basic Changes of Adolescence

- 8 Biological Change
Chapter 1 Steinberg
- 15 **Short essay 1:**
Steinberg (1988) available on Blackboard
- 20 Cognitive Change
Chapter 2: Steinberg
- 27 Social Change
Chapter 3: Steinberg
- 29 **Short essay 2:**
Kotlowitz (1991) available on Blackboard

The Contexts of Adolescence

Oct	4	Family <i>Chapter 4: Steinberg</i>
	11	Peers <i>Chapter 5: Steinberg</i>
	13	Short essay 3: <i>Brown (1995)</i> available on Blackboard
	18	Schools <i>Chapter 6: Steinberg</i> Extended Essay due: :Lafayette and Pharoah in <i>There Are No Children Here</i>
20, 25, 27		No Class (October break and Chilean travel)
Nov	3	Preliminary Exam 1 , Steinberg Chapters 1-6

Psychosocial Development During Adolescence

	9	Identity <i>Chapter 8: Steinberg</i>
	10	Short essay 4: <i>Harter et al. (1988)</i> available on Blackboard
	15	Autonomy <i>Chapter 9: Steinberg</i>
	22	Intimacy and Sexuality <i>Chapters 10 & 11: Steinberg</i>
	24	No Class (Thanksgiving)
Dec	1	Short essay 5: <i>Courting Danger</i> available on Blackboard
	6	Achievement <i>Chapter 12: Steinberg</i>
	8	Preliminary Exam 2 , Chapters 8-12
	13	Psychosocial Problems Short essay 6: <i>Darling et al. (2005)</i> available on Blackboard <i>Chapter 13: Steinberg</i>
	15	Last day of class
	20	Final Exam: 9 AM