

Carolina Consortium on Human Development
Psychology 781 – Development of Individual Differences in Emotion Regulation and Dysregulation
Fall 2013

Instructors: Eric Youngstrom, Ph.D. / Jennifer Coffman, Ph.D.
Office: 248 Davie Hall / Center for Developmental Science 214
Email: *eay@unc.edu / coffman@unc.edu*
Phone: (216) 410-7975 / (919) 843-2401
Class Meetings: Mondays 2:00-3:15; 3:30- 5:00
Office Hours: By appointment

Objectives and Goals

The Carolina Consortium on Human Development topic for the Fall Semester, 2013 is “*The Development of Individual Differences in Emotion Regulation and Dysregulation Across the Life Span.*” The goal of this seminar is to explore different facets of the development of emotion regulation and dysregulation, using state of the art science and theory from multiple disciplines. Across the semester, we will focus on different levels of analysis and illustrate the designs and models that are used to address questions regarding emotion processes. Speakers reflect a variety of areas of expertise, and include presenters such as Avshalom Caspi, Pamela Cole, Gabriel Dichter, Megan Gunnar, Barbara Fredrickson, Esther Leerkes, Terri Moffit, Stephen Porges, Mona El Sheikh, and Eric Youngstrom.

Emotions play a huge role in who we are and how we interact with others. They shape our identities and our relationships. They involve some of the most basic parts of our nervous system and brain, and are influenced by genetic and epigenetic effects, yet there also are profound differences due to culture and context. When is it okay to show anger, or sadness? What are appropriate ways of displaying attachment or aggression? Most striking is the range of differences found across individuals, within the same society or even the same family. Adaptive emotional functioning is one of the greatest strengths one could have, and emotional dysregulation is a core feature of psychopathology.

Basic emotions have a long evolutionary history, yet a child born today grows up in an environment that is radically changed from the historic contexts to which our emotional systems adapted. If we examine the development of emotion regulation and dysregulation from **a multi-level**, interdisciplinary perspective, what do we know about the influence of genes, pre- and perinatal experiences, diet, dyadic interaction and parenting? As the child ages, what physiological changes happen in the brain? How are these changes sculpted by experience? What do we know about the dynamic and reciprocal influences of peer relationships, and are these functions different at various ages, or in distinct relational contexts? How are modern circumstances, such as electric lighting and the resulting alteration of sleep patterns, changes in diet and obesity, and the extend web of communication created by social media, interacting with the development of emotions and their regulation? The goal of this seminar is to explore different facets of the development of emotion regulation and dysregulation, using state of the art science and theory from multiple disciplines. Each week will focus on a different level of analysis, providing background and also illustrating the designs and models used to link the technique to questions about emotion processes. Obviously a complete, integrated model of emotion regulation and dysregulation is beyond the scope of a single seminar. Our objective is to build a mosaic using different pieces of research, providing a broad vision of the emerging connections between systems and disciplines. The organizing questions will be:

- How does this system – genes, environment, relationships— relate to development of emotion regulation and dysregulation?
- What shows continuity through development? What changes?
- What is the range of individual differences in this trait, behavior, or system?

- At what point do extremes of functioning become problematic? What is the connection to psychopathology?

Our discussions each week will link the topic back to individual development, using vignettes to make a narrative connection between the topics. By the end of the seminar, participants will have increased awareness of multiple approaches to elucidating emotion regulatory processes that will help extend each of our own lines of research.

We will address these and other related issues through readings, discussions, and presentations.

Course Requirements and Format

This is an atypical graduate course that requires strong student investment. The day will begin with our invited presenter giving a talk from 2:00-3:14. There will then be a 15 minute break and the class will begin at 3:30. Students will first meet as a group from 3:30 – 4:00 to discuss the assigned readings and connect these readings to emerging themes identified in the course of the semester. The guest speaker will then join the class from 4:00 – 5:00 to discuss his or her career trajectory and program of research.

Class time will be spent primarily in discussion, with students taking turns in leading our discussion of the readings and conversation with the guest speakers. Because discussion is central, you will need to read and prepare for each class period in order to participate actively. Also, because we meet just once a week, the reading assignments are sometimes lengthy; I would discourage you from attempting to do all the assignments in one sitting. You are expected to attend all of these presentations, to actively participate in discussions, and to integrate material from these discussions into your growing understanding of developmental science.

Course Resources

Readings for the course are available through Sakai, and weekly reaction papers will be submitted via this same portal. It may take a few tries to be sure that everyone is set up to access this Sakai page, so please be patient.

Weekly Reaction Papers

The goal of the weekly reaction papers (RPs) is to help you develop your ability to evaluate and synthesize theoretical material and empirical research and to apply this material to your own interests. This is also a useful exercise for developing a research journal of your own. Each week you will post your RPs to Sakai by midnight the Saturday before we meet. These reaction papers should be not exceed one page of single-spaced 11pt font text. I suggest, but do not require, the following format for the responses: (a) a brief opening paragraph that summarizes the most salient themes of the reading (or at least the ones that your response considers); (b) an evaluation of the readings (strengths and limitations of the theory, research, application); (c) questions or comments that arise for you in thinking about the readings; and (d) a brief consideration of how the readings could relate, even indirectly, to your own program of research. I will not have written comments for you by the time we meet in class each week, but I will send you feedback occasionally throughout the semester.

Class Participation

You will not get much out of this course unless you come to class well prepared and use class time to actively engage with the material we're considering. I'm looking for thoughtful input that indicates you're trying to help yourself and others become better researchers and that you've worked on the assignments in connection with readings. If you are shy about speaking up in groups, this is the time to start working on it. If I don't hear from you frequently, I'll call on you and ask questions about readings or the topic of discussion at the moment.

Class Presentations

We will meet from 2:00-4:30 on Monday, December 9th, for final group presentations. These presentations will identify and integrate key themes that have arisen throughout the course of the semester. These themes will emerge across the course of the semester, but the guiding questions provided for the consortium series provide a starting point for thinking about potential themes to address. We will form groups early in the semester, and use some of our class time for group meetings during the semester to work on the content of these presentations. More detail on the length and format of these presentations will be provided during the course of the semester.

Final Grades

Final grades are a weighted average of weekly reaction papers (.4), group presentations (.3) and class participation (.3). Letter grades are assigned as H (90-100), P (80-89), L (70-79), and F (69 and lower).

Honor Code

Your enrollment in the University presupposes a commitment to the principles embodied in the Code of Student conduct and a respect for this most significant Carolina tradition. The Honor Code is defined in The Instrument of Student Judicial Governance, II.A.: *It shall be the responsibility of every student at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill to obey and support the enforcement of the Honor Code, which prohibits lying, cheating, or stealing when these actions involve academic processes or University, student or academic personnel acting in an official capacity.* I expect all students to strictly and honorably abide by this code.

Class Schedule

The speaker will present from 2:00-3:15 and the class will meet from 3:30 – 5:00; all meetings are held in the basement of the Center for Developmental Science. Readings will be provided at least one week before each scheduled speaker. The reaction papers are to be submitted to Sakai by the evening before the speaker is scheduled to present.

Date	Speaker & Class Meeting	Assignment
August 26	Class Meeting Only	Readings but no reaction papers
September 2	<i>No Speaker: Labor Day</i>	No assignment
September 9	Andrea Hussong, <i>Our Fearless Leader!</i>	Readings & reaction papers
September 16	Eric Youngstrom, Departments of Psychology and Psychiatry, UNC-CH	Readings & reaction papers
September 23	Gabriel Dichter UNC-CH, Duke University	Readings & reaction papers
September 30	Barbara Fredrickson Department of Psychology UNC-Chapel Hill	Readings & reaction papers
October 7	Mona El Sheikh College of Human Sciences Auburn University	Readings & reaction papers
October 14	<i>No Speaker: Fall Break at Constituent Universities</i>	
October 21	Megan Gunnar Institute of Child Development University of Minnesota <i>Cairns Capstone Lecture</i> <i>Hyde Hall</i>	Readings & reaction papers
October 28	Avshalom Caspi and Terri Moffit Department of Psychology and Neuroscience Duke University	Readings & reaction papers
November 4	Douglas Teti Human Development and Family Studies Pennsylvania State University	Readings & reaction papers
November 11	Pamela Cole Department of Psychology Pennsylvania State University	Readings & reaction papers
November 18	Esther Leerkes HDFS UNC-Greensboro	Readings & reaction papers
November 25	TBA	Readings & reaction papers
December 2	Stephen Porges RTI Department of Psychiatry, University of Illinois at Chicago	Readings & reaction papers
December 9	Class Only (Student Presentations)	