



Psychology Department
PSY 3008.4 Developmental Psychology: Birth Through Adolescence
4 Units
Fall 2025
T/R 5:30 pm - 7:10 pm
Taylor Hall Room 105
Final: Tuesday 12/16/2025, 5:30pm-7:10pm

Instructor title and name:	Natalie Wood, EdS, NCSP, LEP, Adjunct Professor
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Office location and hours:	By appointment only

PLNU Mission

To Teach ~ To Shape ~ To Send

Point Loma Nazarene University exists to provide higher education in a vital Christian community where minds are engaged and challenged, character is modeled and formed, and service is an expression of faith. Being of Wesleyan heritage, we strive to be a learning community where grace is foundational, truth is pursued, and holiness is a way of life.

General Education Mission

PLNU provides a foundational course of study in the liberal arts informed by the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. In keeping with the Wesleyan tradition, the curriculum equips students with a broad range of knowledge and skills within and across disciplines to enrich major study, lifelong learning, and vocational service as Christ-like participants in the world's diverse societies and culture.

Course Description

A systematic study of the physical, cognitive, social, emotional, and moral development of the individual from birth through adolescence. This class is designed to help you understand how we develop, from the moment of conception until adulthood. This class will show you some of the intricacies of development, and along the way show you common mistakes that people make that undermine their odds of raising great kids. This class will matter because it can give you a map on becoming better parents and professionals.

Program and Course Learning Outcomes

- You will be able to describe physical, cognitive, language, social, and moral development from the span of birth to adolescence.
- You will be able to list impacts of children's cultural diversity and recent brain research.
- You will be able to apply an understanding of development in an applied field experience.
- You will be able to apply developmental findings to practical areas such as effective parenting and teaching.
- You will be able to demonstrate effective written communication in an area of applied child development.

Recommended Texts and Recommended Study Resources

1. Kuther, T. (2021). *Child & Adolescent Development: In Context*. Sage Publications,

Inc: California.

Course Credit Hour Information

In the interest of providing sufficient time to accomplish the stated Course Learning Outcomes, this class meets the PLNU credit hour policy for a 4 unit class delivered over 16 weeks. It is anticipated that students will spend a minimum of 37.5 participation hours per credit hour on their coursework.

Assessment and Grading

The final grade will be based on a combination of four unit projects and one Canvas activity to be submitted via Canvas.

Grades will be based on the following:

Standard Grade Scale Based on Percentages

A	B	C	D	F
A 93-100	B+ 87-89	C+ 77-79	D+ 67-69	F Less than 59
A- 90-92	B 83-86	C 73-76	D 63-66	
	B- 80-82	C- 70-72	D- 60-62	

Final Examination Policy

Successful completion of this class requires taking the final examination on its scheduled day. The final examination schedule is posted on the [Traditional Undergraduate Records: Final Exam Schedules](#) site. If you find yourself scheduled for three (3) or more final examinations on the same day, you are authorized to contact each professor to arrange a different time for one of those exams. However, unless you have three (3) or more exams on the same day, no requests for alternative final examinations will be granted.

Content Warning*

I acknowledge that each of you comes to PLNU with your own unique life experiences. This contributes to the way you perceive various types of information. In Developmental Psychology, all of the class content, including that which may be intellectually or emotionally challenging, has been intentionally curated to achieve the learning goals for this course. The decision to include such material is not taken lightly. These topics include miscarriages, suicide risks, self-harm, depression, anxiety, sexuality, mental health challenges, trauma, abuse, and substance misuse. If you encounter a topic that is intellectually challenging for you, it can manifest in feelings of discomfort and upset. In response, I encourage you to come talk to me or your friends or family about it. Class topics are discussed for the sole purpose of expanding your intellectual engagement in the area of psychology, and I will support you throughout your learning in this course.

Trigger Warning

I acknowledge that each of you comes to PLNU with your own unique life experiences. This contributes to the way you perceive several types of information. In Developmental Psychology, we will cover a variety of topics, some of which you may find triggering. These topics include miscarriages, suicide risks, self-harm, depression, anxiety, sexuality, mental health challenges, trauma, abuse, and substance misuse. Each time this topic appears in a reading or unit, it is marked on the syllabus or will be discussed in the class preceding the topic. The experience of being triggered versus intellectually challenged are different. The main difference is that an individual must have experienced trauma to experience being triggered, whereas an intellectual challenge has nothing to do with trauma. If you are a trauma survivor and encounter a topic in this class that is triggering for you, you may feel overwhelmed or panicked and find it difficult to concentrate. In response, I encourage you to take the necessary steps for your emotional safety. This may include leaving class while the topic is discussed or talking to a therapist at the Counseling Center. Should you choose to sit out on discussion of a certain topic, know that you are still responsible for the material; but we can discuss if there are other methods for accessing that material, and for

assessing your learning on that material. Class topics are discussed for the sole purpose of expanding your intellectual engagement in the area of psychology, and I will support you throughout your learning in this course.

Incompletes and Late Assignments

All assignments are to be submitted/turned in by the beginning of the class session when they are due—including assignments posted in Canvas. Incompletes will only be assigned in extremely unusual circumstances.

Spiritual Care

Please be aware PLNU strives to be a place where you grow as whole persons. To this end, we provide resources for our students to encounter God and grow in their Christian faith.

If you have questions, a desire to meet with the chaplain or have prayer requests you can contact your professor or the [Office of Spiritual Life and Formation](#).

State Authorization

State authorization is a formal determination by a state that Point Loma Nazarene University is approved to conduct activities regulated by that state. In certain states outside California, Point Loma Nazarene University is not authorized to enroll online (distance education) students. If a student moves to another state after admission to the program and/or enrollment in an online course, continuation within the program and/or course will depend on whether Point Loma Nazarene University is authorized to offer distance education courses in that state. It is the student's responsibility to notify the institution of any change in his or her physical location. Refer to the map on [State Authorization](#) to view which states allow distance education outside California.

PLNU Copyright Policy

Point Loma Nazarene University, as a non-profit educational institution, is entitled by law to use materials protected by the US Copyright Act for classroom education. Any use of those materials outside the class may violate the law.]

PLNU Recording Notification

In order to enhance the learning experience, please be advised that this course may be recorded by the professor for educational purposes, and access to these recordings will be limited to enrolled students and authorized personnel.

Note that all recordings are subject to copyright protection. Any unauthorized distribution or publication of these recordings without written approval from the University (refer to the Dean) is strictly prohibited.

PLNU Academic Honesty Policy

Students should demonstrate academic honesty by doing original work and by giving appropriate credit to the ideas of others. Academic dishonesty is the act of presenting information, ideas, and/or concepts as one's own when in reality they are the results of another person's creativity and effort. A faculty member who believes a situation involving academic dishonesty has been detected may assign a failing grade for that assignment or examination, or, depending on the seriousness of the offense, for the course. For all student appeals, faculty and students should follow the procedures outlined in the University Catalog. See [Academic Policies](#) for definitions of kinds of academic dishonesty and for further policy information.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) Policy

You are allowed to use Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools (e.g., ChatGPT, Gemini Pro 1.5, GrammarlyGo, Perplexity, etc.) in this course. Any work that utilizes AI-based tools must be clearly identified as such,

including the specific tool(s) used. Please use the following sources to guide your citations when using AI.

[MLA Style Center: Citing Generative AI](#)

[APA Style: How to Cite ChatGPT](#)

[Chicago Manual of Style: Citing Content Developed or Generated by AI](#)

PLNU Academic Accommodations Policy

PLNU is committed to providing equal opportunity for participation in all its programs, services, and activities in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Students with disabilities may request course-related accommodations by contacting the Educational Access Center (EAC), located in the Bond Academic Center (EAC@pointloma.edu or 619-849-2533). Once a student's eligibility for an accommodation has been determined, the EAC will work with the student to create an Accommodation Plan (AP) that outlines allowed accommodations. Professors are able to view a student's approved accommodations through Accommodate.

PLNU highly recommends that students speak with their professors during the first two weeks of each semester/term about the implementation of their AP in that particular course. Accommodations are not retroactive so clarifying with the professor at the outset is one of the best ways to promote positive academic outcomes.

Students who need accommodations for a disability should contact the EAC as early as possible (i.e., ideally before the beginning of the semester) to assure appropriate accommodations can be provided. It is the student's responsibility to make the first contact with the EAC. Students cannot assume that because they had accommodations in the past, their eligibility at PLNU is automatic. All determinations at PLNU must go through the EAC process. This is to protect the privacy of students with disabilities who may not want to disclose this information and are not asking for any accommodations.

Language and Belonging

Point Loma Nazarene University faculty are committed to helping create a safe and hospitable learning environment for all students. As Christian scholars we are keenly aware of the power of language and believe in treating others with dignity. As such, it is important that our language be equitable, inclusive, and prejudice free. Inclusive/Bias-free language is the standard outlined by all major academic style guides, including MLA, APA, and Chicago, and it is the expected norm in university-level work. Good writing and speaking do not use unsubstantiated or irrelevant generalizations about personal qualities such as age, disability, economic class, ethnicity, marital status, parentage, political or religious beliefs, race, gender, sex, or sexual orientation. Inclusive language also avoids using stereotypes or terminology that demeans persons or groups based on age, disability, class, ethnicity, gender, race, language, or national origin. Respectful use of language is particularly important when referring to those outside of the religious and lifestyle commitments of those in the PLNU community. By working toward precision and clarity of language, we mark ourselves as serious and respectful scholars, and we model the Christ-like quality of hospitality.

If you (or someone you know) have experienced other forms of discrimination, you can find more information on reporting and resources at www.pointloma.edu/nondiscrimination.

Sexual Misconduct and Discrimination

In support of a safe learning environment, if you (or someone you know) have experienced any form of sexual discrimination or misconduct, including sexual assault, dating or domestic violence, or stalking, know that accommodations and resources are available through the Title IX Office at pointloma.edu/Title-IX. Please be aware that under Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, faculty and staff are required to disclose information about such misconduct to the Title IX Office.

If you wish to speak to a confidential employee who does not have this reporting responsibility, you can contact Counseling Services at counselingservices@pointloma.edu or find a list of campus pastors at pointloma.edu/Title-IX.

If you (or someone you know) have experienced other forms of discrimination or bias, you can find more information on reporting and resources at www.pointloma.edu/bias

PLNU Attendance and Participation Policy

Regular and punctual attendance at all class sessions is considered essential to optimum academic achievement. If the student is absent for more than 10 percent of class sessions, the faculty member will issue a written warning of de-enrollment. If the absences exceed 20 percent, the student may be de-enrolled without notice until the university withdrawal date or, after that date, receive an “F” grade.

Note: The information below must be included under the “PLNU Attendance and Participation Policy” Section if you are teaching an Online or Hybrid course.

PLNU Course Modality Definitions*

1. Online Courses: These are courses with class meetings where all instruction and interaction is fully online.
 - a. Synchronous Courses: At least one class meeting takes place at a designated time.
 - b. Asynchronous Courses: All class meetings are asynchronous.
2. Hybrid Courses: These are courses with class meetings that take place both in the classroom and online synchronously and/or asynchronously.
3. In-Person Courses: These are courses that meet in person with the instructor and students in a physical classroom setting. With approval by the area dean, this may include up to 25% of qualified class interactions through a Learning Management System (such as Canvas).

In some courses, a portion of the credit hour content will be delivered asynchronously and attendance will be determined by submitting the assignments by the posted due dates. See [Academic Policies](#) in the Undergraduate Academic Catalog.

Asynchronous Attendance/Participation Definition

A day of attendance in asynchronous content is determined as contributing a substantive note, assignment, discussion, or submission by the posted due date. Failure to meet these standards will result in an absence for that day. Instructors will determine how many asynchronous attendance days are required each week.

Use of Technology

In order to be successful in the online or hybrid environment, you'll need to meet the minimum technology and system requirements; please refer to the [Technology and System Requirements](#) information. Additionally, students are required to have headphone speakers, microphone, or webcams compatible with their computer available to use. Please note that any course with online proctored exams requires a computer with a camera (tablets are not compatible nor allowable) to complete exams online. Problems with technology do not relieve you of the responsibility of participating, turning in your assignments, or completing your class work.

Loma Writing Center

The Loma Writing Center exists to help all members of the PLNU community cultivate transferable writing skills to engage their academic, professional, personal, and spiritual communities. We work toward this goal by conducting one-on-one consultation sessions, supporting writing education across the PLNU community, and participating in ongoing writing center research.

Getting feedback from the Loma Writing Center while you're in the process of working on an assignment is a great way to improve the quality of your writing and develop as a writer. You are encouraged to talk with a trained writing consultant about getting started on an assignment, organizing your ideas, finding and citing sources, revising, editing for grammar and polishing final drafts, and more. For information about how to make in-person or online appointments, see [Loma Writing Center webpage](#) or visit the Loma Writer Center on the first floor of the Ryan Library, room 221.

- [Appointment Calendar](#)
- [Website](#)
- Email: writingcenter@pointloma.edu

Assignments At-A-Glance

There will be a total of four assignments: Four unit projects worth 20 points each and one Canvas-based assignments worth 20 points. All assignments will be posted and submitted in Canvas.

(Guidelines for Essay/Paper Options

- * 3-5 pages in length for papers*
- * Use 8 1/2 by 11 paper, typewritten, on one side only.*
- * Place the title, paper topic, and your name on the top of the first page.*
- * Use double spacing and one inch margins.*
- * Write the paper as if a friend or relative that knew nothing about psychology were to read it.)*

a. Child Essay: Follow a child between the ages of 2-10 years old for a minimum of 2 hours. Make observations, relate your observations to the theories of child development (e.g. cognitive, moral, language, physical development, etc), and predict how the child will develop next. If your child is old enough, try the conservation experiments Piaget describes. Plan to observe for a minimum of 3 hours to find examples of child development.

b. Child Essay: Follow a child between the ages of 2-16 years old who has a special situation (disease, disability, etc.) Introduce the type of disability the child has and a brief overview of it. Then describe specific ways that the child copes and deals with the disability. What impacts are there on the family? What does the child need to best develop from this point forward?

c. Toddler Language Development: Obtain permission to interact with a child between 1-2 years old. Have the following objects with you: teddy bear, small block, small toy dog, small toy truck, toy baby bottle. Initiate language production using the activities listed below, followed by the corresponding question for the child:

- Make the dog jump on the car. Ask, "What happened?" Record child's response.
- Make the car push the block. Ask, "What happened?" Record child's response.
- Put the car on the block. Ask, "What happened?" Record child's response.
- Make the teddy bear hug the child. Ask, "What happened?" Record child's response.
- Pretend to give the bear the bottle. Ask, "What happened?" Record child's response. Go through the motions as indicated, then ask the child what happened. When the dog jumps on the car, the child might say "Doggie jump car." Record the child's response. The child may then say something like "want doggie" and reach for it. Record this also. You may want to add explanatory comments to recall what was happening when the child spoke. On a separate sheet of paper, categorize and label the child's comments and words. "Doggie jump car" would be an example of telegraphic speech using an action word and nominals. "Want doggie" indicates a social aspect of language, is telegraphic, and uses a nominal and personal-social word. Summarize your findings and what you learned in your paper and include the child's responses.

d. Facility Observation: Call a daycare or nursery and obtain permission to visit and observe their setting (perhaps at your church or in the community). Describe what you find. Does the setting have any philosophical basis? How do they create opportunities for child development physically, cognitively, emotionally etc? In what ways are they particularly successful? What are the challenges they face? What are some ways they can improve? Come up with your own questions as well.

e. Overextensions and More: Interview three parents of 2 to 3 year olds about their child's use of overextensions, underextensions, coining, holophrases, etc. Make note of which type occurs more frequently, or more frequently compared to others. Further, ask these parents about the types of first-word combinations their child is using (or used). (At the beginning of your interview, you may want to first define these terms. Refer to the chapter on language development). In your paper describe the results of each child individually and then provide a conclusion to the overall experience.

f. Infant Crying and Sleeping: Interview three parents and ask them how they respond to infant crying. Use the following questions:

- i. Can you describe how you distinguished your infant's different cries? (hunger, anger, pain, attention, etc).
- ii. How do you respond to each of these cries?
- iii. Do you think responding to crying is important for attachment and trust, or do you think it reinforces the crying and increases its frequency?
- iv. Do you have any other comments on crying? Next interview these parents strategies they implement with their infant. Use the following questions:
- v. How do you know that your infant is sleepy?
- vi. What do you do to help get your infant to sleep?
- vii. Did you try to put your infant on a sleeping schedule or did you let your infant choose the schedule? If so, how did you go about implementing the schedule?
- viii. Do you have any other comments on your infant's sleeping schedule? Please do not just give the parent's responses. Summarize your findings, compare the parent's answers, and describe the insights and conclusions you have gained after analyzing the interviews.

g. Adolescent In-depth Interview: Interview an adolescent between the ages of 12-17. You can follow your own format but generally inquire about their lives in the areas of family, dating, future careers, spirituality, their perceived strengths and weaknesses, etc. Try to find areas in their lives that are going well and areas where they feel they are struggling. What theories from our class are demonstrated in the life of this adolescent? It might be best to have a long conversation with them, and then write the paper rather than think of it as a question and answer interview.

h. Arcade games: Visit a video game arcade. Survey the games, noting the names of the games and their "types" (sports, battle, crime, puzzle, etc). How many of each type are there? Play or observe someone in at least two different games. Choose games that would be interesting for 6th grade and up. Answer the following questions:

- i. What is the game theme? What must a player do to win?
- ii. What type of action occurs? Are the graphics good?
- iii. How are males and females portrayed?
- iv. What roles do they play?
- v. Do you see stereotyping?
- vi. How does the game affect the mood and attitude of the players? Observe the player's reactions and interactions with the game and game equipment. If the opportunity arises, ask the players why they like the game they are playing. What is your opinion of the game? If you were the parent of a 8-14 year old who wanted to play arcade games often what would be your reaction?

What other insights can you share?

- i. Research Paper: Find a particular topic related to child development and write a research paper. You may use up to two web references, and must have at least three references from a respected journal (for example *Adolescence*, *Child Development*, *Child Welfare*, *Crime and Delinquency*, *Developmental Psychology*, *Early Child Research Quarterly*, *Families in Society*, *International Journal of Aging and Human Development*, *Journal of Experimental Child Psychology*, *Merrill-Palmer Quarterly*, or *Youth and Society*, *School Psychology*, etc.). * The research paper (option i) should be in APA format.
- j. Research Study Proposal: Suggest a hypothetical experiment (with children) in an area of your interest. Present the experiment as a proposal. Be sure to provide some background on the topic, specify your hypothesis and the method of study (including independent and dependent variables). Specify whether the study is longitudinal or cross-sectional and why. Indicate what type of reinforcement you would use (if necessary), the task for the child, and so on. Be sure to indicate why you would do the study. Include the Purpose of the study (why are you proposing to perform the experiment? What was it that you don't know? What are you trying to find out?) Also include the Procedure of the study (what do you propose to do? What materials do you propose to use? Who will the participants be? How many? What will the experimenter do, and what will the subjects do? Describe these things so that someone else could perform the experiment in the same manner you are proposing.
- k. Games for Gardner's Intelligences: Using each of Gardner's multiple intelligences (Linguistic, Logical-mathematical, Musical, Spatial, Bodily-Kinesthetic, Interpersonal, Intrapersonal) think of games or activities that would develop each of the mental abilities for a 10-16 year old boy or girl. Where appropriate, indicate what could be done with the activity to help the child move through the zone of proximal development. Summarize your findings in your paper and be sure to describe the games thoroughly enough that a person who had not played the game would understand it.
- l. Pregnancy "Presentation": Imagine that you are conducting a session for prospective parents. You want them to have a physically and emotionally healthy pregnancy. Prepare a detailed outline (e.g. bulleted paragraphs) for a presentation that you will hypothetically give to help these parents. Be sure to include prenatal development, healthy pregnancies tips (nutrition, teratogens, etc.), developmental problems, childbirth stages, parenting tips, etc. (This paper can be single spaced and more than five pages if needed.)
- m. Children/Adolescents and aspects of human development are depicted across virtually all films and television shows. For this 3 to 5 page paper, you will pick a film or a television show and analyze it from a child/adolescent development perspective. Specifically, you will pick a character and identify 2 to 4 concepts, phenomena, or theories that you observe and explain how they contribute to the character's development and portrayal.
- n. Acceptable additional formats that do not require professor approval: Choose a topic of interest from this Unit and you can create
 - Powerpoint presentation (you will not have to present): Between 10-15 slides
 - Poem: minimum of 1 page 12 pt font
 - Reflection Paper: 1-3 pages, 12 point font
 - Video: minimum of 3 minutes.
 - Interview: Paper 3-5 pages; or video the length of the interview
 - Book Review: 1-3 pages
 - Art: 1 product (Since this can be subject this may be different for everyone, please seek approval for this option)

- Make a podcast on a topic of your choice from this Unit. You may incorporate current research, interview a parent, etc.
- Other ideas: Please check in if you have any questions: ngarciaw@pointloma.edu

Schedule

	Tuesday	Thursday
Week 1	09/02 Introduction	09/04 Unit 1 Foundations: Chs. 1, 2, 3
Week 2	09/09 Unit 1 Foundations: Chs. 1, 2, 3	09/11 Unit 1 Foundations: Chs. 1, 2, 3
Week 3	09/16 Unit 1 Foundations: Chs. 1, 2, 3	09/18 Unit 2 Motor: Chs. 4, 7, 10, 13 Unit 1 Project Due
Week 4	09/23 Unit 2 Motor: Chs. 4, 7, 10, 13	09/25 Video: "To Walk"
Week 5	09/30 Unit 2 Motor: Chs. 4, 7, 10, 13	10/02 Unit 2 Motor: Chs. 4, 7, 10, 13
Week 6	10/07 Speech and Language	10/09 Video: "To Talk"
Week 7	10/14 Unit 3 Cognitive: Chs. 5, 8, 11, 14 Unit 2 Project Due	10/16 Unit 3 Cognitive: Chs. 5, 8, 11, 14
Week 8	10/21 IQ Talk; Disabilities (504s & IEPs)	10/23 NO CLASS- Fall Break
Week 9	10/28 Video: "To Think"	10/30 Unit 3 Cognitive: Chs. 5, 8, 11, 14
Week 10	11/04 Unit 3 Cognitive: Chs. 5, 8, 11, 14	11/06 Unit 3 Cognitive: Chs. 5, 8, 11, 14 Unit 3 Project Due
Week 11	11/11 Unit 4 Socioemotional: Chs. 6, 9, 12, 15	11/13 Unit 4 Socioemotional: Chs. 6, 9, 12, 15
Week 12	11/18 Video "To Feel"	11/20 Unit 4 Socioemotional: Chs. 6, 9, 12, 15
Week 13	11/25 Canvas Activity	11/27 NO CLASS- Thanksgiving Break
Week 14	12/02 Unit 4 Socioemotional: Chs. 6, 9, 12, 15	12/04 Unit 4 Socioemotional: Chs. 6, 9, 12, 15
Week 15	12/09 Class Topic	12/11 Class Topic
Week 16	FINAL:12/16 Unit 4 Project Due via Canvas	