

Department.: Psychology

Course Number: PSYC 239W

Course Title: Current Topics in Developmental Psychology

Credits: 3

Contact Person: John Rickards

Catalog Copy: Current Topics in Developmental Psychology. Either semester. Three credits. Prerequisite: PSYC 236 or consent of instructor. With change of topic, may be repeated for credit. Selected topics (e.g., infant development, peer relations, cognitive development, and developmental psychobiology) that may vary with each offering.

W Criteria: - There is high student demand for, and increasing faculty interest in, advanced-level courses in specific content areas. Rather than propose separate courses in the specialty area of each faculty member of the Developmental Division of the Department of Psychology, the faculty have used this "Current Topics" course to fulfill the curricular needs of the undergraduate program. Psyc 239W explores material covered in Psychology 236 (Developmental Psychology) but in much more depth. Topics such as peer relations, infant development, and cognitive development are necessarily covered in a rather cursory manner in the Psychology 236, yet the growing literature on each of these topics could easily fill an entire semester. In addition, there are topics that are not typically covered in Psychology 236, such as developmental psychobiology, which should attract many students who are interested in pursuing advanced content in developmental psychology.

Each instructor who teaches the course has agreed that, at a minimum, one 15-20 page paper will be required. The paper will be a review of selected original readings (following American Psychological Association format) or a research proposal (following National Institutes of Health PHS398 guidelines). Because the students must engage these original materials in an active way in order to provide adequate written summaries of their theoretical and/or empirical foci, the writing is a critical component of students' understanding of the material. The instructor will provide guidance on APA and NIH formats in class and will discuss techniques for achieving clarity of thought, and good writing style, in scientific papers (as reviewed in the APA style guide). Students will be required to turn in an outline of the paper, a rough draft, and a final version. The instructor will provide constructive feedback after each of these

stages in the writing process. The students' progress at and through each of these stages will be evaluated and will constitute 50% of the course grade. A failing grade on the written assignment(s) will result in a failing grade in the course.

Role of Grad Students: none