



# Developmental Transition to Adulthood

## Psych 211 Fall, 2002

**Professor:** Nancy Darling  
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**Office hours:** Tuesday/Thursday, 2:30-3:30. Or please stop by or drop me an e-mail if you have a question about the class.  
**Required Texts:** Adolescence by Laurence Steinberg  
Adolescent Behavior: Readings and Interpretations by Elizabeth Aries

### 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 211 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 five 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;
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;
5. to encourage you to work with other students in the class to improve your understanding of the material.

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.

### 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 Readiness Assessment Tests (RATs), short assignments, and two focused, analytic papers.

Readiness Assessment Tests. Readiness Assessment Tests are short quizzes (around 20 multiple choice and true/false questions). There will be five RATs during the course of the semester. Their purpose is to save time reviewing material you were assigned to read outside of class and to ensure that everyone has the basics of the material down before we elaborate on that material during class. There are THREE parts to each RAT.

First, you will take the RAT individually. This is a closed-book quiz.

Second, you will take the same RAT with an assigned group of three other students. The group will turn in the group RAT for grading. This is also a closed-book quiz.

Third, after receiving your graded group RAT, your group will have 5 minutes to write an appeal to any question that was marked wrong on the group RAT. Your appeal must be based on a defense of the correctness of your answer. If your appeal is accepted, your grade (both individual and group) will be changed accordingly. The appeal is done open-book. There are no appeals on individual RATs.

Both the individual and group RAT will count toward your final grade. Your individual score will be worth 15% of your final grade. Your group RAT score will be worth 10% of your grade. If your group grade is LOWER than your individual grade at the end of the semester, you will receive the higher of the two (in other words, your group can't drag you down, but they will probably help you up).

**On the day of each RAT, please be sure to bring in blue or black pen to take your RAT, and a red pen to correct it**

Short Assignments. Periodically during the semester, you will be assigned short assignments. Sometimes the goal of these assignments will be to help you prepare for in-class work by thinking about things ahead of times. Other times, the goal will be for you to summarize what you've done in class and tie up loose ends. All short assignments must be turned in during class the day they are due. Assignments can be written either in prose or in a coherent outline form. They can also be neatly handwritten rather than typed. **NO LATE ASSIGNMENTS WILL BE ACCEPTED.** Assignments will be graded 0 (not done), 1 (minimally completed), 2 (good job), or 3 (excellent). Your best 10 assignments will contribute towards your final grade.

Analytic Papers. Twice during the semester, you will develop one of your short assignments into a formal, analytic essay. The goal of this essay is to build on a major policy issue, discuss the relevant literature on the biological, cognitive, and social characteristics of adolescents as it applies to that issue. 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 as well as other appropriate empirical research.

***Missed RATs, 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 RATs only for confirmed emergencies or an illness that requires confinement to the Health Center. If you miss a RAT, your individual test score will count as both your individual and group score for that week. Please notify me as soon as it is apparent that a RAT 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 essay in late. *Everyone* could do a better job given a little more time. All late papers will be dropped 10 points the first day and will not be accepted more than two days late. If you know your paper 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.

***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.

Cheating and plagiarism are very serious offenses governed by the student code of conduct. Anyone cheating on an exam or copying work from another source without proper acknowledgment will receive an F in this class and will be referred to the College Judicial System for further action.

**Schedule**

Sept 3	Introduction RAT 0: Syllabus
Sept 10	RAT 1: The Fundamental Changes of Adolescence (Chapters 1-3)
Sept 12	Aries selections 3.1, 3.3
Sept 17	Aries selections 4.1, 4.2, 4.3
Sept 24	Aries selections 1.1, 1.2, 7.3
Oct 1	RAT 2: The Contexts of Adolescence I (Chapters 4 & 5)

Oct 3     Aries selection 10.2

Oct 10    Aries selection 11.2, 13.2

Oct 17    RAT 3: The Contexts of Adolescence II (Chapters 6 & 7)

Oct 22    Aries selection 12.1

Oct 29    Aries selection 12.2

Nov 5     RAT 4: Psychosocial Development I (Chapters 8 & 9)

Nov 12    Aries selections 5.1, 5.2

Nov 19    RAT 5: Psychosocial Development II (Chapters 10-13)

Nov 21    Aries selection 8.1

Dec 3     Aries selection 9.1, 14.1, 14.2

Dec 10    Aries selection 7.1

Dec 17    Aries selection 8.2