

**Psychology 601: Deficit or Difference? Interpreting Diverse Developmental Paths**  
University of Wisconsin-Madison  
Fall, 2018  
Tuesday/Thursday 2:30 – 3:45PM, room 115 Brogden Hall

**Instructor:** Ron Pomper  
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**Office Hours:** Tuesday 4:00 – 5:00PM & Thursday 1:00 – 2:00PM  
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There is a remarkable amount of variability between individuals and between cultures. We often interpret these differences as deficits, but what's different is not necessarily worse. For instance, female brains weigh less than male brains. In the past, this was interpreted as a deficit, reinforcing the belief that women were intellectually inferior to men. Although we now know that this is false, our research today continues to interpret many differences as deficits. In this course, we will use the deficit/difference framework to re-examine classic research in psychology.

We will start by briefly examining the history of the deficit framework in psychology, including research on IQ differences and the eugenics movement. We will then read theoretical papers and commentaries challenging the deficit framework. For the majority of the class, we will read recent empirical articles that challenge deficit interpretations of many classic findings in psychological research. Our readings cover a broad range of topics that span many fields in psychology, including cognitive control, language acquisition, gene by environment interactions, emotion perception, and autism spectrum disorder (ASD). Finally, the course will examine how mainstream culture and privilege intersect with the framing of deficits in research on bilingualism, parenting and schooling, and ASD. For instance, monolingual children perform worse than bilingual children on tests of cognitive control, yet this has been exclusively framed as a bilingual advantage, rather than as a monolingual deficit. With a growing emphasis on translational research and bridging the socioeconomic gap, it is important that we more critically examine which differences qualify as deficits to target for intervention.

**Required Readings**

There will *not* be a textbook assigned for this course. All articles and book chapters will be posted on our Canvas page. Make sure to read the assigned article(s) before each class and *please bring a copy of the assigned readings to class, either in paper or electronic form.*

**Prerequisite(s)**

Psych 225 or 285

**Course Designations**

This is an advanced level course in the Liberal Arts and Sciences. Instruction will be face-to-face.

## **Course Learning Outcomes**

- Evaluate the framing and interpretation of results in empirical papers and journal articles
- Write clear and concise evaluations of popular press (midterm paper) and empirical (final paper) articles using the deficit vs. difference framework
- Communicate effectively in both informal (participation and discussion leadership) and formal (final oral presentation) settings

## **Psychology Program Learning Outcomes**

- Learn about the multiple content areas of scientific psychology
- Develop the ability to think critically and quantitatively
- Enhance written and oral communication skills
- Prepare for the most rigorous graduate and professional programs
- Apply the science of psychology to the well-being of citizens of Wisconsin and the global community

## **Grading**

Grading will not be on a curve. This means that you are only competing with yourself, not with your classmates. Grades will be based on the following percentiles:

92% ≤	A	< 100%
88% ≤	AB	< 92%
82% ≤	B	< 88%
78% ≤	BC	< 82%
70% ≤	C	< 78%
60% ≤	D	< 70%
0% ≤	F	< 60%

## **Grading Components**

- Participation (20%)
- Discussion Posts (10%)
- Discussion Leadership (10%)
- Midterm Paper (20%)
- Final Paper (30%)
- Final Oral Presentation (10%)

## **Credit Hours**

This is a 3-credit course. Our class will meet for two 75-minute periods each week during the fall semester. The expectation is that students will work on course learning activities (including reading, preparing for discussions, and researching and writing papers) for about 3 hours out of the classroom for every class period. More specific expectations about student work are below.

## Details about Course Components

Below is a brief description for each component of the total course grade. Separate rubrics and more detailed instructions will be posted on our course's Canvas page.

### Participation (20%)

- I will be presenting material each day, but the majority of our class will be discussion-based. It is therefore important that everyone comes to class ready to participate.
- Participation will be graded based on *quality*, rather than quantity. Try to make a meaningful contribution to the class-wide discussion in every meeting. Meaningful contributions include asking questions!
- Everyone has a different style and I will actively work to ensure that we create a space that facilitates contributions from all. This will include using different activities throughout our course (e.g., think-pair-share).
- Because participation is integral to our class, it's important that you be there. I will be taking attendance every class. You **may miss two days** over the course of the semester. You do not need to notify me beforehand or provide justification. Any absences beyond this will adversely affect your participation grade. If you will be absent for more than two days, talk to me during Office Hours or email me.
- Participation will be graded twice throughout the semester: half-way through the semester (worth 10% of your total grade in the course) and at the end of the semester (10%). For the half-way evaluation, everyone will self-reflect and grade their own participation with the aid of an in-class handout. For the end of the semester, I will be grading everyone's participation using a rubric that is posted on our Canvas site.

### Discussion Posts (10%)

- To help facilitate discussion, everyone will write a discussion post for each week of class.
- Posts will be submitted to the corresponding Topic for that week in the Discussions section of our courses' Canvas page.
- Your posts should be **between 100 to 200 words** and must reference at least **two of the readings** for that week. Posts are **due by 11:59pm every Monday**.
- There will be a total of 11 discussion posts throughout the semester, for weeks 2 through 11 and week 15 (see Course Schedule below). Your final grade will only be based on 10 posts (each post will be worth 1% of your total grade in the course), so you are allowed to miss one post over the course of the semester.
- **Late Policy:** Posts after 11:59pm will *not* receive credit and will count as missed.
- On the first day of class, we will go through examples (with an accompanying handout) of quality posts. You are allowed (and encouraged!) to make your post in response to others' posts.
- I will post grades each week for discussion posts on our Canvas site.

### Discussion Leadership (10%)

- Each week, we will be covering a new topic. On Tuesdays, I will provide an overview of the topic for that week and will facilitate our discussion for that day. On Thursdays, students will be facilitating our discussion.

- **Once during the semester**, you will work in a group of 2 to 3 students to facilitate our class discussion.
- To facilitate discussion:
  - Make your own Discussion Post for that week
  - On Tuesday or Wednesday, meet with your group to read through everyone's Discussion Posts to identify common themes, points of confusion and interesting ideas
  - Come to Thursday's class prepared to provide a brief (approximately 5 to 10 minute) overview of the readings for that week and an outline (for the chalkboard) organizing everyone's Discussion Posts
  - PowerPoint slides are *prohibited*.
- There are 9 Thursdays that students will be facilitating discussion (see Course Schedule below). There are 24 students in our class. This means that there will be 6 weeks where groups will consist of 3 students and 3 weeks where groups will consist of 2 students.
- During the first week of class, we will go over the topics for each week and determine groups.

#### Midterm Paper (20%)

- You will write a **1,000- to 1,250-word paper** (which is approximately 4-5 double-spaced pages) critiquing a popular press article (or podcast) that describes an empirical journal article with a deficit or difference framing.
- Three weeks before the paper is due, I will provide a list of potential popular press articles and podcasts. You may of course use an article or podcast that is not on the list.
- Two weeks before the paper is due you must email me your choice for approval.
- Your paper will be graded on both content and quality and will be worth 200 points (i.e., 20% of your total grade for the course). More detailed instructions and grading criteria will be posted on Canvas with the list of potential articles.
- **Late Policy:** Submitting your paper one-day late (i.e., after the 5pm deadline, but before 5pm of the following day) will result in a deduction of 50 points from your grade on the assignment. Each additional day your paper is late (i.e., 24 hours past the deadline), will result in a further 50-point deduction.
- **Timeline:**
  - Read through Potential Topics: Friday, October 5<sup>th</sup> by 5pm
  - Select Topic: Friday, October 12<sup>th</sup> by 5pm
  - Paper: Friday, October 26<sup>th</sup> by 5pm

#### Final Paper (30%)

- The final paper will consist of two parts:
  - 1) a **1,750- to 2,250-word paper** (which is approximately 7-9 double-spaced pages) using the difference vs. deficit framework to critique empirical research on a topic of your choice
  - 2) a **500-word paper** (which is approximately 2 double-spaced pages) that synthesizes your paper in the style of a popular press article

- You must cite at least 8 published research articles (using APA style). *No more than 2 of these articles can come from our course syllabus.* The purpose of this paper is for you to gain experience in seeking out new research and applying the deficit vs. difference framework to this research.
- You will complete this paper in 3 stages:
  - Four weeks before the paper is due, you will submit to Canvas an annotated bibliography with at least 4 articles. This is worth 50 points. I will provide feedback on your articles and your grade that following week.
  - One week before the paper is due, I have dedicated an entire class towards peer review. You must come with a draft of your paper to share (either printed or electronic). In class, we will exchange papers with partners and then provide feedback. At the end of class, you will submit a brief summary of the feedback you received and the revisions you plan on making. This will be worth 50 points.
  - Your final draft will be graded based on content and quality. It will be worth 200 points (i.e., 20% of your total grade for the course).
- More detailed instructions and grading criteria will be provided in a handout that will be posted on Canvas.
- **Late Policy:** Submitting your paper one-day late (i.e., after the 5pm deadline, but before 5pm of the following day) will result in a deduction of 50 points from your grade on the assignment. Each additional day your paper is late (i.e., 24 hours past the deadline), will result in a further 50-point deduction. This applies to both stages of the assignment – the annotated bibliography and the final paper.
- **Timeline:**
  - Annotated Bibliography: Friday, November 16<sup>th</sup> by 5pm
  - Peer Review: Thursday, December 6<sup>th</sup> in class
  - Final Draft: Friday, December 14<sup>th</sup> by 5pm

#### Final Oral Presentation (10%)

- You will give a **5-minute oral presentation** on your final paper, with an additional **4-minute question and answer** period.
- These presentations will occur *before* your final paper is due, during weeks 13 and 14 (see Course Schedule below).
- You are *not* allowed to use PowerPoint slides.
- The purpose of this assignment is to help you develop your presentation skills and to broaden our course's content beyond the syllabus!
- Your grade will be based on both the content and quality of your presentation (50 points), as well as the questions you ask during others' presentations (50 points). More detailed instructions for the final presentation and grading criteria will be provided in a separate handout and discussed in class.

## **Rights and Responsibilities**

### ***Ethics of being a student in the Department of Psychology***

The members of the faculty of the Department of Psychology at UW-Madison uphold the highest ethical standards of teaching and research. They expect their students to uphold the same standards of ethical conduct. By registering for this course, you are implicitly agreeing to conduct yourself with the utmost integrity throughout the semester.

In the Department of Psychology, acts of academic misconduct are taken very seriously. Such acts diminish the educational experience for all involved – students who commit the acts, classmates who would never consider engaging in such behaviors, and instructors. Academic misconduct includes, but is not limited to, cheating on assignments and exams, stealing exams, sabotaging the work of classmates, submitting fraudulent data, plagiarizing the work of classmates or published and/or online sources, acquiring previously written papers and submitting them (altered or unaltered) for course assignments, collaborating with classmates when such collaboration is not authorized, and assisting fellow students in acts of misconduct. Students who have knowledge that classmates have engaged in academic misconduct should report this to the instructor.

### ***Complaints***

Occasionally, a student may have a complaint about a TA or course instructor. If that happens, you should feel free to discuss the matter directly with the TA or instructor. If the complaint is about the TA and you do not feel comfortable discussing it with him or her, you should discuss it with the course instructor. Complaints about mistakes in grading should be resolved with the TA and/or instructor in the great majority of cases. If the complaint is about the instructor (other than ordinary grading questions) and you do not feel comfortable discussing it with him or her, make an appointment to speak to the Associate Chair for Undergraduate Studies, Professor Maryellen MacDonald, [mcmacdonald@wisc.edu](mailto:mcmacdonald@wisc.edu).

If your complaint concerns sexual harassment, you may also take your complaint to Dr. Linnea Burk, Clinical Associate Professor and Director, Psychology Research and Training Clinic, Room 315 Psychology (262-9079; [burk@wisc.edu](mailto:burk@wisc.edu)).

If you have concerns about climate or bias in this class, or if you wish to report an incident of bias or hate that has occurred in class, you may contact the Chair of the Psychology Department Climate & Diversity Committee, Karl Rosengren ([krosengren@wisc.edu](mailto:krosengren@wisc.edu)). You may also use the University's bias incident reporting system, which you can reach at the following link: <https://doso.students.wisc.edu/services/bias-reporting-process/>.

### ***Accommodations Policy***

The University of Wisconsin-Madison supports the right of all enrolled students to a full and equal educational opportunity. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Wisconsin State Statute (36.12), and UW-Madison policy (Faculty Document 1071) require that students with disabilities be reasonably accommodated in instruction and campus life. Reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities is a shared faculty and student responsibility. Students are expected to inform faculty [me] of their need for instructional accommodations by the end of the third week of the semester, or as soon as possible after a disability has been incurred or recognized. Faculty [I], will work either directly with the student [you] or in coordination with the McBurney Center to identify and provide reasonable instructional accommodations. Disability information, including instructional accommodations, as part of a student's educational record is confidential and protected under FERPA.

## Course Schedule

Week	Date	Topic	Reading / Assignment
1	Tu Sep 4	<b>NO CLASS</b>	none
	Tr Sep 6	Overview	
2	Tu Sep 11	Theoretical Framework	Akhtar & Jaswal (2013); Gernsbacher (2010); Cole (2013)
	Tr Sep 13		
3	Tu Sep 18	Historical Perspective	Kamin (1974); Degler (1991)
	Tr Sep 20		
4	Tu Sep 25	Cognitive Control	Frankenhuis et al. (2016); Kidd et al. (2013); Mittal et al. (2015)
	Tr Sep 27		
5	Tu Oct 2	Emotion & GxE	Frankenhuis & de Weerth (2013); Pollak (2008); Belsky & Pluess (2009)
	Tr Oct 4		
6	Tu Oct 9	Language	Hoff (2013); Dudley-Marling & Lucas (2009); Heath (1983)
	Tr Oct 11		
*	<b>Fri Oct 12</b>	*	<b>Midterm Topic Due by 5pm</b>
7	Tu Oct 16	Mainstream Culture & Privilege	Medin et al. (2010); Miner (1956); Henrich et al. (2010)
	Tr Oct 18		
8	Tu Oct 23	At Home (Parenting)	Gopnik (2016); Correa-Chavez & Rogoff (2009); Lareau (2011)
	Tr Oct 25		
*	<b>Fri Oct 26</b>	*	<b>Midterm Paper Due by 5pm</b>
9	Tu Oct 30	In the Classroom	Kusserow (2005); Pearson et al. (2012); Carraher et al. (1985)
	Tr Nov 1		
10	Tu Nov 6	Bilingualism	Akhtar & Menjivar (2012); Bialystok et al. (2007)
	Tr Nov 8		
11	Tu Nov 13	Autism & Neurodiversity	Kapp et al. (2013); Burack et al. (2016); Norbury & Sparks (2013)
	Tr Nov 15		
*	<b>Fri Nov 16</b>	*	<b>Annotated Bib Due by 5pm</b>
12	Tu Nov 20	<b>NO CLASS</b>	none
	Tr Nov 22	<b>NO CLASS</b>	
13	Tu Nov 27	Oral Presentations	none
	Tr Nov 29		
14	Tu Dec 4	Oral Presentations	none
	Tr Dec 6	Peer Review	
15	Tu Dec 11	Conclusion	none
	Tr Dec 13	<b>NO CLASS</b>	
*	<b>Fri Dec 14</b>	*	<b>Final Paper Due by 5pm</b>

## References

### Week 2: Theoretical Framework

- Akhtar, N., & Jaswal, V. K. (2013). Deficit or difference? Interpreting diverse developmental paths: an introduction to the special section. *Developmental Psychology, 49*(1), 1–3.
- Gernsbacher, M. A. (2010). Stigma from psychological science: Group differences, not deficits—introduction to stigma special section. *Perspectives on Psychological Science, 5*(6), 687.
- Cole, M. (2013). Differences and deficits in psychological research in historical perspective: a commentary on the special section. *Developmental Psychology, 49*(1), 84–91.

### Week 3: Historical Perspective

- Kamin, L. J. (1974). *The science and politics of I.Q.* Potomac, MA: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Publishers. **[read p. 1-12]**
- Degler, C.N. (1991). *In search of human nature: The decline and revival of Darwinism in American social thought.* New York, NY: Oxford University Press.  
Chapter 2 **[read p. 32-55]**

### Week 4: Cognitive Control

- Frankenhuis, W. E., Panchanathan, K., & Nettle, D. (2016). Cognition in harsh and unpredictable environments. *Current Opinion in Psychology, 7*, 76–80.
- Kidd, C., Palmeri, H., & Aslin, R. N. (2013). Rational snacking: Young children’s decision-making on the marshmallow task is moderated by beliefs about environmental reliability. *Cognition, 126*(1), 109–114.
- Mittal, C., Griskevicius, V., Simpson, J.A., Sung, S., & Young, E.S. (2015). Cognitive Adaptations to stressful environments: When childhood adversity enhances adult executive function. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 109*, 604-621.

### *Extra (Optional):*

- Watts, T.W., Duncan, G.J., & Quan, H. (2018). Revisiting the marshmallow test: A conceptual replication investigating links between early delay of gratification and later outcomes. *Psychological Science, 29*, 1159-1177.

### Week 5: Emotion & Gene x Environment interactions

- Frankenhuis, W. E., & de Weerth, C. (2013). Does Early-Life Exposure to Stress Shape or Impair Cognition? *Current Directions in Psychological Science, 22*(5), 407–412.
- Pollak, S.D. (2008). Mechanisms linking early experience and the emergence of emotions: Illustrations from the study of maltreated children. *Current Directions in Psychological Science, 17*, 370-375.
- Belsky, J., & Pluess, M. (2009). Beyond diathesis stress: differential susceptibility to environmental influences. *Psychological Bulletin, 135*(6), 885–908.

### Week 6: Language

- Hoff, E. (2013). Interpreting the Early Language Trajectories of Children from Low SES and Language Minority Homes: Implications for Closing Achievement Gaps. *Developmental Psychology*, 49(1), 4–14.
- Dudley-Marling, C., & Lucas, K. (2009). Pathologizing the Language and Culture of Poor Children. *Language Arts*, 86(5), 362–370.
- Heath, S.B. (1983). *Ways with words: Language, life and work in communities and classrooms*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press. [read p. 73-86 & 95-112]

### *Extra (Optional):*

- Sperry, D. E., Sperry, L. L., & Miller, P. J. (2018). Reexamining the verbal environments of children from different socioeconomic backgrounds. *Child Development*, 0, 1-16.

### Week 7: Mainstream (Majority) Culture

- Medin, D., Bennis, W., & Chandler, M. (2010). Culture and the Home-Field Disadvantage. *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, 5(6), 708–713.
- Miner, H. (1956). Body Ritual among the Nacirema. *American Anthropologist*, 58(3), 503–507.
- Henrich, J., Heine, S. J., & Norenzayan, A. (2010). The weirdest people in the world? *Behavioral and Brain Sciences*, 33, 61-135. [read p. 61-74]

### Week 8: At Home (Parenting)

- Gopnik, A. (2016). *The gardener and the carpenter: What the new science of child development tells us about the relationship between parents and children*. New York, NY: Picador.  
Chapter 6: The work of play [read p. 148-178]
- Correa-Chavez, M. & Rogoff, B. (2009). Children's attention to interactions directed to others: Guatemalan Mayan and European American Patterns. *Developmental Psychology*, 45, 630-641.
- Lareau, A. (2011). *Unequal childhoods: Class, race, and family life*. Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press. [read p. 233-257]

### Week 9: In the Classroom

- Kusserow, A. (2005). The Workings of Class: How understanding a subtle difference between social classes can promote quality in the classroom - and beyond. *Stanford Social Innovation Review*, 38–47.
- Pearson, B. Z., Conner, T., & Jackson, J. E. (2012). Removing obstacles for African American English-Speaking children through greater understanding of language difference. *Developmental Psychology*, 49, 1-14.
- Carraher, T. N., Carraher, D. W., & Schiemann, A. D. (1985). Mathematics in the street and in schools. *British Journal of Developmental Psychology*, 3, 21–29.

### Week 10: Bilingualism

Akhtar, N., & Menjivar, J. A. (2012). Cognitive and linguistic correlates of early exposure to more than one language. *Advances in Child Development and Behavior*, 42, 41-78.

Bialystok, E., Craik, F.I.M., & Freedman, M. (2007). Bilingualism as a protection against the onset of symptoms of dementia. *Neuropsychologia*, 45, 459-464.

### Week 11: Autism & Neurodiversity

Kapp, S. K., Gillespie-Lynch, K., Sherman, L. E., & Hutman, T. (2013). Deficit, Difference, or Both? Autism and Neurodiversity. *Developmental Psychology*, 49(1), 59–71.

Burack, J. A., Russo, N., Kovshoff, H., Fernandes, T. P., Ringo, J., Landry, O., & Iarocci, G. (2016). How I attend—not how well do I attend: Rethinking developmental frameworks of attention and cognition in autism spectrum disorder and typical development. *Journal of Cognition and Development*, 17, 553-567.

Norbury, C. F., & Sparks, A. (2013). Difference or disorder? Cultural issues in understanding neurodevelopmental disorders. *Developmental Psychology*, 49(1), 45–58.