



# LIFE SPAN DEVELOPMENT

## PSY 364 IN-PERSON (IP) COURSE SYLLABUS; FALL 2025

This syllabus is subject to change. Changes (if any) will be announced via Blackboard.

### COURSE INFORMATION

Office: 2128 Au Sable Hall (2nd floor)  
Email: mcdonan2@gvsu.edu  
Contact: Please use BlackBoard Messages to communicate regarding any course-related matters. Otherwise, *email is the best way to connect with me.*

Class Meetings: Tuesday/Thursday 1:00-2:15PM  
Class Location: B-2124 Mackinac Hall

### Dr. McDonald's Schedule - FALL 2025

Time	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	SAT	SUN
9:00 AM	K-12 School Consult	DRIVE TIME	Coaching/Studio	DRIVE TIME	Coaching/Studio	Family	Sabbath
10:00 AM	K-12 School Consult	PSY101 (OG)	Coaching/Studio	PSY101 (OG)	Coaching/Studio	TU & UM	Rest, Meditate
11:00 AM	K-12 School Consult	PSY101 (OG)	Coaching/Studio	PSY101 (OG)	Coaching/Studio	Football	Play & Family
11:30AM-12:30 PM	K-12 School Consult	Office Hours (OG)	Coaching/Studio	Office Hours (OG)	Coaching/Studio		
1:00 PM	K-12 School Consult	PSY364 (OG)	Coaching/Studio	PSY364 (OG)	Coaching/Studio		
2:00 PM	K-12 School Consult	PSY364 (OG)	Coaching/Studio	PSY364 (OG)	Coaching/Studio		
3:00 PM	K-12 School Consult	DRIVE TIME	Coaching/Studio	DRIVE TIME	Coaching/Studio		
4:00PM	Coaching	Coaching/Studio	Coaching/Studio	Book Club/Dinner	Coaching/Studio		
5:00PM	Coaching	Coaching/Studio	Office By Appt. (OL)	Book Club/Dinner	Coaching/Studio		

*To Book an Appointment in Dr. McDonald's calendar, Click the Office Hours link provided in Blackboard.*

NOTE: Both PSY364 On-Ground and PSY364 On-Line students are able to utilize both online and on-ground office hours.

### Thoughts about Boundaries and Whole-Person Wellness

As a mental health professional, I deeply value life practices that allow for a healthy rhythm of work/professional projects, home and family life, and personal projects/pursuits. To promote good balance and to encourage you to do the same, I do my best to complete my GVSU work between the hours of 9AM-4PM Monday through Friday. I do not guarantee that I will send email responses over the weekend, as that is designated family, play and rest time, and personal rest/rejuvenation/reflection time. Student emails received after 4PM will generally receive a response the following work day. I also strive to complete my grading during the week so please keep this in mind in terms of your expectations for the posting of grades in the BB gradebook. As you navigate student life, I also encourage you to establish some healthy boundaries allowing you to complete your work according to due dates while also setting practices that allow for healthy rest, social activities, play and other activities that nurture you holistically.

## Catalog Description

A survey of theories and research on human development from conception through death. Physical, perceptual, cognitive, personality, social, and emotional changes are reviewed, and their interrelationships are discussed. Does not satisfy the requirements for teacher certification. Offered every academic year. Prerequisite: [PSY 101](#).

## Course Materials (Required)

E-Text: Arnett, J. and Jensen, L, (2018). Human development: A cultural approach. Pearson.

Films: You will need access to the following films (available on most streaming sites). A DVD of each is also typically available for 24-hour check-out at Dr. McDonald's office on a first-come first-served basis. I encourage students to gather and watch/discuss films together, if at all possible.

- "In the Womb"
- "Babies"
- "Inside Out 2"
- "A Man Called Otto"

## Course Format: In-Person/On-Ground Format

This course meets in-person on the GVSU-Allendale campus two times per week. The GVSU Blackboard Ultra system will also be utilized regularly to communicate pertinent course information including the course syllabus, grades, videos, announcements, assignment documents/submission points, and other course-related content. Students are responsible for all information provided via Blackboard. **Use of BlackBoard Ultra is integral to this course and you must log in daily to promote your success** (I suggest checking in twice daily, once in the morning and once before your evening studying time) in order to complete course requirements and to receive important announcements and updates about course content.

If you experience technical problems with Blackboard Ultra, contact the help desk by email or phone - [helpdesk@gvsu.edu](mailto:helpdesk@gvsu.edu) or 616-331-3513. The help website is <http://www.gvsu.edu/it/learn/>

### **Required Equipment (owned or accessible):**

- Reliable high-speed internet access
- Computer with a sound card and speakers and operating system that meets current Blackboard browser requirements (Windows 7 or above, OS 10.10 or above)
- Computer microphone built in or external (most laptops have a microphone)
- Computer camera - built in or external (most laptops have a camera)

### **Dr. McDonald's Deep Hope Statement**

*My deep hope for students in this course is that they will deepen their understanding of and appreciation for the complexity and importance of holistic human development across the lifespan. I am eager for my students to marvel at their humanity and to put their unique time, talents and resources to work supporting healthy and flourishing human development in themselves and others within their circles of influence—home/family, educational, faith-related, businesses, community and societal contexts. As one's knowledge of developmental psychology broadens and deepens, may a sense of wonder and awe in humanity—both our human commonalities and our rich diversities—expand within you and inspire engagement, understanding, collaboration, and service to humankind.*

### **Professor's Statement on Teaching and Learning**

Transformative teaching and learning is active, collaborative and mutual; as a professor and an experienced expert in my field, I still constantly learn new insights and perspectives from my students in every single interaction. I am intentional about being a lifelong learner who experiences deep wonder, awe and curiosity about people, ideas, nature and the world around us. My goal as a professor is to model the joy and transformative nature of lifelong learning; learning and a curiosity-rich mindset have transformed my life and shape me daily as a person, and I hope to inspire you to become lifelong learners yourselves. From my perspective, learning is

- **Central to what it means to be human.**
- **Constructive**.....Each learner sees the world uniquely and builds new learning into their prior knowledge, as schemas develop.
- **Connecting**.....Learning is inherently connective, bringing together concepts, ideas, people, cultures.

- ***Creative***.....Each person perceives, connects ideas, and makes meaning in uniquely individual ways. Innovation, invention and creative problem-solving abound through brainstorming, reframing, and divergent thinking.
- ***Relational***.....The best type of learning happens in relationships of trust/mutuality with an edge of challenge and inspiration.
- ***Non-Linear***.....learning does not always progress from Point A to Point B.
- ***Messy and Unpredictable***.....the brain is capable of making order and meaning out of even the most random information, experiences and perceptions.
- ***Curiosity-Driven***.....Sheer motivation to make sense of the world comprises a well of exhilarating joy, discovery, wonder and awe.
- ***Growth-Minded***.....Some of the most powerful and transformative learning experiences of our human lives come out of mistakes, misunderstandings and failures.
- ***Inclusive***.....All humans—whether neurotypical or neuroatypical—can learn. Adjustments to teaching and learning approaches and strategies can open access to learning for all.
- ***Hard and Frustrating at Times***.....Authentic learning challenges and seeks advancement in understanding and insight; being a novice can feel slow, difficult and sometimes impossible. But arduous learning will eventually make the awaited “aha moment” and the long-term retention that much more celebratory. Tenacity and grit are important in the learning process.
- ***Both Conscious/Intentional and Unconscious/Unintentional***.....I am amazed when I read research on how the brain processes meaningful learning during sleep. It forages for information and understanding, even when we are not consciously aware of it doing so.
- ***Self-Perpetuating and Inspiring***....the more you learn, the more you want to learn. And the more you want to learn, the more you are motivated to keep seeking, pursuing and exploring new places, people and experiences.
- ***Not limited to formal classroom settings***.....Learning is not constricted within four walls and formal classrooms; learning is dynamic and ongoing regardless of context and thrives in experiential environments and real-world settings.
- ***Fun and Rewarding***....Inherent joy, delight and hope for the best possible future characterize learning. Authentic learning is enjoyable, engaging, playful and exhilarating.
- ***Lifelong***.....The foundation of a learning lifestyle often starts with formal schooling; but it continues well beyond the structured high school and college experience into the wide-open possibilities of organic learning and exploring across the lifespan.

My goal as your professor is to refrain from limiting your learning to memorization or concept mastery or a formal academic classroom. Rather, I work to create interesting, challenging and compelling learning experiences that will inspire you, motivate you, and excite you about your current and future work. As your instructor, I strive to live out passionate lifelong learning in my own life so that I can model for you the deep joy, inspired awe, and rich satisfaction of learning and growing as a way of life. As I write this, I am researching to learn more about the Hawaiian island of Molokai and its role as an historical leper colony; the Biblical book of Psalms; embodied human experience; how to make sourdough bread; the immigration crisis at the South-American/Central America border; and jellyfish. I simply love to learn, explore and be inspired by new topics, insights and experiences. Someone once said that “We don’t teach students to

learn simply to get a degree, a job or a career; we teach them to learn so that they are inspired to keep on learning and growing throughout their lives.” I wholeheartedly agree. If you ever want to chat about ways to create and embrace a learning-focused lifestyle, let’s make an office hour, lunch or coffee date!

## **Professor’s Statement on Diversity**

An integral core belief that I hold is that every human being was created uniquely and in intentionally diverse ways to reflect creativity, personality, vitality and the very essence of love and belonging. Each individual was born into unique contextual circumstances that further shape us into diverse beings with unique perspectives on the world. I believe that individuals, families, communities and institutions are made better, richer and more effective when diverse people come together toward a common mission or goal. When people approach learning and discourse with civility, an honest desire to learn, and respectful humility toward others, there is true potential for transformative learning.

In any university classroom, the participants embody incredible diversity of personhood, neurology/cognition, life experience, identity, relational contexts, values/beliefs/spirituality and many more factors. Embracing diversity and celebrating its gift takes incredible humility, respect for self and others, and measured self-control. Deep learning flourishes in an environment where diverse ideas and perspectives are shared, considered, and debated. In my courses, I hold myself to the following standards and ask for every student to promote healthy diversity and belongingness by committing themselves to:

- Respecting self and others in all behaviors and interactions;
- Listening actively for understanding;
- Talking about differences in a respectful manner without shying away from them;
- Engaging in the difficult conversation without shutting down valuable dialogue;
- Keeping diversity/neurodiversity in mind when interacting with classmates;
- View every participant as having valuable, important insights, knowledge and contributions;
- Offering grace and the benefit of the doubt to professor and peers; discussing topics from diverse points is challenging and mistakes will be made;
- Practice cultural sensitivity;
- Intentionally reach out and connect with people who are different than you and have had different life experiences than yours;
- Seeking “sacred intersections” by finding ways that your story intersects with others’ stories;
- Seeking constant self-insight into perspectives, assumptions, biases and stereotypes that may limit or harm others, and challenge yourself to learn, grow and do better;
- Calling out and affirming unique strengths, perspectives and insights in others;
- Sharing diversity-related concerns openly and honestly with the professor if problems arise;

## Course Objectives

A PSY 364 student will have the opportunity to work toward the following course objectives:

Objective: Students in this course will	Related GVSU Student Learning Outcome (SLO)	Assessment
Define and explain the interconnectedness of major <b><u>developmental domains</u></b> , including biological/physical, cognitive, social, emotional, psychological and spiritual.	SLO #2 - Critical Thinking	Written Assignments Weekly Quizzes Fishbowl Discussion & Paper Mid-Term Exam Final Exam
Outline the defining assumptions and tenets of major <b><u>psychological theories</u></b> of lifespan human development (including but not limited to behaviorism, social learning, cognitive theory, psychosocial theory, psychoanalytic theory, ecological theory, sociocultural theory, and developmental contextualism)	SLO #2 - Critical Thinking	Written Assignments Weekly Quizzes Dev. Theory Exam Mid-Term Exam Final Exam
Explain the role and importance of the <b><u>scientific method</u></b> and <b><u>empirical research</u></b> in the field, focusing on design and results of seminal research in human lifespan developmental psychology	SLO #4 - Information Literacy	Written Assignments Weekly Quizzes Fishbowl Discussion & Paper Mid-Term Exam Final Exam
<b><u>Apply</u></b> developmental theories and research to frame and understand real-world problems, solutions and treatment impacting human beings in all stages of the lifespan (both individually and in a multi-disciplinary team setting).	SLO #1 - Collaboration  SLO#2 - Critical Thinking  SLO #5 - Integration  SLO #6 - Oral Communication  SLO #7 - Problem Solving	Written Assignments Weekly Quizzes Fishbowl Discussion & Paper Dev. Theory Exam Mid-Term Exam Final Exam
Describe key <b><u>milestones, stages and transitions</u></b> evident across the human lifespan, including but not limited to birth, educational milestones, identity	SLO #2 - Critical Thinking	Written Assignments Dev. Theory Exam Mid-Term Exam

development, intimate relationships, vocation/work/career, faith/spiritual journey, and end-of-life.		Final Exam
Identify the <b><u>impact of contexts</u></b> – family/home, school/educational, community, society–on human development across the lifespan.	SLO #2 - Critical Thinking	Written Assignments Dev. Theory Exam Mid-Term Exam Final Exam
<b><u>Examine developmental/psychological issues</u></b> and debatable topics critically using empirical evidence, logical reasoning and persuasive communication skills	SLO#1 - Collaboration  SLO #2 - Critical Thinking  SLO#3 - Ethical Reasoning  SLO #4 - Information Literacy  SLO #6 - Oral Communication  SLO#7 - Problem Solving  SLO #9 - Written Communication	Fishbowl Discussion & Paper
Identify and discuss <b><u>ethical responsibilities, challenges and dilemmas</u></b> within the field of developmental psychology.	SLO #2 - Critical Thinking  SLO #3 - Ethical Reasoning	Written Assignments Fishbowl Discussion & Paper Mid-Term Exam Final Exam
Deepen <b><u>self-insight</u></b> into one’s own unique developmental story from a psychological perspective and informed by varied disciplines, as well as the developmental paths of others in one’s life.	SLO #5 - Integration	Written Assignments Fishbowl Discussion & Paper
Student-specific learning objective (Each student will develop and submit one personal objective to guide learning, in addition to the above)	Varies by Student	Final Exam (Essay)

## Student Multi-Disciplinary Teams

Each student in this course will be assigned to a team involving students who are pursuing varied professions, so that the team is diverse and multi-disciplinary. These teams will work together for various in-class activities and discussions, as well as for the team Fishbowl Discussion activity. Working in smaller integrative teams should help the class to feel smaller and more connected, strengthening each student's sense of collaboration and belonging. It also provides a microcosm of the professional world where many of you will be working with multi-disciplinary teams in places such as clinics, schools, hospitals and agencies.. Team assignments will be made early in the course. Student groups will need to determine how you will accomplish meetings whether via Zoom, MS Teams, Facetime or in-person meeting.

## ASSIGNMENTS & ASSESSMENT

Student learning outcomes will be assessed using the following assignments, each of which will be weighted in the final course grade according to the specified weightings:

- **Weekly Quizzes (10%)** - Each Thursday at the end of class, students will complete a in-class paper-pencil quiz at the end of class. Each quiz is worth approximately 1% of the student's overall course grade. Quizzes will consist of 10 questions (multiple choice, matching, true-false, short-answer). Quizzes take place on Thursdays only and cannot be made up. The lowest 2 quiz grades (which could be a missed quiz grade of "0") from the semester will be dropped when final grades are computed. There will be no weekly quiz on: Thursday, Sept. 9 (Theory Exam); Thursday, Oct. 9 (No Class, Dr. McDonald presenting at conference); Thursday, Oct. 23 (Fall Break Week); and Thursday, November 27 (Thanksgiving). Weekly quizzes are closed-book and closed-note, and you may not talk with others about the quiz or consult AI in any way while completing it.
- **Developmental Theory Exam (10%)** - Early in the course, following coverage of key lifespan developmental theories, students will complete an in-class exam covering these key theories. The exam will consist of both objective (multiple choice, matching) and essay/application items. An exam review guide will be posted in the week preceding the exam. Students will complete the Blackboard exam in person during normal class time. The developmental theory exam is open-book and open-note, but you cannot discuss the exam with other people or consult AI in any way while completing it. To preserve the integrity of the exams, students will only be allowed to view their individual exam during an individually scheduled office hours meeting with Dr. McDonald. Exam grades may be curved according to the discretion of the professor.



- **Mid-Term Exam (15%)** - During GVSU mid-term week, students will review for and complete a mid-term exam covering material from the first half of the semester. The exam will consist of both objective (multiple choice, matching) and one essay/application item. A mid-term exam review guide will be posted in the week preceding the exam, though students are encouraged to incorporate weekly exam-focused review each week of the course. Students will have 75 minutes of in-class time to complete the Blackboard-formatted exam on the mid-term exam date designated in the course schedule. After taking the midterm, eligible students will be provided with a mid-term course grade via the GVSU registrar's office. The PSY-364 mid-term exam is open-book and open-note, but you cannot discuss the exam with other people or consult AI in any way while completing it. To preserve the integrity of the exams, students will only be allowed to view their individual exam during an individually scheduled office hours meeting with Dr. McDonald. Exam grades may be curved according to the discretion of the professor.
  
- **Final Exam (25%)** - At the conclusion of the semester, during GVSU final exam week, all course students will complete a cumulative final exam covering material from the entire semester. The exam will consist of both objective (multiple choice, matching) and comprehensive theory-application essay(s). A final exam review guide will be posted in the week preceding the exam, and an in-class exam review activity will be completed in the week period to the final exam. The final exam will be taken in Blackboard format during the designated GVSU final exam period, which for this course is Thursday, December 11 @ 10-11:50AM. The PSY-364 cumulative final exam is open-book and open-note, but you cannot discuss the exam with other people or consult AI in any way while completing it. Final exam grades may be curved according to the discretion of the professor.
  
- **Team Fishbowl Activity & Paper (15%)** - Each student will work with their multi-disciplinary team all semester to research a controversial, multi-faceted developmental issue in the form of a core question. The student team will then have a 15-minute discussion in class on an assigned date; this is a “fishbowl” because the team will be discussing the issue at the “center of the class”—as if in a glass fishbowl—while peers are observing the conversation from the outside and taking notes on the interaction to learn about the researched topic at hand. Students will work with peers from other disciplines (OT, PT, nursing, etc.), each of whom brings diverse and valuable perspectives to the discussion. For this project, teams will work together to:
  1. Choose a developmental problem, controversy or challenge that impacts human development; state your topic in the form of a core questions that will drive your fishbowl conversation;

2. Prepare an outline of the key points that you want to make sure your fishbowl discussion addresses, along with empirical evidence and citations that you plan to include; present a printed copy of the group's outline to Dr. McDonald on your assigned "fishbowl" day;
3. At the beginning of your assigned fishbowl discussion, your group will begin by clearly stating your core question.
4. Following statement of your core question, your team will have a 15-minute oral discussion that addresses multiple perspectives on the core question/issue; You will be able to prepare partially for your conversation, but you will also need to "think on your feet" and allow the discussion to unfold organically. In your dialogue, you should be sure to address the following at some point in your dialogue:
  - a. Define the problem and explain how it can impact a human's development in multiple developmental domains;
  - b. Give multiple team members the opportunity to explain how they see the problem uniquely;
  - c. Present a case study illustrating the problem or challenge;
  - d. Cite at least 3 empirical research studies during the discussion
  - e. Include any relevant developmental theories or concepts;
  - f. Discuss at least 2 potential solutions or action steps related to the core question.
  - g. To end your conversation, one of your group members should restate the core question and summarize the key points of the discussion in a one-minute concluding statement.
  - h. IMPORTANT: Discussions should NOT be read directly from a script; you should use your notes as a guide but the discussion should be as organic as possible. This means that you will need to practice your discussion and be familiar with the content so that you can have a conversation using your notes as reference and support. Over-reading your discussion material will result in a notable deduction in your grade.

During the fishbowl dialogue, verbal participation should be roughly equal across all group members. A discussion checklist and grading rubric will be provided to guide each team's preparation, discussion, and written paper. For the fishbowl discussions led by other teams, you will attend class and observe the fishbowl while taking notes on key material. Fishbowl discussion content is fair game for exam questions.

- **Weekly Written Assignments (15%)** - Students will complete a series of assignments (every 1-2 weeks) wherein they will work with the week's key concepts, research and theories. For the weeks wherein written assignments are due, assignments must be

submitted via Blackboard by the end of Sunday (11:59PM). Students can miss or opt out of one weekly assignment of their choice during the semester without penalty; if a student completes all assignments, the top 10 grades will be recorded (no extra credit). \*Note that the first 3 assignments cannot be opted out of or missed, due to foundational content.\* Late assignments are not accepted and no make-up assignments will be given. An assignment missed due to an emergency or illness will count as the one allowed misses/opt-outs. Weekly assignments will be assessed points using the following system, with a basic points rubric provided on each assignment instruction document:

10/10	Excellent/Exceeds Expectations
9/10	Strong/Exceeds Expectations
8/10	Good/Solid/Meets Expectations
7/10	Falls Below Expectations
6/10	Falls Well Below Expectations
5/10	Falls Extremely Below Expectations
0/10	Not Complete or Severely Deficient

- **Class Engagement, Participation & Attendance (10%)** - It is my goal that we create a safe community space of learning, listening, considering and respecting where every voice can be heard and valued. Learning is an active process, and a college course is made stronger when every student in the course engages and participates on an ongoing basis. We need the input and perspective of every single person in the course. I encourage the sharing of perspectives and ideas, even those that feel “half-baked.” During our class sessions, I will be looking for evidence of student engagement and participation which includes the following specific behaviors:

- Timely arrival to class
- Limiting absences to unavoidable situations such as illness
- Verbal participation in class
- Verbal participation in small group activities/discussions
- Active notetaking
- Posting articles or other sources in the “Weekly Participation” thread posted in Blackboard each week
- Sending class-related articles and links to Dr. McDonald with your comments
- Respectful attitude and behavior toward the professor
- Respectful attitude and interactions with peers
- Avoiding unnecessary distraction (i.e. in regard to phone/laptop use)
- Present and active engagement in fishbowl discussions

In terms of class attendance, please plan to be in class and to save your allowed absences for when you really need them. Life happens and each student is allowed 3 absences to use for illness, mental health days, etc. Any additional absence beyond 3 will result in a grade reduction in your final course grade. Consistent with GVSU policy, student absences for the following circumstances are excused:

- 1) Active participation in an intercollegiate event;
- 2) Observance of religious holidays
- 3) Military duty
- 4) Jury duty, or appearance in court or other government hearings
- 5) Student illness or medical conditions that preclude class attendance
- 6) Birth or adoption of child
- 7) Academic and/or professional conference
- 8) Bereavement for an individual of significant relationship.

Regardless of the reason for absence, it is the student's responsibility to catch up on any missed work and, if needed, to initiate connection with Dr. McDonald to discuss missed work. If you have concerns related to attendance, please make an appointment to have a conversation about it with Dr. McDonald.

## **Instructor Feedback to Students**

Students in this course will receive feedback on their work and course progress through the following channels:

- 1) Whole-group feedback provided in class or via BB posts from Dr. McDonald
- 2) Individual grades on quizzes and exams (provided through Blackboard gradebook; allow one week for exam grades to be determined and posted)
- 3) Criterion-measured grades on weekly written application assignments (graded pass/credit or fail/no-credit)
- 4) Verbal and written feedback on team fishbowl discussion (verbal comments provided immediately following presentation; written grading when all Fishbowl Discussions have been completed)
- 5) Student appointment discussion with Dr. McDonald (by student request)

## POLICIES & PROCEDURES

### Grading Scale

The following GVSU psychology program-adopted grading scale will be used to assign final course grades:

A	=	100 – 93
A -	=	92 – 90
B +	=	89 – 87
B	=	86 – 83
B -	=	82 – 80
C+	=	79 – 77
C	=	76 – 73
C -	=	72 – 70
D+	=	69 – 65
D	=	64 – 60
F	=	< 60

*Note: There is not a “D -” grade in the scale used by the GVSU Psychology Department. You must earn at least 6% to pass this course.*

### Professor Policies on Written Work

All written assignments submitted to Dr. McDonald should adhere to the following guidelines:

- Heading should include student’s name (first and last), course w/section #, and submission date
- Cite all sources fully and correctly using APA 7th edition.
- Include a complete APA-formatted References page for any paper citing external sources.
- Unless noted otherwise, written assignments should be submitted electronically via Blackboard Ultra.
- Assignment due dates should be respected and followed. Late work is generally not accepted, unless a student has an unavoidable serious emergency that has been communicated to Dr. McDonald and an assignment extension approved. Please do everything that you can to turn assignments in on time, according to the stated due date. In general, late assignments are not accepted and will receive a grade of “0”.
- When you submit a written assignment with your name on it through your Blackboard Ultra account, I assume that it is solely your work and that you have cited to give credit to others’ work that you have integrated into your paper. Any instance of plagiarism will be reported and handled according to GVSU policy. Please, if you are in a bind and tempted to cheat/plagiarize, come and talk with me honestly. It is never a good idea to

cheat and plagiarize, and it is always the best choice to operate in a way that upholds your integrity.

- Every written assignment must include the detailed “AI Acknowledgement Statement” disclosing thoroughly how you used AI in the assignment. See the AI section of this syllabus for further details.
- Further information on GVSU academic honesty policies can be reviewed here: <https://www.gvsu.edu/catalog/navigation/academic-policies-and-regulations.htm#anchor-29>

## **Professor Policies on Exams**

All exams completed for Dr. McDonald should adhere to the following guidelines:

- Course exams will be administered electronically through Blackboard Ultra.
- Exams should be completed according to the syllabus schedule.
- Please do not make travel plans that conflict with course exam dates/times. Final exams are scheduled in accordance with GVSU’s master schedule and cannot be adjusted.
- In general, make-up exams are not available in this course. Make-up exams are given only in unavoidable emergency circumstances.
- When you submit an exam with your name on it through your BlackBoard Ultra account, I assume that it is solely your work. Any instance of cheating on exams will result in an exam grade of “0” and possible other penalties; it will further be reported and handled according to GVSU policy. It is never a good idea to cheat on an exam, and it is always the best choice to operate in a way that upholds your integrity. It is better to fail an exam honestly than to pass it by cheating.
- It is never acceptable to use any form of AI to complete a quiz, exam or final exam.
- The final exam is cumulative.
- Students will not be allowed to review individual exams on their own, due to potential compromise of exams. Exam review will be limited to individually scheduled office hour meetings with Dr. McDonald.

## **Extra Credit Policy**

Extra credit will not be offered in this course. There are many scheduled assignments where you can earn points, so please take full advantage and do your best work throughout the course to avoid a panicked situation near the end of the course. If you have concerns about how you are doing in the course, please make an appt. to talk with Dr. McDonald early to formulate a plan to improve your course performance.

## **Student Accessibility Policy and Resources**

Grand Valley State University strives to provide an inclusive environment across campus that is accessible to all individuals with a diverse range of abilities. As your instructor, it is my objective to facilitate opportunities within all class activities and programs because your success

is important to me. If you are encountering difficulties that are interrupting your learning experience please feel free to make those known to me as soon as possible, as early planning is essential. If you feel that you need accommodations in this course, you must present a memo to me from Accessibility Resources, indicating the existence of a disability and the approved accommodations. If the class meets in person, you should schedule a meeting with me during office hours to discuss your accommodations. If your class is online or hybrid, please forward your memo to me in an email and schedule a virtual or phone appointment with me to discuss your accommodations. Accommodations are not retroactive. If you have not already done so, please contact the Accessibility Resources office (215 CON) by calling (616) 331-2490 or by email to [dsrgvsu@gvsu.edu](mailto:dsrgvsu@gvsu.edu). Please note that I cannot provide accommodations based upon disability until I have received a copy of the Accessibility Resources issued memo. Furthermore, if you have a disability and think you will need assistance evacuating this classroom and/or building in an emergency, please make me aware so that the university and I can develop a plan to assist you. All discussions will remain confidential.

As your professor, I have a deep commitment to creating a safe learning space where everyone belongs and feels heard and valued. Even when (especially when) we don't agree, we can still practice civility and demonstrate respect and acceptance for our fellow humans.

### **Important GVSU Policies**

All GVSU Academic policies can be viewed at the following link:

<https://www.gvsu.edu/catalog/navigation/academic-policies-and-regulations.htm>

This includes but is not limited to

### **RESOURCES**

GVSU provides a large range of valuable resources to support students in their academic and vocational pursuits. Here are just a few of the key resources that are available to you, so please take advantage of them as the need arises:

- The Knowledge Market (Located in the Library: Assistance with Research, Writing and Presentations) <https://www.gvsu.edu/library/km/>
- The Tutoring and Reading Center <https://www.gvsu.edu/trc/>
- Mental Health Needs (Counseling Center) <https://www.gvsu.edu/counsel/>
- Financial Wellness (Money Smart Lakers) <https://www.gvsu.edu/moneysmart/>
- Financial Aid Issues <https://www.gvsu.edu/financialaid/>

- COVID information <https://www.gvsu.edu/lakerstogether/>
- Career Services (Career related events, resume writing, sample interviews):  
<https://www.gvsu.edu/careers/>
- Professional Advising (for major and graduation requirements, etc.):  
<https://www.gvsu.edu/clasadvicing/>

**Psych Friends Peer-to-Peer Mentors:** Psych Friends mentors are upper-level psychology and behavioral neuroscience students who provide guidance and support in many areas, such as: effective studying and time management techniques, understanding the PSY and BNS major requirements, careers in the field, and the process of applying for graduate school. Visit <https://www.gvsu.edu/navigate> to schedule an online or in-person meeting today! Mentoring is available to psychology majors and to any student taking a psychology course.

## Policy on Artificial Intelligence (AI)

In the GVSU Psychology program, we treat AI-based assistance, such as ChatGPT and Copilot, the same way we treat collaboration with other people: you are welcome to talk about your ideas and work with other people, both inside and outside the class, as well as with AI-based assistants.

However, all work you submit must be your own. You should never include in your assignment anything that was not written directly by you without proper citation (including quotation marks and in-line citation for direct quotes). **To be clear: Under no circumstances should you submit AI-generated material for an assignment that is supposed to be your own original work. Doing so will result in failure of the assignment and repeated offenses will result in failure of the course and/or more serious academic consequences.**

Including anything you did not write in your assignment without proper citation will be treated as an academic misconduct case. If you are unsure where the line is between collaborating with AI and copying from AI, we recommend the following:

1. Never hit "Copy" within your conversation with an AI assistant. You can copy your own work into your conversation, but do not copy anything from the conversation back into your assignment. Instead, use your interaction with the AI assistant as a learning experience, then let your assignment reflect your improved understanding.
2. Do not have your assignment and the AI agent open at the same time. Similar to above, use your conversation with the AI as a learning experience, then close the interaction down, open your assignment, and let your assignment reflect your revised knowledge. This includes avoiding using AI directly integrated into your composition environment:



just as you should not let a classmate write content directly into your submission, so also avoid using tools that directly add content to your submission.

For every written assignment, you will write and submit (at the end of your paper) a detailed “AI Acknowledgement Statement” disclosing thoroughly how you used AI in the assignment. This includes functions such as, but not limited to, generating ideas, searching for references/evidence, checking grammar/punctuation, creating visual to accompany written text, or more direct inclusion of AI-generated content. Following your paragraph description, you will include the following sentence: “By my inclusion of this sentence, I assert that this paragraph accurately, honestly and fully describes how I utilized AI for this assignment. Signed, (including your full name and date). Assignments failing to include the paragraph explanation or the concluding statement with signature will receive no credit.

Typical Class Session Structure: I value creativity and engagement in my teaching; I also seek to help you build your “psychological tool belt” of strategies that you can use in your internship and work settings now and into the future. I work diligently to employ a spectrum of teaching methods to engage a diverse student group with a wide range of preferred modalities. As I plan each class session, I tend to draw from a menu of activities including but not limited to:

- Mini-skills demonstrations (each class session will begin with a brief skill description of demonstration)
- Direct instruction/lecture “nuggets” (no more than 15 minutes, typically)
- Think, pair and share (learning in pairs)
- Thought-writes (quick papers)
- Small group activities and discussions
- Case Study Application
- Problem-based learning
- Other creative teaching strategies such as jigsaw methods, debates, games
- Exit reflections in Google forms (we will do this every class session as part of your course engagement grade)

## PSY364 SCHEDULE - FALL 2025

DATE	FOCUS	TOPICS	READING (Complete before class)	UNDERSTANDING, APPLYING, CREATING & WRITING	ASSIGNMENT (DUE Sunday @ 11:59 each week va BB)
<b>WEEK 1</b> Tuesday, 8/26/25	Course Introduction Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Human Development Overview</li> <li>Defining Development &amp; Key Themes</li> </ul>	Course Syllabus	Student “Get to Know You” Paper and “Commitment to Succeed” Agreement with Personal Learning Objective	<b>DUE: Wednesday 8/27 @ 11:59PM</b>
Thursday, 8/28/25	Worldview & Major Developmental Theory  <b>Quiz #1 (Practice)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Worldview: Everybody has one</li> <li>Developmental Theory: Lenses of Understanding</li> </ul>	Arnett & Jansen, Chapter 1  Worldview Assessment Handouts (complete early in Week 2)		“Letter to Myself From My Life’s End” (see instructions on BB) <b>DUE: Sunday 8/31</b>
<b>WEEK 2:</b> Tuesday, 9/02/25	Major Developmental Theories (Cont)  Case Study Application & Theory Matrix	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Behaviorism; Classical and Operant Conditioning</li> <li>Social Learning Theory (Bandura)</li> <li>Cognitive Construction Theory (Piaget)</li> <li>Psychoanalytic/ Psychosexual Theory (Freud)</li> </ul>	Lifespan Theory Article (Speilman et al) - <a href="https://pressbooks.cuny.edu/jsevitt/chapter/lifespan-theories/">https://pressbooks.cuny.edu/jsevitt/chapter/lifespan-theories/</a>		
Thursday, 9/04/2025	Major Developmental Theories (Cont)  <b>Quiz #2</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Psychosocial Theory (Erikson)</li> <li>Ecological Theory (Bronfenbrenner)</li> <li>Sociocultural Theory (Vygotsky)</li> <li>Developmental Contextualism</li> </ul>	Article: Lerner & Kauffman (1985) (Linked in Blackboard)		Worldview Assessment & Reflection Paper <b>DUE: Sunday 9/07</b>  Developmental Theory Matrix <b>DUE: Sunday 9/07</b>

		(Lerner & Lerner) ● Eclecticism			
<b>WEEK 3:</b> Tuesday 9/09/2025  Today's class will be virtual asynch via BB	Genetics, Ovulation & Conception	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Conception Process</li> <li>● Origins of Life Debate</li> <li>● Reproductive Technologies</li> <li>● Reproductive Ethics</li> <li>● Genetic Disorders</li> <li>● Ovulation</li> </ul>	Arnett & Jensen, Chapter 2  View: Video Clips on Ovulation and Conception (linked in BB)		
Thursday 9/11/2025	<b>Developmental Theory Exam (in class)</b>  <b>No Quiz Today</b>				Personal Theory Paper <b>DUE: Sunday 9/14</b>
<b>WEEK 4:</b> Tuesday, 9/16/2025	Pregnancy & Prenatal Development	Pregnancy Truths & Myths Prenatal Care Prenatal Testing Pregnancy Lifestyle Choices States of Prenatal Development Complications of Pregnancy		View "Life Before Birth: In the Womb" Documentary (linked in BB)	
Thursday, 9/18/2025	Fishbowl Discussion Team Proposal Workshop  <b>Quiz #3</b>				"In the Womb" Response Paper <b>DUE: Sunday 9/21</b>  Fishbowl Discussion Topic Proposal <b>DUE: Sunday 9/21</b>
<b>WEEK 5:</b> Tuesday 9/23/2025	Labor & Delivery/Birth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Labor/Delivery Plans and Places</li> <li>● Labor Experience</li> <li>● Birth Process</li> <li>● Stages of Delivery</li> </ul>	Arnett & Jensen, Chapter 3		

Thursday, 9/25/2025	The Newborn Human  <b>Quiz #4</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Newborn Characteristics</li> <li>• Newborn Assessments</li> <li>• Disorders &amp; Complications of the Newborn</li> </ul>			Birth Plan Paper <b>DUE: Sunday 9/28</b>
<b>WEEK 6:</b> Tuesday, 9/30/2025	Infancy: Baby's First Year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Early Attachment</li> <li>• Trust vs. Mistrust</li> <li>• Oral Stage</li> <li>• Infant Reflexes</li> <li>• Brain Development in Year One</li> <li>• Fine and Gross Motor Development</li> <li>• Early Language Basics</li> </ul>	Arnett & Jensen, Chapter 4	View "Babies" Documentary Film (stream via Amazon Prime, YouTube Movies, etc)	
Thursday, 10/02/2025	Infant Reflexes & Neurological Development  <b>Quiz #5</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Core infant reflexes</li> <li>• Infant Intelligence - Habituation</li> </ul>			"Babies" Film Response Paper <b>DUE: Sunday, 10/05</b>
<b>WEEK 7:</b> Tuesday, 10/07/2025	Toddlerhood	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Terrible Twos?</li> <li>• Terrifying Threes?</li> <li>• Emerging Sense of Self</li> <li>• Language Development</li> <li>• Locomotion</li> </ul>	Arnett & Jensen, Chapter 5		
Thursday, 10/09  NO CLASS TODAY - Dr. McDonald Presenting at Teaching Conference	<i>Fishbowl Group Meeting Day</i>  <i>No quiz today</i>				Fishbowl Discussion Outline Draft & Progress Report <b>DUE: Sunday 10/12</b>

<b>WEEK 8:</b> Tuesday, 10/14/2025	Early Childhood/ Preschool Years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Language and Literacy</li> <li>• Early School Contexts</li> <li>• Impact of Media on Early Brain Development</li> </ul>	Arnett & Jensen, Chapter 6  Benjamin et al. article (2020) - Linked in BB  Research Report - Human Attention Span (linked in BB)	Research Spotlight: Delayed Gratification Revisited (Benjamin article)	
Thursday, 10/16/2025	Play, Art/Creativity and Healthy Development  <b>Quiz #6</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Play as Developmentally Crucial</li> <li>• Art and Creativity in Development</li> </ul>	Ginsburg (2007) Article (linked in BB)		Piagetian Concepts Paper <b>DUE: Sunday 10/19</b>
<b>WEEK 9:</b> Tuesday, 10/21	<b>NO CLASS</b>	<b>FALL BREAK</b>	<b>ENJOY!</b>		
Thursday, 10/23	<b>Mid-Term Exam</b>  <b>No Quiz Today</b>	Covers Arnett Chapters 1-6 and all articles, course activities, materials, and videos through 2/21/25			Personal Play/Art History and Play/Art Date Reflection <b>DUE Sunday 10/26</b>  Mid-Term Google Feedback Form <b>DUE: Sunday 10/26</b>
<b>WEEK 10:</b> Tuesday, 10/28	School-Age Child/ Middle Childhood	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Industry vs, Inferiority</li> <li>• Family Context and Parenting Styles</li> <li>• Non-shared developmental environments</li> </ul>	Arnett & Jensen, Chapter 7		
Thursday, 10/30	Common Childhood Neurodevelop- mental Disorders and Treatments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Disorders in School</li> <li>• Pediatric Treatment Approaches</li> </ul>			Childhood Diagnosis & Treatment Paper <b>DUE: Sunday 11/02</b>

	<b>Quiz #7</b>				
<b>WEEK 11:</b> Tuesday, 11/04	Childhood Trauma	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Childhood Trauma, ACES and HOPE</li> <li>• Trauma and the Brain</li> </ul>	Article: Sege & Brown (2017)	Complete ACES Assessment (linked in Blackboard) - Bring Results to Class	
Thursday, 11/06	Tweens & Middle School  <b>Quiz #8</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Developmental Needs of Tweens</li> <li>• Puberty and the Secular Trend</li> <li>• Developmentally Appropriate Middle Schools</li> </ul>			Trauma, ACES and HOPE Paper <b>DUE: Sunday 11/09</b>
<b>WEEK 12:</b> Tuesday, 11/11	Adolescents & Identity Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identity vs. Role Confusion</li> <li>• Aspects of Identity</li> <li>• Identity Statuses</li> <li>• Individuation and Affiliation</li> <li>• The Adolescent Brain</li> <li>• Positive Youth Development (Lerner)</li> </ul>	Arnett & Jensen, Chapter 8	View Film - "Inside Out 2" this week	
Thursday, 11/13	Emerging Adulthood and Early Adulthood: Intimacy vs. Isolation  <b>Quiz #9</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Intimacy vs. Isolation</li> <li>• Vocation and Career</li> <li>• Relationship Trends- Cohabitation, Marriage</li> <li>• Disability across the Lifespan - Down Syndrome</li> </ul>	Arnett & Jensen, Chapters 9 & 10  Article "The new life stage of emerging adulthood...." (Arnett et al., 2014) (Link in BB)		Film Response Paper, "Inside Out" OR Blakemore TED Talk response <b>DUE Sunday 11/16</b>
<b>WEEK 13:</b> Tuesday 11/18	Middle Adulthood	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mid-Life Crisis? Truth or Myth</li> </ul>	Arnett & Jensen, Chapter 11		

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Common Disorders of Adulthood</li> <li>• Spotlight on Military Service and Development</li> </ul>	Article: "Dissecting the Midlife Crisis: Disentangling social, personality and demographic determinants in social brain anatomy" (Kiesow et al, 2021)		
Thursday, 11/20	Late Adulthood  <b>Quiz #10</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Integrity vs. Despair</li> <li>• Cognitive Development: Wisdom</li> <li>• Gratitude, Generosity and Reciprocity</li> <li>• Positive Aging</li> </ul>	Arnett & Jensen, Chapter 12		"Letter to Myself from My Life's End" Re-read & Reflection Paper <b>DUE: Sunday 11/23</b>
<b>WEEK 14:</b> Tuesday, 11/25	<b>Team Fishbowl Final Prep &amp; Rehearsal Time</b>				
Thursday, 11/27	<b>NO CLASS</b>	<b>HAPPY</b>	<b>THANKSGIVING</b>		No written assignment due this week.
<b>Week 15:</b> Tuesday, 12/02	<b>Team Fishbowl Discussions</b>	1. 2. 3.		Observe & Learn from Fishbowl Discussions	
Thursday, 12/04	<b>Team Fishbowl Discussions</b>  Death and Dying as Developmental Phenomena  <b>Quiz #11</b>	4. 5.  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cultural views of dying and death</li> <li>• End-of-life practices and rituals</li> </ul>	Arnett & Jensen, Chapter 13	Observe & Learn from Fishbowl Discussions	Fishbowl Summary & Discussion Paper <b>DUE: Sunday 12/07</b>
Tuesday, 12/09	<b>FINAL EXAM (Cumulative)</b>	<b>12:00-1:50PM</b>			

(Note: Instructor reserves the right to adjust schedule if the need arises)

## Professor's Tips on How to Succeed in PSY364

### Be an Active and Self-Regulated Learner

- **Self-Management is Key:** Online courses require perseverance, self-discipline, self-motivation, and the ability to work independently – more so than face-to-face on-campus classes. Make sure to:
  - Log onto Blackboard daily to check announcements and interact with course material.
  - Stay organized and keep track of due dates.
  - Plan weekly study times and stick to a schedule.
  - Plan on spending roughly **10-12 hours per week** on this course. This includes:
    - 2 - 3 hours watching and (re)watching video material while notetaking (approx)
    - 2 hours completing reading assignments
    - 2 hours in discussion forums/fishbowl prep with team (varies by week)
    - 2 - 3 hrs completing weekly written assignments
    - 1 - 2 hours reviewing and prepping for exams
- **Read!** Complete the week's readings associated with each instruction video, watch the video, then re-read key sections of the readings where you need further clarity.
- **Take Good Notes:** Take notes while reading, while viewing instructional videos, and while studying. Some students find it helpful to translate written notes into diagrams or pictures (sometimes called sketch-notes).
- **Turn in all Weekly Assignments on time.** Late assignments receive a 0. Missing more than the two allowed weekly written assignments may lower your course grade.
- **Prepare for Exams Well in Advance.** Get in the habit of re-reading your notes and quizzing yourself on key concepts each day. Make flashcards, re-write notes, talk about key concepts with a friend/classmate, etc. Use related questions and flashcards, or take practice exams, on platforms such as Quizlet (<https://quizlet.com/>). If you wait until the last minute to begin preparing for an exam, you are setting yourself up for struggle and failure.
- **Communicate with me!** *Email me* or make an appointment to meet with me on Zoom if you need to discuss anything related to this course. *I enjoy meeting and talking with students!*
- **Make lifestyle choices that support learning.** A solid and growing body of research supports that connection between healthy lifestyle and meaningful learning. Small decisions for a healthy lifestyle equate to a brain, body and spirit that is at its prime for learning. Establish healthy routines and practices in the areas such as:



- Consistent sleep and rest routines (Naps are most effective when 26ish minutes long, or 90 minutes long)
  - Adequate hydration
  - Healthy balanced diet (include favorites in moderation)
  - Daily exercise (even if a brisk 15-minute walk)
  - Healthy breathing (including intentional deep breaths when needed to calm and center)
  - Balance of social/relational connection time and time in solitude
  - Make time daily for spiritual/soul practices and rituals that are meaningful and beneficial to you.....mindfulness, prayer, meditation
  - Attend to physical and mental health needs, whatever that looks like for you.
  - Mindset matters....work on fostering an optimistic, gratitude-focused growth mindset. Mistakes, struggles and failures are optimum grounds for progress.
- **Take active ownership of your own learning**

## Exam preparation

- Keep your notes organized.
- Make flashcards of key concepts, theories and research study findings. Keep flashcards with you to use small amounts of time constructively throughout the day for review (waiting for an appt., lull time between classes, walking around campus)
- Distribute your exam preparation across every week of the course, not just in the days leading up to the exam. This is called distributed practice and is much more supportive of student success than cramming.
- Research suggests.....**Brain retrieval practice is key!** Quiz yourself on key concepts or have a classmate or friend quiz you, forcing your brain to repeatedly retrieve information. Train your brain to retrieve.
- Get a good night's sleep consistently; develop a healthy sleep routine and practice good sleep hygiene. This is a lifestyle choice that will serve you well for a lifetime.

## Tips for taking an online exam

- Ensure you are in a location where you won't be interrupted.
- Make sure you are in a space with strong and reliable WiFi connection.
- Turn off all other devices (e.g. tablets, phones, second computers) and place them outside of your reach
- Clear your desk or workspace of all external materials not permitted - books, papers, other devices
- Remain at your computer for the duration of the test
- To produce a good webcam video, do the following:
  - Ensure your computer or device is on a firm surface (a desk or table). Do NOT have the computer on your lap, a bed, or other surface where the device (or you)

are likely to move

- If using a built-in webcam, avoid readjusting the tilt of the screen after the webcam setup is complete
- Take the exam in a well-lit room, but avoid backlighting (such as sitting with your back to a window)
- If you feel test anxiety, take a moment to breathe deeply a few times; reminding yourself that the goal is to do your best, and that no single exam will make you or break you on your academic and vocational goals. Visualize yourself calmly taking the exam and succeeding.