
Laboratory in Adolescent Development

Fall 2012

Instructor:

Nancy Darling

Office hours 4-5 Monday and 2:30-3:30 Wednesday in 228A Severance

All reading materials for the class are available through Blackboard.

Description and Goals:

The goal of ***Laboratory in Adolescent Development*** is very simple: to teach you a variety of techniques used in conducting research in adolescent development. This is a course in the craft of research: a how-to course. To that end, the course is designed in a workshop mode where students are heavily involved in shaping their own experiences. This is not a course for listening, it is a course for doing.

There are five specific goals for the class

- To gain an understanding of development during adolescence and emerging adulthood
- To gain familiarity with a variety of techniques for studying adolescents, including key methodological issues, appropriate use, and key do's and don'ts.
- To learn the norms and skills required to work in a professional research laboratory, including working within a team framework, interacting with research participants, accurately carrying out research protocols, and keeping accurate records. Ethical considerations in conducting research will be emphasized throughout.
- To develop greater skill and sophistication in reading and critiquing scientific articles
- To develop greater skill and sophistication in designing and carrying out a research project from conceptualization to analysis and presentation
- To develop strong verbal presentation and writing skills
- To strengthen your statistical sophistication and skills

Modus Operandi

To move towards these goals, we will be engaging in a series of inter-related activities. Each class will be divided into two sections: A preliminary section in which we will engage in class discussion based on assigned readings and listen to a student based presentation and a working section in which we will get hands-on experience in conducting research. The course is organized in several sections:

- Introduction to Adolescent Development
 - During this section of the course, we will develop two Wikipedia articles: Adolescence and Emerging Adulthood. The goal of this project is to further your understanding of this age period. We will also increase our understanding of measurement issue in developmental psychology by helping to develop measures to be used on the Oberlin Project for 4th-12th graders.
- Ethics
 - If you have not already completed training in the ethics of working with human research participants, you will need to do so at this time
- Techniques
 - We will review a series of techniques from observational to interview and survey to physiological

assessments. Many of these sessions will include hands on demonstrations.

- Students will present a summary of these techniques and an article exemplifying their use.

○ Presentations

- All students will do a public presentation of their work that will be no more than 15 minutes long. Depending on logistics, this will take place either the last day of class or the last day of class plus our scheduled final exam period.

Tasks

Each student will:

- Give two formal presentations of approximately 15 minutes length.
 - Summary of an empirical research article
 - this will be done with a partner
 - Demonstration or summary of a research technique
 - this can be done individually or with a partner
 - Presentation of individual research
 - This can be done with other team members or individually. If it is not done individually, arrangements must be approved by Professor Darling
- Co-write and edit two Wikipedia articles: one on an age period (Adolescence or Emerging Adulthood) and one on their focal methodology.
- Fully participate in a research team, including:
 - Developing the research protocol
 - Recruiting research participants
 - Running participants
 - Participating in the development of coding manuals and data entry tools, as needed
 - Data entry and cleaning
 - **Your performance as a team member will be evaluated by both myself and your peers**

Grading

Your semester grade will be determined by:

- 10% Class participation
- 20% Presentation 1 & 2
- 20% Individual Wikipedia articles
- 20% Research presentation
- 30% Team performance

Any student who violates ethical standards for the conducting of research, including breaching confidentiality of our participants, will receive an F in the class and will not be able to further participate in the laboratory experience. Any student who fails to show up for a scheduled data collection appointment without arranging for another student to cover them will drop 5 points on their final grade.