Overview

This course is based on developmental psychopathology theory, emphasizing the integration of clinical child/adolescent and developmental psychology sub-disciplines. Using this approach, we will study psychopathology as failures to meet developmental tasks, psychopathology as maladaptive person-environment transactions, developmental variants in the expression of psychopathology, and also study the manner in which psychological symptoms can alter the course of children’s development.

The course also is meant to offer an introduction to youth psychopathology in a manner that will be useful for future work in experimental psychopathology research and/or clinical child and adolescent practice. Thus, we also will discuss psychopathology research, risk and resilience, and typical/atypical clinical presentations of psychopathology in different clinical settings. An emphasis of the course will be the study of different theoretical models commonly used to explain the development and course of psychopathology in youth.

Goals

1. To understand the phenomenology of psychopathology among children and adolescents, including symptom presentation, epidemiology, and developmental course.

2. To understand the developmental psychopathology approach to clinical child and adolescent psychology, including an exploration of each of the following issues:
   - What factors contribute to the risk of, or resilience from, psychopathology at different stages in development?
   - Which childhood psychological disorders (or symptoms within a disorder) are most sensitive to developmental changes?
   - How can we use developmental theory to understand the varied presentations of a single disorder across development?
   - How might the presence of psychological symptoms affect the course of children’s development in related domains?
   - How can the study of childhood psychopathology inform us about normative development?

3. To become acquainted with current research questions pertaining to different areas of developmental psychopathology

4. To gain exposure to particularly innovative methods and approaches used in developmental psychopathology research

Very special thanks to Andrea Hussong (UNC), Janis Kupersmidt (UNC), Kristin Lindahl (UMiami), Eric Vernberg (U Kansas), and Eric Youngstrom (Case Western) who graciously donated their syllabi to help with the preparation of this course.
Course Organization

The course will be divided into two parts. The first section of the course will concentrate on theoretical issues – both developmental psychopathology theory broadly, and then specific theoretical approaches used within developmental psychopathology to understand the presentation and treatment of symptoms. Specific childhood psychopathologies will be discussed for the remainder of the course. A developmental approach has been used to organize these disorders, roughly in order of when we see them first present in clinical practice.

Three areas will be discussed as sub-themes during each week throughout the semester. These include: comorbidity, diversity/culture (including demographic and environmental sources of diversity), and classification/taxometric issues.

Readings

Mandatory readings have been kept to a relative minimum. For most weeks, the relevant sections of the DSM and a corresponding chapter from the main text (Mash & Barkley, 2003) have been listed for you as a reference. These provide a general basis and overview for understanding the weekly topics; it is advisable to become generally acquainted (skim) these readings before each class. Empirical articles or reviews also have been listed for each week; these will require a thorough review to fully participate in weekly discussions. Each of these seminal articles has been chosen either for its historical significance in defining the field, to highlight contemporary issues and questions in the field, or just because I thought they were especially cool.

Useful Texts

Many of the readings come from the texts below. Based on your budget, you may wish only to purchase the Mash & Barkley (2003) book as a reference. I will have all readings available on reserve for you throughout the semester.

Course Requirements

There are four main requirements for this course, each of which will contribute to your grade.

**Attendance and Participation (10%)**. You are expected to attend every class. Please let me know in advance if you are unable to attend. Much of your experience in this class will depend on critical thinking and review that is generated from group discussion each week. Your active participation in these discussions will be used to determine 10% of your course grade.

**In-Class Presentation (30%)**. You will be asked to deliver a formal presentation in class. For many of the class topics below, I have listed a “Presentation Question.” Please select one of these questions by Jan 24; each question can be selected by only one student.

The presentations should be conducted formally, using PowerPoint, etc. (much like a clinical lunch talk). To fully address your topic, you will need to conduct a substantial review of the research literature (I can help you identify sources, relevant authors, and seminal works) and organize a lecture lasting approximately 40 minutes.

Although the approach for each presentation topic surely will vary, I suspect that it will be possible to begin each presentation by identifying the relevant areas of the literature that were used to address each research question (i.e., info from developmental literature, clinical literature, info from studies on related disorders), address some of the history that has led to this issue/question within the field, present approximately 6-12 empirical articles that offer data or theories related to the topic, and state your conclusions. It will not be necessary to discuss basic descriptive information (e.g., symptom criteria, prevalence, etc) of a disorder for most of these presentations. From a professional development perspective, this task is meant to help you think about ways to organize material into a talk and gain experience with formal presentations/lecturing. We will be a friendly audience for your talk, helping to make this a positive learning experience.

Your grade on this presentations will be computed by assigning you up to 10 points for each of the following (for a total of 30 points): 1) Breadth of knowledge used to answer the question; 2) Familiarity with relevant concepts/issues in this area; 3) Organization of the presentation.

**Midterm and Final (each worth 30%)**. The midterm will be a take-home written exam. The questions on this exam will ask you to synthesize material covered in class and will encourage critical thinking rather than regurgitation of lectured material. For the final, we will decide as a class whether to take a similar written final exam, or to have students complete a mock grant proposal (in the format of a NIH F31 or R03 grant). Your proposed study should be feasible within a $50,000 direct costs budget for each of two years and should address a question relevant to an area of developmental psychopathology discussed in class. You may select a topic for the grant proposal that extends your work on one of the in-class presentations. The F31 and R03 proposal (10 pages total, single-spaced) requires that you include sections: A. Specific Aims (1-2 pages); B. Background and Significance (which should include an overall model, theoretical framework, importance of the study for national health objectives, etc); C. Preliminary Studies (include only if this applies); D. Research Design (including rationale for design, participants, procedures, measures, analytical plan, power, etc). From a professional development perspective, this task is meant to help acquaint you with grant-writing style, grantsmanship issues (feasibility, “selling” your work, etc), and to demystify the sometimes daunting task of writing a grant proposal.
**Course Schedule**

**Jan 17** Developmental Psychology Primer and Developmental Psychopathology

Text, Chapter 1 (Overview)


**Jan 24** Developmental Psychology Primer continued…..

(see readings above)

**Jan 31** Overview of Theoretical Models in Developmental Psychopathology, part 1

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Feb 7  Theoretical Overview, part 2


Feb 14  Issues in Risk and Resilience Research


Feb 21  Disorders in Infancy; Diagnostic Classification 0-3

DSM pp. 103-108


  • Diagnostic Classification of Mental Health and Developmental Disorders of Infancy and Early Childhood (DC: 0-3).

Feb 28  Pervasive Developmental Disorders

Text, Chapter 9  
DSM pp. 69-84


Presentation Questions:  
What can we learn about normative social and language development by studying youth with Autism?  
Are High Functioning Autism and Asperger’s Disorder two different disorders?

Mar 7  Elimination Disorders & Learning Disabilities

Text, Chapter 12  
DSM, pp. 49-69; 116-121


Presentation Questions:  
How are ADHD and learning disabilities related?  
What do we know about comorbidities with learning disabilities?
Mar 21  ADHD

Text, Chapter 2
DSM pp. 85-93


**Presentation Questions:**
What do we know about the effects of ADHD subtypes and ADHD in girls?
What do we know about the effects of ADHD on social-cognitive development and peer relationships?

Mar 28  Disruptive Behavior Disorders

Text, Chapter 3
DSM pp. 93-103


**Presentation Questions:**
Discuss callous-unemotional traits as important for predicting life-course psychopathy.
What do we know about aggression and Conduct Disorder in girls?
Apr 4       Depression

Text, Chapter 5
DSM 345-428


Presentation Question:
What do we know about developmental variation in the presentation of specific depressive symptoms among youth?
What do we know about dysthymia in children and adolescents?
What do we know about Bipolar Disorder in youth?

Apr 11      Suicide and Self-Injurious Behavior


Presentation Questions:
What are some differences between suicide attempters, repeat attempters, and completers?
What do we know about treatment of suicidal behavior?
Apr 18  Anxiety Disorders

Text, Chapter 6
DSM 121-124; 429-484


**Presentation Questions:**
**Discuss PANDAS.**
*What do we know about social-cognitive distortions in child and adolescent anxiety disorders?*

Apr 25  Weight-Related Disorders

Text, Chapter 15
DSM pp. 583-595


**Presentation Question:**
*What do we know about cross-cultural differences in the prevalence and risks for eating disorders?*

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**Epidemiology**
