

Psychology 390
Special Topics: Adolescence
Moravian College
Fall 2013

Instructor: Dr. Michelle Schmidt
PPHAC 230
610-861-1606
mschmidt@moravian.edu

Class Time: Tuesday 8:55-11:30

Office Hours: T 12:45-1:30, W 11:00-12:30; R 11:30-12:30; email to schedule other times!

Course Goal

Adolescence is designed to trace the development of the person from the beginning of adolescence through late adolescence and emerging adulthood. Emphasis will be placed on understanding current issues that are facing adolescents in areas such as physical, emotional, social, and cognitive development. Sample topics to be discussed include relationships with family, friends, and romantic partners, the onset of and different meanings surrounding puberty, and cultural influences on the adolescent.

Specific Course Objectives

1. To stimulate **critical thinking** using our shared course materials and experiences.
2. To promote the **oral expression** of students' critical thinking.
3. To engage students in the process of **collaborative learning** with their peers through discussion both inside and outside of class.
4. To gain an understanding of the **methods and content of empirical inquiry** in research on adolescence.
5. To impart more advanced skills in **writing** in different forms that are relevant to the discipline.
6. To understand the meaning of our text material and empirical research in an **applied** way.

Required Readings

Steinberg, L. (2014). *Adolescence* (10th Ed). New York: McGraw Hill.

McGraw Hill CREATE reader (available in bookstore only)

Green, J. (2012). *The fault in our stars*.

Handouts

Grades

Weekly write-ups	10%
Discussion/participation	15%
Current events	10%
TV show analyses	15%
In-class debates	15%
Research paper	20%
Book club	15%

**The Instructor reserves the right to use qualitative judgment in assigning final grades. Absences, disrespectful classroom behavior, dishonesty, texting or looking at your phone on your lap during class, and other factors can reduce a final grade.

Description of assignments

- *Weekly write-ups.* You will be responsible for turning in a summary of the readings in the CREATE reader each week, as well as a list of three thoughtful questions that you had after completing the readings. The summary should be integrative, meaning you should tie all the readings together and communicate the main point of the readings for the day. The three questions that you provide about the readings should demonstrate that you thought critically about the material and were able to write questions that challenge us to think about the readings. These will be due for the week beginning September 12th and run through the week of November 14th (with the exception of October 24th; 8 total write-ups).

All write-ups must be typed and turned in at the beginning of class. You should also bring a copy for yourself to reference during class.

The summary should be single spaced on one page, followed by your three questions at the bottom of the page. You may be called on during discussion to pose one of your questions to the class.

- *Discussion hours.* We will have regular discussion hours throughout the semester. You are expected to read in advance for our discussions. Your participation grade will be based on both the quantity and the quality of your contributions. Agreeing with someone without substance will receive a lower grade than referring to the readings and offering something thoughtful and of substance.
- *Current events.* There are myriad articles on adolescence that appear in newspapers on a regular basis. You will be required twice during the semester to turn in a recent news article (not an opinion piece or a blog) from one of the following newspapers ONLY: the New York Times, the Washington Post, the Philadelphia Inquirer, the LA Times, USA Today, the Wall Street Journal, the Daily News of New York, or the New York Post. You will not get credit for the assignment if the newspaper article does not meet the outlined criteria. With the article, you must write a 1 paragraph, single spaced summary of the article and a 1 paragraph, single spaced reaction to the article.

Your printed article and 1 page assignment need to be stapled and turned in together. You will be graded on the quality of your concise but accurate summary and the level of critical thinking demonstrated in the reaction paragraph.

- *TV show analysis.* This semester, you will need to become a fan of a tv show! There are many shows that are marketed toward and produced for the adolescent population. Twice over the course of the semester, you will be required to complete an evaluation of a show marketed toward adolescents. Some sample shows include: *The Secret Life of the American Teenager*, *Family Guy*, *Degrassi*, *Victorious*, *South Park*, *The Carrie Diaries*, *Beyond the Break*, *Big Time Rush*, *Make It or Break It*.

After watching several episodes of the show of your choice, you will turn in a reaction paper. After summarizing the show, generally, and the storyline of the episodes you watched, specifically, think like an educated scholar on adolescence and react to the content. Evaluate its appropriateness, its influence, its messages, etc. Specific guidelines will be handed out separately. Reaction papers will be 2 papers in length and must include the show title and episode names. Netflix is a great way to find shows and watch episodes in order.

- *Research paper and in-class debate.* Four groups of students will engage in separate debates about a given question relating to adolescence. Questions will represent “hot topics” that are currently being debated about adolescents. Students will be assigned a question and a position. They will be required to complete a research paper on the topic. The paper must provide support for the assigned position. Information from the research paper will help the students during the debate.

Questions:

- Should all girls be given the HPV vaccine in middle school?
- Should adolescents who commit a crime be treated as adults?
- Should abstinence be taught as part of sex education programs?
- Should schools provide support for students who have babies in high school?

Specific guidelines for the research paper and the debates will be provided separately.

- *Book club.* This semester, you will read *The Fault in Our Stars*, a best-selling novel for those in adolescence/young adulthood. The story will provide you with a portrait of adolescence—friendship, romantic relationships, intimacy, identity—that you will use to examine topics related to adolescence. You will write a 3-4 page paper on the book and then we will have a discussion at the end of the semester. Separate guidelines will be distributed later in the semester.

Class Policies

Attendance

As Moravian College's Attendance Policy in the Student Handbook states, "students are expected to attend classes regularly." If you have an unavoidable situation that prevents you from being in class, please advise the instructor before the class meeting. Excused absences will require appropriate documentation (e.g., doctor's note). Otherwise, your attendance will be expected. Absences will result in a 3-point deduction per absence on the final average. Discussions and participation grades will receive a grade of 0 if you are absent. If you are absent, it is your responsibility to get missed material from a classmate.

Academic Integrity

The Policy on Academic Honesty (Student Handbook) states, "Moravian College expects its students to perform their academic work honestly and fairly." Therefore, students are expected to be honest in all matters pertaining to this class, without exception.

The Moravian College Student Handbook reads, "[w]hen students use the specific thoughts, ideas, writings, or expressions of another person, they must accompany each instance of use with some form of attribution to the source." Failure to do so is plagiarism, a major form of dishonesty. Specific procedures for attribution for this course are outlined in the APA Publication Manual (3 copies are available in the reference section of the library). If you are not sure what constitutes plagiarism, please set up an appointment with the instructor. Otherwise, adherence to the guidelines set forth by APA will be expected. **Students must turn in copies of all sources used for papers and are expected to "keep all notes, drafts, and materials used in preparing assignments until a final course grade is given."** A student judged to have violated the policy on academic honesty will receive a grade of zero for the relevant assignment or a failing grade for the course, at the discretion of the instructor. Any such violation will be reported in writing to the office of the Academic Dean.

All work submitted for evaluation in this course must be original work. It may not be "borrowed" from another student, a printed source, or online source without proper credit as outlined by the current APA Manual (available in the Reference section of Reeves Library). Please note that no part of your assignments may be shared with other students in this class or with students in future classes, and you may not refer to papers from previous classes. All papers submitted for this class must be original work completed to meet the requirements of this class. **Psychology 211 is a prerequisite for this class and thus, you are expected to know APA style for citations and references.**

Put simply: If you are caught cheating, you will receive a failing grade. **If they are not your thoughts and ideas and you present them as such, then it is plagiarism.**

Note: You are responsible for reading the Student Handbook as well as this syllabus, and for adhering to all outlined policies.

Late Papers

A 10-point deduction will be applied for **each partial or full day** papers are late (unless it is noted above that late papers will not be accepted), beginning at the start of class (8:55am)—no exceptions...not even “my printer wouldn’t work,” “my computer broke,” or “the computer didn’t save it.” Papers will not be accepted after 4 calendar days (at that point, the paper would start at a 60 and would be a failing paper). Back up all your files...save to the server...save to disk...SAVE EARLY AND SAVE OFTEN. If there is a printer problem and you are minutes from the start of class, email me the finished document as an attachment (before class) and then get me a hard copy ASAP after class. If I cannot open the attachment, late deductions will apply. This policy applies to all papers for this class.

If you turn in a paper late, you know the policy...do not tell me it is unfair if you get deductions. Plan ahead and get your papers in on time. And remember, in fairness to other students, LATE IS LATE. If class has begun and it is after 8:55, papers will be marked late.

Learning Services Office

The Learning Services Office “provides assistance to students who are experiencing academic difficulties” (Student Handbook). If you feel you need special services through this office, you may call 610-861-1510 or visit their offices at 1307 Main Street. If you do not document something that is interfering with your schoolwork, when it is happening, I cannot make exceptions after the fact.

Students with disabilities who believe they may need accommodations in this class are encouraged to contact Learning Services as soon as possible to enhance the likelihood that accommodations can be made.

Workload

Students in this class should expect to work, on average, 8 hours per week.

THIS COURSE REQUIRES A LOT OF TIME, ATTENTION, AND PLANNING. BE SURE TO ANTICIPATE DEADLINES AND DUE DATES SO THAT YOU CAN PACE YOURSELF THROUGHOUT THE SEMESTER. SOME WEEKS MAY REQUIRE FEWER HOURS THAN OTHERS, SO SPREAD OUT YOUR WORK ACCORDINGLY.

Schedule for the semester...

August 27	Introduction to the Course Adolescence in developmental context Biological, Cognitive, and Social Processes <i>In class: Frontline—Inside the Teenage Brain</i> (60m)	Text chapters 1,2,3
September 3	Families Discussion DUE: News article 1	Text chapter 4 Reader: familial relationships
September 10	Peer Group Discussion <i>In class: PBS ://GROWING_UP-ONLINE</i> (60m)	Text chapter 5 Reader: relationships
September 17	Schools Discussion DUE: TV show 1	Text chapter 6 Reader: risk taking
September 24	Work, Leisure, Mass Media Discussion <i>In class: digital_nation</i> (90m) DUE: At least 5 articles with abstracts for research paper (failure to do so will result in a 10 point deduction on the research paper). No late articles will be accepted.	Text chapter 7 Reader: the internet
October 1	Identity Discussion DUE: News article 2	Text chapter 8 Reader: body image
October 8	Autonomy Discussion <i>In class: The Merchant of Cool</i> (60m)	Text chapter 9 Reader: drugs/alcohol
October 15	NO CLASS	
October 22	Intimacy Achievement DUE: TV show 2	Text chapter 10 Text chapter 12
October 29	Sexuality Discussion	Text chapter 11 Reader: puberty/sexual behavior
November 5	DEBATE DAY DUE: Research Paper	
November 12	Psychosocial Problems Discussion <i>In class: The Secret Life of the Brain</i> (60m)	Text chapter 13 Reader: mental health
November 19	Happy Thanksgiving	

November 26	Depression and Suicide Discussion <i>In class: PBS Cry for Help</i>	Reader: self-injurious behavior
December 3	From Adolescence to Emerging Adulthood Discussion of <i>Fault in Our Stars</i> DUE: Book club paper Wrap Up Final reflections	Reader: From A to EA