

PSY 432 COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT: LANGUAGE, THINKING, AND PERCEPTION

Fall 2025

Online

Asynchronous

Instructor: Wagner Peng

Office hours: Zoom (see Canvas for link)

Time: by appointment

Email: wpeng1@sfsu.edu

PRE-REQUISITE: PSY 431 – Developmental Psychology or PSY 330 – Child Development or equivalent

TEXTBOOK: *THERE IS NO TEXTBOOK FOR THIS COURSE.* All readings will be posted on Canvas.

COURSE OVERVIEW: In this course, we will study cognition from a developmental perspective. We will specifically focus between prenatal stages through adolescence, focusing on different cognitive aspects such as perception, attention, and executive functioning. Most importantly, you will develop the analytic and reasoning skills used by developmental researchers and explore your own views of cognitive development as they pertain to yourself and those around you.

CANVAS: All course information (syllabus, lecture notes, announcements, and grades) will be online on Canvas (<https://canvas.sfsu.edu/>). It is a good idea to check the website regularly for updates. In addition, all assignments must be submitted through the website portal.

A NOTE ON EMAILS: Your professor receives way too many emails daily. To ensure that your email does not get buried in the pile, please begin your header with the class number (PSY 432). This will allow me to flag it down and assist in me getting back to you promptly. Failure to do so will result in a huge delay in responses. In addition, some of you may have noticed Canvas's inbox setting. Please do NOT use that function as I do not check that inbox frequently. All emails sent to that inbox will be ignored.

REQUIREMENTS AND EXPECTATIONS:

Attendance

This course is in an online, asynchronous modality. This means there will not be any set times we meet as a class; instead, you are expected to complete the work at your own pace and to submit all assignments before the deadline. As such, there is no “attendance grade” for this class. You are expected to do your work and turn them in when they are due. Additional reading materials will be available for you to download via Canvas. Questions and comments are highly appreciated and encouraged.

Grades:

We will follow a straight grades distribution. There will be no curve for or against you. So, if you get an 89.99% as your final grade, then you have earned a B+ for the course (which is an amazing accomplishment as you have managed to master 89.99% of the material).

A+	100 – 97
A	96.99 – 93
A-	92.99 – 90
B+	89.99 – 87
B	86.99 – 84
B-	83.99 – 80
C+	79.99 – 77
C	76.99 – 74
C-	73.99 – 70
D	69.99 – 60
F	59.99 – 0

Your grade will be determined by accumulated points as followed:

<i>Item</i>	<i>Point Value</i>
Test 1	40
Test 2	40
Test 3	40
Test 4	40
Reading Responses	24 (4 points each)
Syllabus Quiz	4
Forum Discussions	60 (15 points each)
Introduce Yourself	2 Points
Total	250

Breakdown:

Tests: There will be four, noncumulative tests throughout the semester. The questions will compose of multiple-choice questions, and the tests will be administered online with their respective due dates also online. As these are considered tests, you are NOT to collaborate with others – in or out of this class.

Final: An optional final will also be administered after the last week of instruction. If you do take the final, it will take the place of your lowest test score (albeit you forgot to do a test or you did not do so hot on one of them). Keep in mind the final is cumulative and will follow the same format as the other tests.

Reading Responses: Every so often, there will be article readings posted on Canvas. You are expected to read them and to write up a summary response accordingly. The responses will be due on *Sundays at 11:59 PM PST* corresponding to the modules. **When submitting, format it as a**

.doc or .pdf file; otherwise, Canvas will not read the file and you will fail the assignment.

Briefly, I am looking for the following:

- What is the general background the authors are providing?
- What questions do the author(s) want answers to?
- How did the author(s) approach and solve the question?
- What were the results and how does it relate back to lecture?

The responses should be roughly 1.5 pages double spaced in length and should contain a natural flow. In other words, do not response with bullet points, but instead write coherent paragraphs to respond to the question in hand. Given only six will count towards your grade, the lowest one will be dropped (albeit for forgot to do one, you did not score well on one, or you simply chose to not complete one).

Syllabus Quiz: To ensure that you have fully read and understood the contents of this document, there will be a quiz on the syllabus. **You can take it as many times as you want prior to the due date, but you must score 100% on it to receive credit. If you miss even one question, you will receive a 0 for the quiz.**

Forum Discussions: Every module, there will be discussion forums on Canvas related to the week's topic. Possible topics include reacting to videos, responding to short news articles, or engaging in questions provided. I encourage you (but really am forcing you) to answer the prompt by engaging with each other. Feel free to post questions, comments, and concerns, about certain topics. To receive full credit, you must do at **both** of the following:

- Create a new discussion.
- Engage with someone else's discussion post

Introduce Yourself: To make the points add up nicely to 250 points, please take a moment to introduce yourself on Canvas. You will automatically receive points for this assignment regardless of whether you responded or not, but I do encourage you to respond. Who knows, maybe someone in the class might share similar interests with you!

Extra Credit: Officially, there are no forms of extra credit currently available. This may be subject to change. As such, do not rely on extra credit to pass a class; think of extra credit as a small insurance for that one point you missed on a test or assignment.

Late Work Policy: Your professor is teaching many courses this semester and can already feel the stress behind messing up course-related matters. (Spoiler, he already messed up in the past). As such, unless you have a valid excuse (as deemed by the university), I will not be accepting work turned in late. It is your responsibility to turn in the work on time or to contact the professor ASAP if you have any issues come up. Your professor is not a mind reader and cannot anticipate everyone's moves. (Do not be that person who emails me on Friday before final's week for an extension on 6 reading assignments.)

Examples of university approved excuses can include the following:

- Death of a family member
- Accidents (such as being sent to the emergency rooms)
- Abruptly moving out of a hostile environment (such as moving out of an abusive relationship or facing eviction)

Examples that do NOT count as valid excuses can include the following:

- “I thought the due date was x date instead of y date.”
- “I submitted in the wrong format.”
- “I was swamped with work/other classes.”

SFSU ACADEMIC POLICIES:

Incompletes/Withdrawals: Incompletes will only be assigned in accordance to SFSU’s policy. Familiarize yourselves with the deadlines for withdrawing from the class without a “W” or “I”.

Academic Integrity: Academic integrity is a fundamental principle not only to the university but also our very core beliefs. As such, I am required to report all forms of cheating (including plagiarism). Students are responsible for knowing SFSU regulations concerning cheating and plagiarism. <https://conduct.sfsu.edu/standards>

Services for Students with Disabilities: The University is committed to providing reasonable accommodation to students with disabilities. Students needing accommodations are encouraged to contact the instructor. Please contact with the Disability Programs and Resource Center (DPRC) via dprc@sfsu.edu or 415-338-2472 to facilitate the reasonable accommodations process.

Student Disclosures of Sexual Violence: SFSU fosters a campus free of sexual violence including harassment, domestic/dating violence, stalking, or any form of discrimination. If you disclose a personal experience to any staff members, they are required to report and notify the Dean of Students. For more information on your rights and available resources, visit titleix.sfsu.edu.

To disclose any violence confidentially, contact:

The SAFE place: 415-338-2208; www.sfsu.edu/~safe_plc/

CAPS (Counseling and Psychological Services Center): 415-338-2208; www.psyserve.sfsu.edu/

Statement on Religious Holidays: SFSU staff shall accommodate students wishing to observe religious holidays when such observances require students to be absent from class activities. It is the student’s responsibility to inform the instructor, in writing, about such holidays during the first two weeks of class each semester. If such holidays occur during the first two weeks, the student must notify the instructor, in writing, at least three days before the date he/she will be absent.

General Disclaimers: I reserve the right to change any part of this syllabus at my discretion. Any changes will be announced on Canvas. *Last updated 8/23/25 – Fall 2025.*

Tentative Schedule and Modules

<i>Module</i>	<i>Topic</i>
1	Overview of Cog Dev Theories of Cog Dev: Piaget, Vygotsky, Core knowledge, Behavioral Neuroscience, IPT
2	Infancy: Perception, Attention, and Memory Infancy: Concepts and Representation Language: Acquisition and Development
3	Early childhood: Basic and Higher Order Cognition Middle childhood: Basic and Higher Order Cognition
4	Adolescence and beyond Broader topics: Morality, Prejudice, and Gender

Important Dates to Remember

Date	Information
8/25	First day of class
9/1	Labor Day Holiday
9/7	Last day to add classes without permission numbers
9/15	Last day to drop without a W
11/11	Veteran's Day Holiday
11/24	Thanksgiving Break. Effective until 11/29
12/5	Last day to change grade options (Letter or C/NC)
12/13	Finals week. Effective until 12/19
1/2	Grades available on Gateway