

Module Template for New and Revised Undergraduate Modules¹

Module Code	PSU34780
Module Name	Debates in Developmental Psychology
ECTS credit weighting	5 ECTS
Semester taught	Semester 2
Module Coordinator/s	Lorraine Swords
Module Learning Outcomes with embedded Graduate Attributes	<p>On successful completion of this module, students will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Critically engage with historical and contemporary debates in developmental psychology.• Evaluate the methodological approaches used in developmental research and their implications for interpretation of findings.• Analyse the interaction of biological, psychological, social, and cultural influences on human development.• Apply developmental theory to contemporary real-world issues and case-based examples.
Module Content	<p>Developmental psychology is the scientific study of age-related change and consistency across the spectrum of human growth. This module aims to build upon the knowledge base students received during their Freshman years and provide a stimulating context in which to introduce them to a number of important issues that are debated in the field. Some of these issues are long-standing, some more current. The focus will be on presenting the key elements of each perspective under scrutiny and then inviting students to critically review, examine and evaluate the available information.</p> <p><i>Lecture 1: An Introduction to Seasonality of Birth Effects</i></p> <p><i>Lecture 2: Decision-Making in Paediatrics: When Should Child Patients Get Involved?</i></p> <p><i>Lectures 3 & 4: Impressionable Young Minds? The Impact of Screen Use in Childhood & Adolescence</i></p> <p><i>Lecture 6: Censoring Children's Media</i></p> <p><i>Lectures 7 & 8: Are Children Reliable Eye-Witnesses?</i></p> <p><i>Lectures 9: Final Class - Debate & Critical Thinking</i></p>

¹ [An Introduction to Module Design](#) from AISHE provides information on designing and re-designing modules.

Teaching and Learning Methods²

The teaching and learning methods for this module prioritise critical thinking, synthesis of evidence, and applied understanding.

Lectures will provide a structured overview of key theories, empirical findings, and debates in developmental psychology across the lifespan. Content will be organised thematically to support students' understanding of how ideas in the field have developed over time.

Lectures will emphasise:

- Major theoretical perspectives (e.g., cognitive, social, attachment, biological approaches)
- Core developmental debates (e.g., nature–nurture)
- Key empirical findings and landmark studies
- Links between theory and real-world development

Interactive elements (e.g., polling questions, short discussion prompts) will be embedded to encourage active engagement.

Students will be introduced to developmental case studies that illustrate real-world issues. They will apply theoretical frameworks to interpret these cases, supporting integration of theory and application.

Students will be guided through key empirical and theoretical literature, including systematic reviews, longitudinal studies, and influential theoretical papers.

Emphasis will be placed on:

- Identifying strengths and limitations of research
- Synthesising findings across studies
- Understanding methodological approaches in child health research

Assessment Details³

Please include the following:

- **Assessment Component**
- **Assessment description**
- **Learning Outcome(s) addressed**
- **% of total**

This module is assessed by way of an **end of term essay** worth 100% of the module grade. This format aligns strongly with the module's emphasis on critical thinking, theoretical integration, and the ability to synthesise complex, multidisciplinary evidence.

Debates in developmental psychology rarely have simple or single-factor explanations. An essay allows students to engage with ambiguity, competing evidence, and contextual variation, which is essential for understanding real-world developmental outcomes. It also allows students to demonstrate depth of conceptual understanding, moving beyond recognition of facts to explanation, analysis, and evaluation of theories and evidence. The module draws on psychology and related disciplines such as public health, education, and sociology and so an essay format enables students to integrate

² [Trinity-INC](#) provides tips and resources on how to make your curriculum more inclusive.

³ <https://www.tcd.ie/academicpractice/resources/assessment/>

It is recommended that module co-ordinators consider assessment types used across the year to ensure varied assessment methods.

across these perspectives, compare theoretical frameworks (e.g., ecological systems theory, ACEs, resilience models), and build a coherent argument.

Contact Hours and Indicative Student Workload⁴

Contact hours: 11
Independent Study (preparation for course and review of materials): 66 hours
Independent Study (preparation for assessment, incl. completion of assessment): 44 hours

Inclusive Curriculum

All modules should be inclusive for all students who learn differently. Please respond to the following questions (i.e. ensuring the course supports engagement and representation of all students)

	PLEASE TICK
1. Have you reviewed the teaching / assessment methods and materials for possible barriers to learning, e.g. students with English as a second language, disabilities, significant external responsibilities, students with IT issues / requiring specific accessibility software etc.?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
2. Have you adapted your resources and teaching materials taking into account Trinity's Accessible Information Guidelines (https://www.tcd.ie/disability/teaching-info/TIC/materials.php)?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
3. Does the content of your module address diversity? For example, including a diverse demographic profile of authors, diversity of ideas and perspectives, or representation (e.g. pictures of conditions on different skin tones), or by acknowledgement of the homogenous context of the discipline/topic?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
4. Highlight at least two ways which your course/module incorporates principles of inclusivity and accessibility into the curriculum design	
<p>1. Provision of Accessible and Flexible Learning Materials Lecture slides, reading lists, and supplementary learning resources will be made available in advance via Blackboard. Materials will be provided in accessible formats. Clear learning objectives and structured study guides will further support students with diverse learning needs.</p> <p>2. Multiple Opportunities for Engagement and Participation</p>	

⁴ https://www.tcd.ie/academicpractice/resources/assessment_workload/

Teaching activities will incorporate a variety of participation methods, including verbal discussion, anonymous polling, online quizzes, and reflective exercises. Offering different ways for students to engage with content helps create an inclusive learning environment that accommodates diverse communication styles and levels of confidence.

3. Universal Design for Learning (UDL) Principles

The module will adopt Universal Design for Learning principles by presenting information through multiple formats (e.g., lectures, concept maps, videos, and readings) and by providing regular formative quizzes and revision resources. These approaches support different learning preferences and help students build understanding incrementally throughout the module.

By embedding accessibility and inclusivity into both content and teaching practices, the module can foster a learning environment in which all students are supported to achieve the intended learning outcomes.

Indicative Reading List (approx. 4-5 titles)

Each topic covered will have its own reading list. As examples, these are suggested for **Lecture 5: Prejudiced from Pre-School? The Experience & Expression of Stigma in Childhood**

1. DeLuca, J. S. (2019). Conceptualizing adolescent mental illness stigma: Youth stigma development and stigma reduction programs. *Adolescent Research Review*, 1-19.
2. Ferrie, J., Miller, H., & Hunter, S. C. (2020). Psychosocial outcomes of mental illness stigma in children and adolescents: A mixed-methods systematic review. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 104961.
3. Heary, C., Hennessy, E., Swords, L., & Corrigan, P. (2017). Stigma towards mental health problems during childhood and adolescence: Theory, research and intervention approaches. *Journal of Child and Family Studies*, 26(11), 2949-2959.
4. Swords, L., Hennessy, E., & Heary, C. (2022). Stigma, in (eds) Eilis Hennessy, Caroline Heary & Maria Michail, *Youth Mental Health: A New Approach*, Open University Press.

Module Pre-requisite

None

Module Co-requisite

None

Are other Schools/Departments involved in the delivery of this module? If yes, please provide details.

No