HDF 652: Theories of Human Development, Fall 2018
Stone 246, Thursdays, 9:00–11:50
Office: 155 Stone. Email: jrtudge@uncg.edu
Office hours: Tuesdays 10-11:30, but feel free to email to set up any other time that works better for you

In this class we shall focus on some of the major developmental theories. A guiding presupposition of the course is that theories fit into one of three worldviews or metatheoretical perspectives (mechanism, organicism, and contextualism), and we will examine various theories in their metatheoretical contexts. Although we will only focus on one mechanist theory (that of Bandura) and one organicist theory (that of Piaget), more of our attention will be given to contextualist theories. Increasingly, scholars are accepting the fact that these latter types of theories are the most appropriate to study the complexity of human development. The current problem, however, is to find methods and statistical analyses that make sense, given the theories’ complexities. In other words, although research methods can be studied in their own right, and can be evaluated in terms of how well they are applied in practice, methods should be closely tied to theory. We will therefore examine the methods to determine the extent to which they are appropriately related to the theory. In a single-semester class there are clearly theories that we will not cover; the purpose is not to cover each and every theory of human development. Instead, the goal is for you to understand the paradigmatic nature of some major theories and the necessity for ensuring that the methods and analyses make sense given each theory’s paradigmatic presuppositions.

Required book: APA (2009),  
Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (6th ed.). Washington, DC: APA. Required papers are all to be found in Canvas, in “files.”

Course requirements
1. Paragraphs and questions. Every week, except weeks in which you are presenting, you need to produce one or more paragraphs (maximum of 250 words total) and one question on the reading(s) for that week. If two papers are assigned, your paragraphs must be based on both papers. Your lowest score will not be counted—that means that you can either skip one week or drop your lowest score. The paragraphs need to present what you think is an important concept or issue about which the author(s) wrote, and why you think it is important, providing clear reasoning. Notice: You are not expected to try to summarize one or more reading! You also need to formulate a question for discussion, one that would allow us the get greater clarity, following discussion. Specify precisely to where (page number, column, paragraph) you are referring in the text. You need to use APA style, including title page, appropriate headings and running header and page numbers, appropriate quotations and/or citations, references, etc. If you need help on any of these, you’ll need to refer to the APA Publication manual, 6th edition. The paragraphs and questions need to be sent as an email attachment to jrtudge@uncg.edu by 9 a.m. on Wednesday (a point will be removed for each hour late). The paragraphs and questions, together, are worth 25% of your final grade.

Each of the paragraphs and questions will be graded using the following rubric:

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<th>Excellent</th>
<th>Good</th>
<th>Weak</th>
<th>Nonexistent</th>
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<td>Major idea</td>
<td>You chose an important concept and either nicely explained its importance or appropriately critiqued it. (5)</td>
<td>A central idea or concept, but you didn’t explain its importance or critiqued it well, or a marginal idea, well explained. (3–4)</td>
<td>You chose an unimportant issue to write about and/or didn’t explain it well, or summarized. (1–2)</td>
<td>Nonexistent, or plagiarized. (0)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Question</td>
<td>The question is about an important issue and focuses our attention on the text. (3)</td>
<td>The question is interesting, but does not focus on something that is important in the reading(s). (2)</td>
<td>The question is neither particularly interesting nor does it focus on something important in the reading(s). (1)</td>
<td>Irrelevant or nonexistent. (Score 0)</td>
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<tr>
<td>APA and grammar</td>
<td>Writing fully conforms to APA norms and there are no or almost no typographical or grammatical errors. (2)</td>
<td>Writing either partly conforms to APA norms or there are many typographical or grammatical errors. (1)</td>
<td>The writing only partly conforms to APA norms and there are many typographical or grammatical errors (0)</td>
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Grades for each of the paragraphs (including related questions) will be: A = 9–10; B = 7-8; C = 5-6; D = 0-4.
2. Discussion. This class is largely based around discussion that is heavily focused on the readings. You are therefore expected to contribute, in appropriate ways, to this discussion, for example by asking questions, raising issues, making counter arguments, defending your ideas, and so on, primarily basing your arguments on what you have read in this class. Please take into account that this is not a competitive endeavor; you will actually be marked down for being disrespectful to others, or by talking too much (making it difficult for others to talk). Greater understanding of the issues will come about more easily by being mutually supportive. Contribution to the discussion is required, so come prepared to make your contribution. Your contribution to the discussion will be taken into account in your final grade. What this means, in essence, is that making it difficult for others to talk or talking very little will result in at least one reduction of a grade (e.g., from A- to B+). NOTE: When your question is being discussed, be prepared to lead the discussion of it. You also need to read, and think about, other people’s questions, which I’ll make available to you before class. In other words, come prepared to lead the discussion of your question and comments on others’ questions.

3. Presentations. Two formal presentations, of 20 minutes each, with one on one from the starred (*) weeks and the other from a non-starred week (but not one related to the same theory). These presentations should be thought of as preparations for conference presentations; questions from the audience should be kept for the end of the presentation (except for minor questions about clarification).

The purpose of the presentations is not simply to cover what is in the reading for that week, which people will have read. You may briefly summarize the main issues, but you need to go beyond what is in the readings, for example by making links to other theories (discussing similarities or differences), or by linking to one or other of the basic paradigms, or by linking to research that might support or attack the theory. The grades for the presentation will be based on the extent to which you:

- present coherently and clearly, showing that you have understood the topic and at least some of the key issues and arguments that the author(s) make(s) [0–3 points];
- include relevant and interesting “outside” material, designed to help us understand the theory (devote at least half of your time to this) [0–3 points];
- “talk” to your audience (as opposed to reading from the paper), with good eye contact [0-1 point];
- use appropriate overheads or slides (visible, not too much information on any one overhead) [0 point];
- keep to your time limit (no less than 16 minutes, no more than 21 minutes) [0-1 point];
- have both an appropriate introduction (informing your audience what you plan to cover) and conclusion (some type of summarizing statements) [0-1 points].

It will help you to restrict your notes to a minimum (so that you are not tempted to read them) and to practice a couple of times prior to the actual presentation. Make sure that your overheads use a font that is clear and large enough to be seen, and that you do not try to get too much information on any one overhead. You should prepare a version of your presentation for all class members (using the “handout” facility in PowerPoint). If your presentation has a lot of dark background, copy it to a plain background before printing and copying. If you are presenting with someone else, make sure that you coordinate so that you don’t present very similarly. Each presentation is worth approximately 12.5% of your final grade, and A = 9–10, B = 7-8, C = 5-6, D = 0–4.

4. Final paper. A final paper should cover one of the theories of your choice, preferably one that we’ve covered (although I will entertain other possibilities). You should summarize the theory, taking no more than 50% of your paper. The remaining space should be devoted to (a) explaining how it fits into one or other of the major paradigms, (b) empirical support for or critique of the theory (i.e., relevant research that used paradigm-appropriate methods), and (c) weaknesses of the theory. You will almost certainly do better if you go beyond the assigned papers as you try to understand the theory that you choose to write about. Do not rely on commentaries for your summary of the theory. As with the brief discussion papers, you need to use APA style (see above) and be careful not to plagiarize (see below). The final paper is worth 50% of your final grade.

Be careful not to plagiarize, using someone else’s words as your own. Note that slightly modifying the original words (changing a word here or there, leaving out a clause from a sentence, etc.) still constitutes plagiarism. Sometimes this happens by chance if you take fairly extensive notes on some text, and then simply use those words in your own paper—but it is still plagiarism. If you use an author’s words you must put them in quotation marks and cite your source (author’s name, date, and page number), and if you summarize you must also cite your source (author’s name and date only). Plagiarism is a serious issue. The minimum penalty, for a first offence, is F on the assignment, and a report filed with the appropriate office on campus.
The rubric for grading the papers is as follows:

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<th>Summary of the theory (no more than half the paper)</th>
<th>Excellent</th>
<th>Good</th>
<th>Weak</th>
<th>Unmentionable</th>
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<tr>
<td>A good, clear, and accurate summary of the major components of the theory. (5-6)</td>
<td>Many, but not all of the major components of the theory, described accurately, or all of the components, with some inaccuracy. (3-4)</td>
<td>Not all of the major components are discussed and those that are described do not seem to be well understood. (1-2)</td>
<td>Not worth considering, or plagiarized. (Score 0)</td>
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| Fit with paradigm, empirical support, and weaknesses | You have shown why the theory fits the appropriate paradigm, and have described well both support for and critique of the theory (taking the paradigm into account) and its weaknesses. (5-6) | Two of these three aspects were appropriately and well discussed, but the other one was not. (3-4) | One of these three aspects was appropriately and well considered, but the other two were not. (1-2) | Hmmm, perhaps you ran out of time before you could write this section. (0) |

| APA and grammar | The writing fully conforms to APA norms and there are no (or almost no) typographical or grammatical errors. (2) | The writing either partly conforms to APA norms or there are typographical or grammatical errors. (1) | The writing only partly conforms to APA norms and there are typographical or grammatical errors. (0) |

Grades for your paper will be: 12-14 A; 8-11 B; 5-7 C; D 0-4

Calendar

**August 16**: Introduction to the semester.

**August 23**: Paradigms and theories

Additional readings relevant to this topic (only if you want to go further into this topic).
Guba, E. G., & Lincoln, Y. S. (1994). Competing paradigms in qualitative research. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research* (pp. 105-117). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. [This chapter is particularly important as a way to think about “critiques from within” the mechanist (positivist or post-positivist) paradigm.]

**August 30**: Organicism and contextualism

*Your goal, in this week’s paragraph, is to explain the key similarities and differences between these two paradigms.*

**September 6:** Developmental relational systems theory

Additional readings relevant to this topic (only if you want to go further into this topic)

**September 13:** Applying Developmental Relations Systems theory

**September 20:** The development of Bronfenbrenner’s theory

**September 27:** Bronfenbrenner’s bioecological theory

Additional readings, if you’re interested in the development of his theory:

**October 4:** Bioecological research (or not?)

*October 11: PVEST: Spencer’s Phenomenological Variant of Ecological Systems Theory [in teleconferencing room]*


Additional readings relevant to this topic (only if you want to go further into this topic)

October 18: No class [SRCD conference on character]

HOWEVER...read

This chapter is a commentary on Piaget’s theory, but it seemed like the best brief introduction to his ideas (although obviously, as with all commentaries, Goldhaber has a particular perspective). Other good commentaries include:

*October 25: Piaget*

If you want to understand Piaget’s theory, you need to read his books, but the fullest brief introduction to his ideas is:


*November 1*: Mechanism? Bandura


Additional readings relevant to this topic (only if you want to go further into this topic)


November 8: No class [Association for Moral Education conference]

November 15: Bandura applying Bandura


Additional readings relevant to this topic (only if you want to go further into this topic)


November 22: Thanksgiving

December 3: Your paper is due by 9 a.m. on Monday, December 4; one grade removed for every day (or part of a day) late.