

Course Unit	Developmental Psychology	Field of study	Psychology
Bachelor in	Gerontology	School	School of Health
Academic Year	2025/2026	Year of study	1
Type	Semestral	Level	1-1
	Semester	1	ECTS credits 4.0
		Code	9833-346-1106-00-25
Workload (hours)	108	Contact hours	T - TP 30 PL - TC - S - E - OT 10 O -

T - Lectures; TP - Lectures and problem-solving; PL - Problem-solving, project or laboratory; TC - Fieldwork; S - Seminar; E - Placement; OT - Tutorial; O - Other

Name(s) of lecturer(s) **Silvia Maria Fernandes Ala**

Learning outcomes and competences

At the end of the course unit the learner is expected to be able to:

1. Describe models and factors of the human development
2. Characterise research methodology used in development and health psychology
3. Characterise attachment theory, its development and application in several contexts
4. Understand the identity formation and development, auto-concept, self-esteem, self-knowledge, moral and vocational development
5. Understand disturbances inherent to adolescents and young adults
6. Characterise the psychology of human ageing

Prerequisites

Before the course unit the learner is expected to be able to:
None

Course contents

1. Introduction to DP. Theories of human development
2. Research methodology in psychology and health
3. Fetal life
4. Attachment theory
5. Personality structure
6. Psychosexual development
7. Identity crisis
8. Cognitive development
9. Moral development
10. Whole person psychogenesis theory
11. The Socio-Historical Developmental Perspective
12. Bioecological theory
13. Lifespan development paradigm
14. Mental disorders

Course contents (extended version)

1. Introduction to the psychology of the development. Theories of human development
 - Factors of human development
2. Research methodology in psychology and health
3. Psychology of the foetus and baby . Health of the fetus. Fetal life
 - Behaviour and development of the foetus
4. Theory of attachment. Attachment and behaviour of attachment. Phases of attachment
 - Strange situation of Mary Ainsworth
5. Theory of personality structure - Sigmund Freud
 - Psychic instances of the mind
 - Defense mechanisms of the ego - Anna Freud
6. Theory Psychosexual - Sigmund Freud
 - The five stages of psychosexual development
7. Psychosocial Theory of Development - Erik Erikson
 - The eight stages of psychosocial development
 - Identity crisis
8. Theory of Cognitive Development - Jean Piaget
 - Constructivism and learning
 - Mechanism of adaptation to the environment
 - The four stages of cognitive development
9. Moral development - Piaget and Kohlberg
 - Stages of moral development - Piaget
 - Stages of awareness formation
 - Heinz's dilemma
10. Theory of the Psychogenesis of the Whole Person - Henri Wallon
 - Functional fields and psychological development of the child
11. The Socio-historical perspective of development - Lev Vygotsky
 - Zone of Proximal Development (ZDP)
12. Fundamentals of Urie Bronfenbrenner's bioecological theory
 - Bronfenbrenner diagram
 - Ecological transition
13. Principles of the lifelong development paradigm (lifespan) - Paul B. Baltes
 - Selection, optimization and compensation theory (SOC theory)
 - Principles of intellectual aging
14. Psychopathology
 - Lifelong Mental Disorders

Recommended reading

1. Papalia, D. E. , & Martorell, G. (2021). Desenvolvimento humano (14.ª ed.). McGraw Hill.
2. Lally, M. , & Valentine-French, S. (2020). Lifespan development: A psychological perspective (4th ed.). College of Lake County.
3. Leal, I. , & Pais Ribeiro, J. (2021). Manual de psicologia da saúde. Pactor.
4. Tavares, L. P. (Ed.). (2024). Psicologia e velhice. Ampla Editora.

Teaching and learning methods

Theoretical lessons (30 hours): expositive and reflective method. Lessons of orientation guardianship (10 hours): orientation for the accomplishment of group works (of bibliographical research and posterior presentation in context of classroom). Not actual period (68 hours): individual study and/or in group, having for support texts and supplied bibliography.

Assessment methods

1. Alternative 1 - (Regular, Student Worker) (Final)
 - Practical Work - 40% (Discussion of works)
 - Final Written Exam - 60%
2. Alternative 2 - (Regular, Student Worker) (Supplementary, Special)
 - Final Written Exam - 100%

Language of instruction

1. Portuguese
2. Portuguese, with additional English support for foreign students.

Electronic validation

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30-01-2026	30-01-2026	04-02-2026	07-02-2026