

**Human Development & Family Studies 464**  
**Play: Development and Role Across the Lifespan**  
**Spring, 2007**  
**Tuesdays 5:30-8:00 p.m.**  
**Room 118 Human Ecology**

**Instructor:** Jill Steinberg, Ph.D.

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Office: 52A. HDFS

Walk-in hours: Wednesdays, 9:40-11:30 (or arrange another time by appointment)

**Objectives for the course:**

Students will gain an understanding and appreciation for the role and function of play (and playfulness) across the lifespan: what it contributes to individual development as well as to the durability of family and culture. In this class, students are expected to take responsibility for coming to class prepared for both discussion and activity which will help them construct their own understanding of “play”.

**Required Reading:** One required book plus additional selections

Fromberg & Bergen (2006). Play From Birth to Twelve- Contexts, Perspectives, and Meanings. (2<sup>nd</sup> Edition). Routledge: New York

Supplementary Readings available in a reading packet from Bob’s Copy Shop (University Ave) , and occasionally posted in Learn@UW

**Attendance Policy**

This is not a class where students are passive recipients of lecture information, nor is it the kind of class where students can easily get notes from other students. Things happen in class that you’ll miss out on if you are not here. Each of you will be constructing your own knowledge and perspective from the material, as well as from your experiences in this class. You are strongly advised NOT to miss class if there is any way you can avoid it, as this will reduce your grade and diminish your experience here. Any time you are absent from class, I expect an emailed explanation.

**Special needs**

I realize that students are a diverse group, and some have special needs. I sincerely welcome persons with disabilities in this class, and am happy to do what I can to make the class fair and accessible to you. Please let me know if there are any special accommodations (in terms of curriculum, instruction, assessment, etc.) which would better help you fully participate. Any information you share with me will remain confidential.

**Use of Learn@UW**

I make use of Learn in a number of ways in this class, including :

- Posting Power Point files (so you can print out slides as “handouts” which facilitates note-taking
- Posting occasional supplementary readings on topics not covered in your required book
- Posting discussion guides for the required reading
- Posting grades, and secure individual feedback

**Evaluation/Grading**

(Yes, even in a class called “Play”, we can’t escape those pesky grades!)

Your grade in this class will be based on three written papers, a play space design activity, a group presentation activity, and weekly in-class activities as follows:

- Paper 1: *What is the function of “play” toward development?* 20% (40 points)
- Paper 2: *Measuring a specific construct of PLAY* - 25% (50 points)

- Play space design - 8% (16 points)
- Group project: Co-leading a presentation/guided discussion session concerning your chosen special topic - 15% (30 points)
- Paper 3: Article for Parents Magazine, based on information from the group-guided discussion of your special issue - 15% (30 points)
- PlayBreak activities (Each student will lead an activity, or share a play stimulus during one class.) 4% (8 points)
- Attendance, preparedness & participation, and an occasional reading reflection sheet - 13% (26 points)

Your final “letter” grade will follow (approximately) this “curve”

92-100% A

88-91% AB

81-87 B

71-80 BC

61-70 C

## Topic Schedule

## Assigned reading- to be completed prior to class:

### Part 1: Background and context

1/23 **WEEK 1:** Introduction to the course  
“Is it PLAY?”  
A little historical background

1/30 **WEEK 2:** Theory  
Text: Introduction (pp xv-xxi)  
Text: Chapter 9 (Social and Non-social Play)  
Text: Chapter 14 (Play as Children See It)

Classifications/ kinds of play R1 Frost et al. (2001). *Philosophy and Ideas Over the Years.*

2/6 **WEEK 3:** Animal play (No text readings for this week)  
R2: Ellis, M.J. (1988). Play and the origin of the species. Pp. 23-25 in Play as a Medium for Learning and Development. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.  
R3: Power (2000). *Play-Fighting in Animals*.  
R4: Flack, J.C., Jeannotte, L.A. & De Waal, F.B.M. (2004). *Play signaling and the perception of social rules by juvenile chimpanzees*.  
The physiology of play R5: Stanford Univ. School of Medicine (2004): *Toys May Have a Lasting Effect*  
*PlayBreak activities: People-pet playful interactions*

### Part 2: The Development of Play

2/13 **WEEK 4:** Infants and toddlers  
“play” vs. “exploration”  
Text: Chapter 1 (Pp 1-11 Play Development from Birth to Age 4)  
Text: Chapter 8 (The Meanings in Play with Objects).  
R6: Provenzo, E.F. & Brett, A. (1983). Blocks: Theory and research (pp 35-58) in The Complete Block Book. Syracuse: University Press

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|      | <i>PlayBreak activities:</i>           | <i>Evaluating games, toys and other play stimuli for infants/toddlers brought by students</i>  |  |
| 2/20 | <b>WEEK 5:</b> Preschoolers            | Text: Chapter 2 (Play Development from Ages Four to Eight)   |  |
|      | The development of social pretense     | Text: Chapter 10 (Sociodramatic Play Pretending Together)  |  |
|      |  | Text: Chapter 11 (Constructive Play)   |  |
|      |  | Text: Chapter 16 (Play's Pathways to Meaning)  |  |
|      |  | R7: Sawyer (1997). <i>Joining the Performance: The Metapragmatics of Play Entry.</i>   |  |
|      | <i>PlayBreak activities:</i>           | <i>Evaluating games, toys and other play stimuli for preschoolers brought by students **/</i>  |  |
| 2/27 | <b>WEEK 6:</b> The school-age years    | Text: Chapter 3 (Play Development from Ages Eight to Twelve)   |  |
|      |  | Text: Chapter 12 (Rough-and Tumble Play from Childhood through Adolescence)  |  |
|      | Games with rules                       | Text: Chapter 13 (Games with Rules)  |  |
|      |  | R8: Freie (1999). <i>Rules in Children's Games and Play.</i>   |  |
|      | <i>PlayBreak activities:</i>           | <i>Evaluating games, toys and other play stimuli for school-age children brought by students</i>   |  |
| 3/6  | <b>WEEK 7: ***Paper 1 Due Today***</b> |  |  |
|      | Adolescent and adult play              | Text: Chapter 7 (Play in the Context of Life-Span Human Development)   |  |
|      |  | R9: Perlstein (2003) <i>Now You Have the Percentage of your Love</i>   |  |
|      | <i>PlayBreak activities:</i>           | <i>Evaluating games &amp; toys &amp; other play stimuli for adolescents or adults</i>  |  |
|      | Researching play                       | R10: Bergan (1984) <i>Methods for Studying Certain Types of Play</i>   |  |
|      |  | Text: Chapter 37 (Fantasy and Imagination)   |  |
|      |  | Text: Chapter 24 (The Role of Play in Assessment)  |  |
| 3/13 | <b>WEEK 8:</b> Play and Language,      | Text: Chapter 4 (Language and Play)  |  |
|      |  | Text: Chapter 15 (Play as a Context for Humor Development)   |  |
|      |  | R11 Scarlett, W.G. Naudeau, S. Salenius-Pasternak, D. & Ponte, I. (2005). Children's humor. Chapter 5 (pp 93-109) in <u>Children's Play</u> . Thousand Oaks: Sage                          |  |
|      | The development of HUMOR               | R12 Collins (2004, NYT) <i>Toonology</i>   |  |
|      | <b>MINI-ASSIGNMENT Bring to class:</b> | <b>***From your experience, bring to class one example of something that is funny to a 4-year old, something that is funny to an 11-year old, and something that is funny to an adult.</b> |  |

**Individual and Contextual influences on play**

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| 3/20 | <b>WEEK 9:</b> Cultural influences on play | Text: Chapter 26 (Play in Historical and Cross-Cultural Contexts) |
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Text: Chapter 5 (Gender Identity and Play)  
 Text: Chapter 27 (Influences of Race, Culture, Social Class, and Gender)  
 Text: Chapter 28 (Parent-Child and Child-Child Play in Diverse Cultural Contexts)  
 Text: Chapter 31 (Sociocultural Perspectives of Parent-Child Play)  
 Text: Chapter 38 (Sociocultural Influences on Gender-Role Behaviors in Children's Play)

R13: Haight et al. (1999) *Universal, Developmental and Variable Aspects of Young Children's Play: A Cross-Cultural Comparison of Pretending at Home.*

R14: Nwokah & Ikekeonwu (1998) *A Sociocultural Comparison of Nigerian and American Children's Games*

R15: Maccoby(1999) *Gender and Group Process: A Developmental Perspective.*

R16: Servin, et al (2003) *Prenatal Androgens and Gender-Typed Behavior: A study of girls with mild and severe forms of congenital adrenal hyperplasia.*

Gender influence on play

*PlayBreak activities: Evaluating games & toys or other play stimuli that reflect culture or gender*

3/27 **WEEK 10:** Play and disability

Text: Chapter 6 (Play as the Language of Children's Feelings)  
 Chapter 29 (Can I Play Too...)

R17: O'Neil (2004, NYT) *Slow-Motion Miracle: One Boy's Journey Out of Autism's Grasp.*

Introduction to play therapy

Text: Chapter 35 (Play as Ritual in Health Care Settings)  
 Text: Chapter 36 (Clinical Perspectives on Play)

*PlayBreak activities: Evaluating games & toys or other play stimuli related to developmental disability or therapeutic settings*

4/3 Spring Break **Individual Applied Research time!** 😊

4/10 **WEEK 11:** Play and education  
 The role of adults in children's play

Text: Chapter 17 (Adult Influences on Play: Vygotskian Approach)  
 Text: Chapter 18 (Social Play in School)  
 Text: Chapter 19 (Play as a Medium for Literacy Development)  
 Text: Chapter 20 (Play and Mathematics at Ages One to Ten)  
 Text: Chapter 21 (Scientific Inquiry and Exploratory Representational Play)  
 Text: Chapter 25 (Reconciling Play and Assessment Standards)



## Specific instructions for your three papers in HDFS 464

### **Paper 1:**

Why do we play? In a concise, 2-3 (single-spaced) page paper, discuss why play occurs in humans and other species, and what it contributes to development. In order to do this, you'll probably need to define what play is, and be sure to discuss how play helps us develop as individuals, and makes our survival as a species more likely. There are a number of assigned readings for weeks 2-5 which relate to this question (as well as a lot of "mini-lecture" material that you will hear), so be sure to reference some of these as you make your case for play. (Use standard APA referencing format, including a reference list at the end of your paper.)

Due March 6th

### **Paper 2:**

From any area within the class content, pick one **construct** (i.e. an "idea" or concept) related to play. Then, think very carefully about how you would measure this construct in a research study. This is not as easy as it seems. You will need to be very specific about what "counts" and what doesn't, and decide whether you're measuring frequency, intensity, or both, etc.

Once you have the general construct you are interested in, do a search of existing research (using a database such as PsychInfo) to see if you can find research studies that used a similar measure, or tried to assess something similar to what you are interested in. Depending on your construct, you may find it hard, but try to find two studies that are at least SOMEWHAT related to the construct you have chosen. Once you've done this, think more specifically about how you will MEASURE your construct in a new way - different than what you have seen others do. Design a measurement strategy.

Once you have worked out way that you **think** you can measure this construct, **write out your strategy, and create any recording or coding forms that you will need. Do a pilot test** of your measure and measurement strategy. Observe 4-6 individuals in an age group that interests you, and use your measurement strategy to collect some simple data to see if your measure is really usable. (After this pilot observation, many students choose to refine or change their measure and try again. This is ok - you may need to do more than one pilot test.) Once you have some pilot data and are satisfied that you have a workable way of measuring your construct, you are ready to write up your paper.

Begin by discussing the CONSTRUCT that you are interested in, and why it may be important toward our understanding of "play". Relate this construct to the two (or more) related research studies that you found, explaining how you would like to extend these studies and do something slightly different.

Describe the exact measurement strategy that you decided on being detailed enough so that someone who didn't know you could follow this and measure here!), including coding schemes, subtle distinctions between behaviors, what is considered "in" and what "out", etc. in enough detail that someone else can know exactly how to apply this measurement scheme.

Discuss the method that you used to do your pilot study, including characteristics of your small

sample, and present a simple summary of the data that you collected.

You will be graded on originality, clarity, and overall soundness of your measurement strategy, as well as the apparent work you did piloting your measure.

Due April 17th

### **Group Activity/Final Paper:**

Pick one of the “special issue” topics described below (or propose another). Research various perspectives on the issue (seek out expert opinions, research findings, etc). Then, with the other students who have chosen the same topic, prepare to lead a discussion of the issue in class on the evening specified. We will have some in-class time for group project planning, where you can get together with the other students and deciding how you will handle the class - whether there will be activities, graphics, etc. Decide what discussion questions will be used, what expert opinions will be shared, etc. I expect every student in the group to be well prepared, and to contribute in some way to this project, which may last from 30-50 minutes depending on the number of participants in the group.

Then, between your discussion day and the due date for this assignment (May 17th) write an article for a non-academic audience (suitable for a magazine such as Parents) that clearly shows **what you have learned about the topic from your research, the research of others in your group, and from the class discussion** that ensued. There is no minimum or maximum length for this article, but it should be well organized and well-reasoned. Expert and research sources should be referenced in a way that is appropriate for this type of article (not-overwhelming to a lay audience, but still present.) You may take a strong personal position in this article if you choose, or you can present all sides of the issue in an objective way.

Grading criteria: (1) the apparent depth of your understanding of the issue and how it relates to what you’ve learned in this class; (2) coherence, organization, creativity and editing; (3) appropriate integration of the ideas of researchers or other experts.

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Here are six possible “special issue” topics, along with some questions that you may want to address as a part of your group presentation:

1. Is technology (e.g. computer and video games) promoting, or restricting, healthy play? What are the benefits of electronic or technological play? The risks? How much is “too much”? What limits might be appropriate? Are there some children for whom this kind of play is more beneficial than for others? What recommendations would you give to parents and school districts in terms of allowing children access to various forms of technology, including things like Internet-based interactive competitions? How can technological play be integrated in our lives in a healthy way?
2. Is there such a thing as “bad” play? What should the role of the adult be in setting boundaries for the content and social interactions in play? For organizing activities in

recreational programs? Some early childhood teachers have taken the “you can’t say you can’t play” approach to social interactions. Others have outlawed all weapon play. What are some approaches to controlling violence and/or coercion in play? When adults structure all play for children, what is lost?

3. Is there an appropriate time for a “play break” in elementary school? How about middle school? What is the function of recess: is this simply a “break for teachers” that leads to bullying and social exclusion, or does recess serve an important purpose in the development of children? Should it be abolished? Expanded? Should something better be substituted? Does physical education serve the same purpose as recess? Should age groups be mixed or segregated? What should schools consider in making “recess” policies? What are some trends in school systems around the country?
4. Have you noticed that many public play spaces are rather uninteresting, with little opportunity for children to be creative, or take risks? Many people would agree that the American system of tort law (e.g. allowing lawsuits over injuries) has reduced the opportunities for children in this country to have fun, because so much focus has been placed on avoiding lawsuits which may arise from injuries. Do children today have less “fun” in their community than children did in the past? What evidence do we have to support or refute this idea? How does our legal system compare to that of other parts of the world when it comes to play? Are toys and equipment now getting unnecessarily bland? What is possible? What is ideal?
5. Organized sports for children age 5-8: does this serve the same function as “play”, or is it something else? Does it take away from valuable play time? In what ways are organized sports activities beneficial to children’s development? In what ways might they be harmful? In the real world, how developmentally appropriate are the kinds of activities that usually take place during practice sessions, and during competitions? What changes might be made in the way practices and competitions are handled by coaches? Ideally, what role should parents play in these activities? Should there be limits on involvement in sports at various ages?
6. Children’s play in stressful situations, such as war-torn areas: how is it altered? What does war do to play, and what can play do to help solve the problem of war? Can longstanding group hostilities be lessened through children’s play? Can play be used as a tool to promote peace? What model programs have attempted to do this? You may also want to talk about play in other kinds of stressful settings such as hospitals (and Child Life Professionals).

**Play: Development and Role Across the Lifespan**  
**Spring 2007 Supplementary Reading Packet contents (in order of usage):**

#1 Frost, J.L., Wortham, S. & Reifel, S. (2001) Philosophy and ideas over the years; Theory as lenses on children's play (pp. 7-74) in Play and Child Development. Upper Saddle River: Merrill Prentice Hall.

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#2 Ellis, M.J. (1988). Play and the origin of the species. Pp. 23-25 in Play as a Medium for Learning and Development. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

#3 Power, T.G. (2000). Play-fighting in animals. Ch. 4 (pp. 111-162) in Play and Exploration in Children and Animals. Mahwah, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum

#4 Flack, J.C., Jeannotte, L.A. & De Waal, F.B.M. (2004). Play signaling and the perception of social rules by juvenile chimpanzees. Journal of Comparative Psychology. Vol 118, No. 2 pp 149-159.

#5 Stanford Univ. School of Medicine (2004): *Toys May Have a Lasting Effect* (News Release)

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#6 Provenzo, E.F. & Brett, A. (1983). Blocks: Theory and research (pp 35-58) in The Complete Block Book. Syracuse: University Press

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#7 Sawyer, R.K. (1997). Joining the performance: The metapragmatics of play entry. Pretend Play as Improvisation, 97-117. Mahwah, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum.

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#8 Freie, C. (1999). Rules in children's games and play. Ch 6 (pp. 83-100) in S.Reifel (Ed.), Play and Culture Studies, Volume 2: Play Contexts Revisited. Stamford, Connecticut, Ablex.

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#9 Perlstein, L. (2003). Now you have the percentage of your love. Chapter 20 (pp 210-217) of Not Much Just Chillin': The Hidden Lives of Middle Schoolers. New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux.

#10 Bergan, D. Excerpt from Chapter 2, Methods for studying certain types of play. Pp. 36-43 in Play as a Medium for Learning and Development. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

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#11 Scarlett, W.G. Naudeau, S. Saloni-Pasternak, D. & Ponte, I. (2005). Children's humor. Chapter 5 (pp 93-109) in Children's Play. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

#12 Collins, G. (Sept 28, 2004). Toonology: Scientists try to find out what's so funny about humor. The New York Times D5.

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#13: Haight, W.L, Wang, X., Fung, H.H., Williams, K. & Mintz, J. (1999). Universal, developmental and variable aspects of young children's play: A cross-cultural comparison of pretending at home. Child Development, 70, 1477-1488.

#14 Nwokah, E.E. & Ikekeonwu, C. (1998). A sociocultural comparison of Nigerian and American children's games. Ch 5 (pp. 59-76) in S. Reifel, M.C. Duncan, G. Chick & A. Aycock (Eds.), Play and Culture, Volume 1: Diversions and Divergencies in Fields of Play. Greenwich, Connecticut: Ablex.

#15: Maccoby, E.E. (Aug, 1999). Gender and Group Process: A Developmental Perspective. Current Directions in Psychological Science. APA.

#16 Servin, A. Nordenstrom, A., Larsson, A.. & Bohlin, G. (2003). Prenatal androgens and gender-typed behavior: A study of girls with mild and severe forms of congenital adrenal hyperplasia. Developmental Psychology, 39(3) 440-450.

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#17: O'Neil, J. (Dec 29, 2004). Slow-Motion Miracle: One Boy's Journey Out of Autism's Grasp. The New York Times

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#18 Van Hoorn, J., Nourot, P.M., Scales, B. & Alward, K.R. (2003). Orchestrating play: Interactions with children. Chapter 5 (pp. 89-112) in Play at the Center of the Curriculum, Third Edition. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Merrill Prentice Hall.

#19 Reynolds, E. (2001). Excerpt from Chapter 3 (pp. 74-87) Guiding Young Children: A Problem-Solving Approach. Mountain View CA: Mayfield.