



MHS 6485
Human Development for School Counselors
86303 900
Fall 2026

Instructor Name

Deirdra Sanders-Burnett

University Course Description

Provides an advanced survey of life span human development. Demographic, physiological, sociological factors contributing to optimal functioning are discussed, with applications to counseling in school settings. Provides an integrated view of how theoretical frameworks, developmental research, and knowledge about typical age-related experiences can inform school-based counseling interventions.

Course Requisites

Prerequisite(s):

Corequisite(s):

Course Format

Mondays 5:00 – 7:45 pm

This course will primarily be conducted in synchronous face-to-face instruction. Instructional strategies include:

1. **Weekly preparation.** All weeks will have routine reading assigned. Some weeks may also consist of virtual mini-

lectures or other supplemental materials. Materials will be available on Canvas prior to the class meeting.

2. **Large group class meetings (5:00-7:45 pm).** Synchronous class meetings each week will utilize mini-lectures, discussions, and application exercises.

Student Learning Outcomes

Student Learning Outcomes	Evaluation
Student Learning Outcomes (SLO)	Evaluation
Develop a working understanding of theories of individual and family development, learning, and personality development	Article Review, Developmental Autobiography, Final Exam
Apply foundational theories and understanding of biological, neurological, physiological, systemic, and environmental factors that impact human growth and development	Intervention Project, Developmental Autobiography
Articulate foundational understanding of research-based interventions for counseling	Article Review, Intervention Project
Formulate developmentally relevant counseling plans with attention to differentiated interventions and strategies for promoting resilience and wellness	Intervention Project, In-Class Case Studies, Final Exam

Course Objectives

Content Addressed (CACREP 2024 Standards: 3.C. Lifespan Development)

1. theories of individual and family development across the lifespan theories of cultural identity development theories of learning theories of personality and psychological development theories and neurobiological etiology of addictions structures for affective relationships, bonds, couples, marriages, and families models of resilience, optimal development, and wellness in individuals and families across the lifespan models of psychosocial adjustment and adaptation to illness and disability the role of sexual development and sexuality related to overall wellness biological, neurological, and physiological factors that affect lifespan development, functioning, behavior, resilience, and overall wellness systemic, cultural, and environmental factors that affect lifespan development, functioning, behavior, resilience, and overall wellness the influence of mental and physical health conditions on coping, resilience, and overall wellness for individuals and families across the lifespan effects of crises, disasters, stress, grief, and trauma across the lifespan

Required Texts and/or Readings and Course Materials

Development Through The Lifespan 7th edition by Laura E. Berk

ISBN: 9781071895177 Paperback

ISBN: 9781071895191 Electronic Version

Supplementary (Optional) Texts and Materials

Additional readings may be assigned periodically and will be made available to you through Canvas.

Additional Course Materials

- ❖ Liability insurance (provided complimentary with professional organization membership)
- ❖ USF Libraries: <https://lib.usf.edu/>
- ❖ Access to the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (7th edition) See <https://guides.lib.usf.edu/academicwriter>
- ❖ Access to the ASCA National Model 4th Edition (Optional)

How to Succeed in this Course

Professionalism & Student Responsibility

As graduate-level student counselors, I expect you to take responsibility for engaging in this course in a meaningful way. This may occur by:

- ❖ Attending class routinely on time with minimal distractions to learning
- ❖ Carefully preparing for class through assigned readings and learning materials
- ❖ Reflecting on your own learning and seeking support when needed
- ❖ Demonstrating professional dispositions through interactions with peers and instructor
- ❖ Engaging in discussion and respecting the ideas and opinions of others
- ❖ Seeking feedback on assignments and activities and utilizing as appropriate
- ❖ Maintaining academic integrity as outlined by university policy

❖ Wearing appropriate clothing to help maintain a respectful learning environment

Grading Scale

Student Evaluation Criteria

Scale	Min	Max
Grading Scale	Min (%)	Max (%)
A	94	100
A-	90	93
B+	87	89
B	84	86
B-	80	83
C+	77	79
C	70	76
D	60	69
F	0	59

Note: You must successfully complete all courses with a grade of B or higher in order to progress in the Counselor Education program. Students who do not earn a B or higher may not register for any core Counselor Education courses until the course is successfully repeated with a B or higher.

Grade Categories and Weights

Assignment	Points	Due
Assignment	Points	Due Date
Journal Article Review	15	September 28
Developmental Autobiography	30	November 2
Intervention Handout	10	November 23
Intervention Presentation	15	November 23 and November 30
Final Exam	30	December 6

Due Dates

You are responsible for submitting assignments on or before due dates. If you are concerned about your ability to consistently complete quality work as

described in the schedule, make an appointment with me to discuss how to support your learning in our course.

Assignment Snapshots

All assignments will be submitted electronically through Canvas unless otherwise noted. These descriptions do NOT include all assignment information.

See Canvas for detailed instructions and associated rubrics.

Journal Article Review - 15 Points

You will submit a review of a journal article that focuses on a school-based counseling intervention. Article reviews will include: 1) a summary of the article including a description of the intervention, population, and results, 2) a discussion of *your* perceived strengths and limitations of the article, and 3) 2-3 specific applications to your work as a school counselor. All journal articles reviewed must have been published between 2015 – present. Examples of appropriate journals are listed on Canvas. *Acceptable AI Use: Supplemental resource for proofreading and/or editing (e.g., Grammarly). Generative AI is not allowed.*

Intervention Project - Handout 10 Points/Presentation 15 Points

In this project, you will enhance your understanding of research-informed practices for counseling children and adolescents. You will be assigned an evidence-supported counseling intervention to research and present to the class. You will create a one-page handout to be shared with your classmates and present your findings in a Three Minute Thesis format. See Canvas for specific presentation and handout requirements. *Acceptable AI Use: Supplemental resource for proofreading and/or editing (e.g., Grammarly). Generative AI is not allowed.*

Developmental Autobiography - 30 Points

In a 10-page paper, you will write an autobiography that reflects your knowledge of human development as it applies to your own life. This practice allows you to learn about yourself in a meaningful way that will enhance your ability to apply concepts to your future counseling practice. Within each developmental period that you've navigated thus far (i.e., infancy and early childhood, middle childhood, adolescence, emerging adulthood, early adulthood, middle adulthood, late adulthood), you will attend to: 1) major developmental tasks, challenges, and milestones experienced, 2) biological, neurological, physiological, systemic, and/or environmental factors that influenced your development, and 3) connections with 2-3 developmental theories discussed in class. You will conclude your paper by summarizing ways in which your developmental history will carry with you and outline specific next steps for your growth and development as a professional counselor. Intentional course preparation throughout the semester should provide you with a strong foundation for this assignment. *Acceptable AI Use:*

Supplemental resource for proofreading and/or editing (e.g., Grammarly). Generative AI is not allowed.

Final Exam - 30 Points

You will take a comprehensive final exam that covers the content covered in this course. This exam will contain both multiple-choice and short-answer questions. Multiple-choice items may resemble questions on the Counselor Preparation Comprehensive Examination (CPCE), National Counselor Exam (NCE), or FTCE School Counseling Exam. The exam will be available on Canvas beginning December 5th at 12:00 am and will remain open until December 6th at 11:59 pm.

All students must review the syllabus and the requirements to determine if they wish to remain in the course. Enrollment in the course is an agreement to abide by and accept all terms. Any student may elect to drop or withdraw from this course before the end of the drop/add period.

Note: No external resources or contact with anyone is allowed. Acceptable AI Use: None

Major Topics and Course Schedule

Course Schedule

Reminder: This schedule shows overarching class topics and major assignment due dates. You are responsible for reviewing the weekly class outlines on Canvas for required readings and class preparation activities.

Date	Class Focus	Assignments Due
Date	Class Focus	Assignments Due
Week 1 : 8/24	Course Orientation Ch 1: Organizing Themes in Development	Routine Readings and Prep (Canvas)
Week 2 : 8/31	Ch 2: Genetics, Epigenetics, and the Brain, Ch 3: Cognitive Development in the Early Years Routine Readings and Prep (Canvas)	
Week 3 : 9/7	No Class - Labor Day	

Date	Class Focus	Assignments Due
Week 4 : 9/14	Ch 4: Emotional and Social Development in the Early Years	Routine Readings and Prep (Canvas)
Week 5 : 9/21	Ch 5: The Emerging Self and Socialization in the Early Years	Routine Readings and Prep (Canvas)
Week 6 : 9/28	Ch 6: Realms of Cognition in Middle Childhood	Routine Readings and Prep (Canvas) Article Review Due
Week 7 : 10/5	Ch 7: Self & Moral Development: Middle Child.–Adol.; Ch 8: Gender & Peer Relationships: Middle Child.–Adol.	Routine Readings and Prep (Canvas)
Week 8 : 10/12	Ch 9: Physical, Cognitive & Identity Development in Adolescence	Routine Readings and Prep (Canvas)
Week 9 : 10/19	Ch 10: The Social World of Adolescence	Routine Readings and Prep (Canvas)
Week 10 : 10/26	Ch 11: Physical & Cognitive Development in Young Adulthood	Routine Readings and Prep (Canvas)
Week 11 : 11/2	Ch 12: Socioemotional & Vocational Development in Young Adulthood	Routine Readings and Prep (Canvas) Developmental Autobiography Due
Week 12 : 11/9	Ch 13: Middle Adulthood: Cognitive, Personality, & Social Development	Routine Readings and Prep (Canvas)
Week 13 : 11/16	Ch 14: Living Well: Stress, Coping, and Life Satisfaction in Adulthood	Routine Readings and Prep (Canvas)
Week 14 : 11/23	Ch 15: Gains and Losses in Late Adulthood Intervention Presentation Day 1	Routine Readings and Prep (Canvas) All Intervention Handouts Due
Week 15 : 11/30	Intervention Presentation Day 2	Routine Readings and Prep (Canvas)
Final Exam on Canvas: Opens December 5, 2026, at 12:00 a.m. Complete by December 6, 2026, at 11:59 p.m.		

**Course calendar is tentative. The instructor reserves the right to alter to address class needs.
Students will be notified of any changes.*

USF Core Syllabus Policies

USF has a set of central policies related to student recording class sessions, academic integrity and grievances, student accessibility services, academic disruption, religious observances, academic continuity, food insecurity, pregnancy and related conditions, and sexual harassment that **apply to all courses at USF**. Be sure to review these online:

<https://www.usf.edu/provost/faculty-success/resources-policies-forms/core-syllabus-policy-statements.aspx>

Student Recordings

Florida Statute 1004.097 Free Expression on Campus

Students may, without prior notice, record video or audio of a class lecture for a class in which the student is enrolled for their own personal, educational use (USF Policy 10-048). A class lecture is defined as a formal or methodical oral presentation as part of a university course intended to present information or teach enrolled students about a particular subject. Recording class activities other than class lectures, including but not limited to lab sessions, student presentations (whether individually or part of a group), class discussion, clinical presentations such as patient history, academic exercises involving student participation, test or examination administrations, field trips, private conversations between students in the class or between a student and the faculty member is prohibited. Recordings may not be used as a substitute for class participation and class attendance and may not be published or shared without the written consent of the faculty member. Failure to adhere to these requirements may constitute a violation of the USF Student Conduct Code.

Course Policies: Grades

Absences and Late Arrivals

Our time together is limited, and it is essential that you attend class on time every week. Should illness, family obligation, or emergency arise, you are able to miss one class without penalty.

Please notify me of your absence as soon as possible. If you believe you need to miss more than one class period, please reach out to me to discuss how we

can appropriately support your learning in this course.

If you know you will be arriving to class late, please communicate with me beforehand, if possible. Arriving more than 15 minutes late (without prior instructor approval) on three occasions will be considered an unexcused absence. If you obtain two class absences without teacher approval, I will deduct five points from your final grade. Except in the most extenuating of circumstances, those who miss more than two class periods will need to repeat the course. Attendance at the first class is mandatory. Students will be dropped if they do not attend.

Grades of "Incomplete"

An Incomplete grade ("I") is exceptional and granted at the instructor's discretion only when students are unable to complete course requirements due to illness or other circumstances beyond their control. The course instructor and student must complete and sign the "I" Grade Contract Form that describes the work to be completed, the date it is due, and the grade the student would earn factoring in a zero for all incomplete assignments. The due date can be negotiated and extended by student/instructor as long as it does not exceed two semesters for undergraduate courses and one semester for graduate courses from the original date grades were due for that course. An "I" grade not cleared within the two semesters for undergraduate courses and one semester for graduate courses (including summer semester) will revert to the grade noted on the contract.

Campus Free Expression

It is fundamental to the University of South Florida's mission to support an environment where divergent ideas, theories, and philosophies can be openly exchanged and critically evaluated. Consistent with these principles, this course may involve discussion of ideas that you find uncomfortable, disagreeable, or even offensive.

In the instructional setting, ideas are intended to be presented in an objective manner and not as an endorsement of what you should personally believe. "Objective" means that the idea(s) presented can be tested by critical peer review and rigorous debate, and that the idea(s) is supported by credible research.

In this course you may be asked to engage with complex ideas and to demonstrate an understanding of the ideas. Understanding and engaging with an idea does not require you to believe it or to agree with it.

Course Policies: Technology and Media

Canvas:

This course uses USF's learning management system (LMS), Canvas. If you need help learning how to perform various tasks related to this course or other courses being offered in Canvas, please view the following videos or consult the Canvas help guides. You may also contact USF's IT department at (813) 974-4357 or help@usf.edu.

Course Policies: Student Expectations

Health and Wellness

Your health is a priority at the University of South Florida. We encourage members of our community to look out for each other and to reach out for help if someone is in need. If you or someone you know is in distress, please make a referral at www.usf.edu/sos so that the Student Outreach & Support can contact and provide helpful resources to the student in distress. A 24-hour licensed mental healthcare professional, offered through the counseling center, is available by phone at 813-974-2831, option 3. Please remember that asking for help is a sign of strength. In case of emergency, please dial 9-1-1.

Title IX Policy

USF is committed to fostering a safe and respectful learning environment, free from sex discrimination and sexual harassment, in accordance with Title IX and USF Policy 0-004. If a student shares an experience of sexual harassment, sexual assault, stalking, or relationship violence with a USF employee (including faculty), that employee will notify the Title IX Office. This allows the Title IX Office to send the student an email with information about support resources and options—if it is safe to do so. Students are not required to respond to this email. The Title IX Office is a private resource. Information is shared only on a need-to-know basis to provide students with support measures. To speak to a confidential resource, students may contact USF Center for Victim Advocacy at

813-974-5757. Confidential resources do not notify the Title IX Office unless the student requests it. For more information about Title IX, available resources, or to make a report, please visit www.usf.edu/title-ix.

Course Hero / Chegg Policy

The USF Policy on Academic Integrity specifies that students may not use websites that enable cheating, such as by uploading or downloading material for this purpose. This does apply specifically to Chegg.com and CourseHero.com – almost any use of these websites (including uploading proprietary materials) constitutes a violation of the academic integrity policy.

Professionalism Policy

Per university policy and classroom etiquette; mobile phones, iPods, etc. must be silenced during all classroom and lab lectures. Those not heeding this rule will be asked to leave the classroom/lab immediately so as to not disrupt the learning environment. Please arrive on time for all class meetings. Students who habitually disturb the class by talking, arriving late, etc., and have been warned may suffer a reduction in their final class grade.

Turnitin.com

In this course, turnitin.com may be utilized. Turnitin is an automated system which instructors may use to quickly and easily compare each student's assignment with billions of web sites, as well as an enormous database of student papers that grows with each submission. Accordingly, you may be expected to submit all assignments in both hard copy and electronic format. After the assignment is processed, as instructor I receive a report from turnitin.com that states if and how another author's work was used in the assignment. For a more detailed look at this process visit <http://www.turnitin.com>.

Netiquette Guidelines

- Act professionally in the way you communicate. Treat your instructors and peers with respect, the same way you would do in a face-to-face

environment. Respect other people's ideas and be constructive when explaining your views about points you may not agree with.

- Be sensitive. Be respectful and sensitive when sharing your ideas and opinions. There will be people in your class with different linguistic backgrounds, political and religious beliefs or other general differences.
- Proofread and check spelling. Doing this before sending an email or posting a thread on a discussion board will allow you to make sure your message is clear and thoughtful. Avoid the use of all capital letters, it can be perceived as if you are shouting, and it is more difficult to read.
- Keep your communications focused and stay on topic. Complete your ideas before changing the subject. By keeping the message on focus you allow the readers to easily get your idea or answers they are looking for.
- Be clear with your message. Avoid using humor or sarcasm. Since people can't see your expressions or hear your tone of voice, meaning can be misinterpreted.

Email and Discussion Board Guidelines

- Use the subject line effectively by using a meaningful line of what your email or discussion is about.
- Keep your emails and postings related to the course content. You should not post anything personal on a discussion board unless it is requested by the instructor.
- Any personal, course or confidential issues should be directly communicated to the instructor via email. The discussion boards are public spaces; therefore, any issues should not be posted there.

End of Semester Student Evaluations

All classes at USF make use of an online system for students to provide feedback to the University regarding the course. These surveys will be made available at the end of the semester, and the University will notify you by email when the response window opens. Your participation is highly encouraged and valued.

Food and Drink Policy (for in-campus sessions only).

Please adhere to the firm policy of no beverages (other than bottled/capped water), food, tobacco products, or like items in the classroom. Your understanding of the necessity for this policy and cooperation will be greatly appreciated. This policy will be strictly enforced.

Learning Support and Campus Offices

Academic Accommodations

Students with disabilities are responsible for registering with Student Accessibility Services (SAS) in order to receive academic accommodations. For additional information about academic accommodations and resources, you can visit the SAS website.

[SAS website for the Tampa campus and Sarasota-Manatee Teachout site.](#)

[SAS website for the St. Pete campus.](#)

Academic Support Services

The USF Office of Student Success coordinates and promotes university-wide efforts to enhance undergraduate and graduate student success. For a comprehensive list of academic support services available to all USF students, please visit the [Office of Student Success website.](#)

Canvas Technical Support

If you have technical difficulties in Canvas, you can find access to the Canvas guides and video resources in the “Canvas Help” page on the homepage of your Canvas course. You can also contact the help desk by calling 813-974-1222 in Tampa or emailing help@usf.edu.

[USF IT Services](#)

Center for Victim Advocacy

The [Center for Victim Advocacy](#) empowers survivors of crime, violence, or abuse by promoting the restoration of decision making, by advocating for their rights, and by offering support and resources. Contact information is available online.

Counseling Center

The Counseling Center promotes the wellbeing of the campus community by providing culturally sensitive counseling, consultation, prevention, and training

that enhances student academic and personal success. Contact information is available online.

[Counseling Center website for the Tampa campus and Sarasota-Manatee Teachout site.](#)

[Counseling Center website for the St. Pete campus.](#)

Tutoring

The Tutoring Hub offers free tutoring in several subjects to USF undergraduates. Appointments are recommended, but not required. For more information, email asctampa@usf.edu.

[Tutoring website for the Tampa campus and Sarasota-Manatee Teachout site.](#)

[Tutoring website for the St. Pete campus.](#)

Writing Studio

The Writing Studio is a free resource for USF undergraduate and graduate students. At the Writing Studio, a trained writing consultant will work individually with you, at any point in the writing process from brainstorming to editing. Appointments are recommended, but not required. For more information or to make an appointment, email: writingstudio@usf.edu.

[Writing studio website for the Tampa campus and Sarasota-Manatee Teachout Site.](#)

[Writing studio website for the St. Pete campus.](#)

Student Ombuds Office

Florida Statute 1006.51 and Florida Board of Governors Regulation 6.011 require that all public institutions provide ombuds services to students. The Student Ombuds Office at USF is a confidential, impartial, informal, and independent resource for students experiencing challenges related to the university. Ombuds can help students safely explore options, clarify processes, and consider next steps. [Learn more or make an appointment at usf.edu/student-ombuds.](https://usf.edu/student-ombuds)