

The background is a vibrant, abstract composition. It features large, organic shapes in shades of purple, green, and blue. These shapes are filled with various patterns: some have a fine dot pattern, others have larger white dots, and some have wavy lines. There are also areas with a cross-hatch pattern. Small, black, squiggly lines are scattered throughout the design, adding a playful, hand-drawn feel.

# **Introduction to PSYC 304: Child Development**

**Sonia Krol, PhD**  
**September 5<sup>th</sup>, 2023**

# Outline for Today

- Syllabus
- What is this course about and why take it?
- Visual development

slido



Why are you taking this course?

① Start presenting to display the poll results on this slide.

# What is this course about?

- Introduction to theory and research in psychological development of children

# **My Office Hours**

- Tuesdays, drop-in 3-4pm or by appointment
- 2001 McGill College Ave., room 476

# Basics

- Lectures in-person
- Slides will be posted before class
- Lectures recorded
- Polling in class with Slido
- 15 min break in the middle
- No required reading but recommended textbook is available in the bookstore

# TAs

- TA virtual office hours: TBD
  - See myCourses for Zoom link

# Communication

- **Questions about course material:**

- Ask a TA during their regularly scheduled office hours
- Ask Prof. Krol during her regularly scheduled office hours
- Post your question to the discussion board on myCourses
  - Regularly monitored

- **Questions about procedural issues:**

- Answers can usually be found in the syllabus or in announcements on myCourses



# Evaluation

1. Syllabus quiz - 1%
2. In-class polling - 4%
3. Online quizzes - 10%
4. Midterms - 40%
5. Final exam - 45%
6. Optional – Participant pool - 2%

# Syllabus Quiz – 1%

- Online on myCourses
- 5 multiple choice Qs
- Infinite number of attempts
- Due September 15<sup>th</sup>, 11:59pm

## Polling – 4%

- Through Slido
- Come to class with devices charged
- See syllabus for how to get set up
- Graded for completion, not correctness
- Need to attend 6 out of 9 lectures starting Sept 19<sup>th</sup> for full 4%

# Online Quizzes – 10%

- Available on myCourses for 24 hours on Fridays (12:00am – 11:59pm)
  - **Quiz 1** : Sep 22
  - **Quiz 2**: Oct 6
  - **Quiz 3**: Nov 3
  - **Quiz 4**: Nov 17
- 5 multiple choice Qs based on lectures from previous 2 weeks
  - Except Quiz 1 which covers first 3 lectures
- Once you start, 25 minutes to complete
- Best 3 out of 4 quizzes worth 10% of final grade

# Midterms – 40%

- **Midterm 1:** Oct 17<sup>th</sup>
- **Midterm 2:** Nov 21
- Each worth 20%
- 1.5 hours
- Multiple choice, not cumulative

# Final Exam – 45%

- Scheduled by university
- Multiple choice, 3 hours

# **Psychology Participant Pool – 2%**

- Can earn up to extra 2% on your final grade by participating in psychology research at McGill
- More details in syllabus and on myCourses

# Missed Midterm Procedure

- If you miss a midterm for any reason, weight will be added to final exam
- No need for documentation
- Send an email to the course email before a midterm to let us know that you will not be writing the test
  - mcgillchilddevelopment@gmail.com



# Final Grade Calculation

- Your grade will automatically be calculated in 4 different ways, and you will get the highest grade that results:
  1. Syllabus Quiz (1%) + Polling (4%) + Quizzes (10%) + Midterm 1 (20%) + Midterm 2 (20%) + Final Exam (45%) + 2% Participant Pool
  2. Syllabus Quiz (1%) + Polling (4%) + Quizzes (10%) + Midterm 1 (20%) + Final Exam (65%) + 2% Participant Pool
  3. Syllabus Quiz (1%) + Polling (4%) + Quizzes (10%) + Midterm 2 (20%) + Final Exam (65%) + 2% Participant Pool
  4. Syllabus Quiz (1%) + Polling (4%) + Quizzes (10%) + Final Exam (85%) + 2% Participant Pool

**Why study child  
development?**

# Reasons to Learn About Child Development

- Raising children
- Choosing social policies
- Understanding human nature

# Raising Children

- Child development research helps answer questions about how to raise children



# Choosing Social Policies

- Child development research can help inform social policies that affect children



# Understanding Human Nature and Individuals

- Child development research is vital to understanding how nature and nurture shape human psychology
- Also can help explain individual differences between people

**What is childhood?**

# Childhood

- “Every human being below the age of 18 years”
- A human that is physically immature
- What about psychologically speaking?



slido

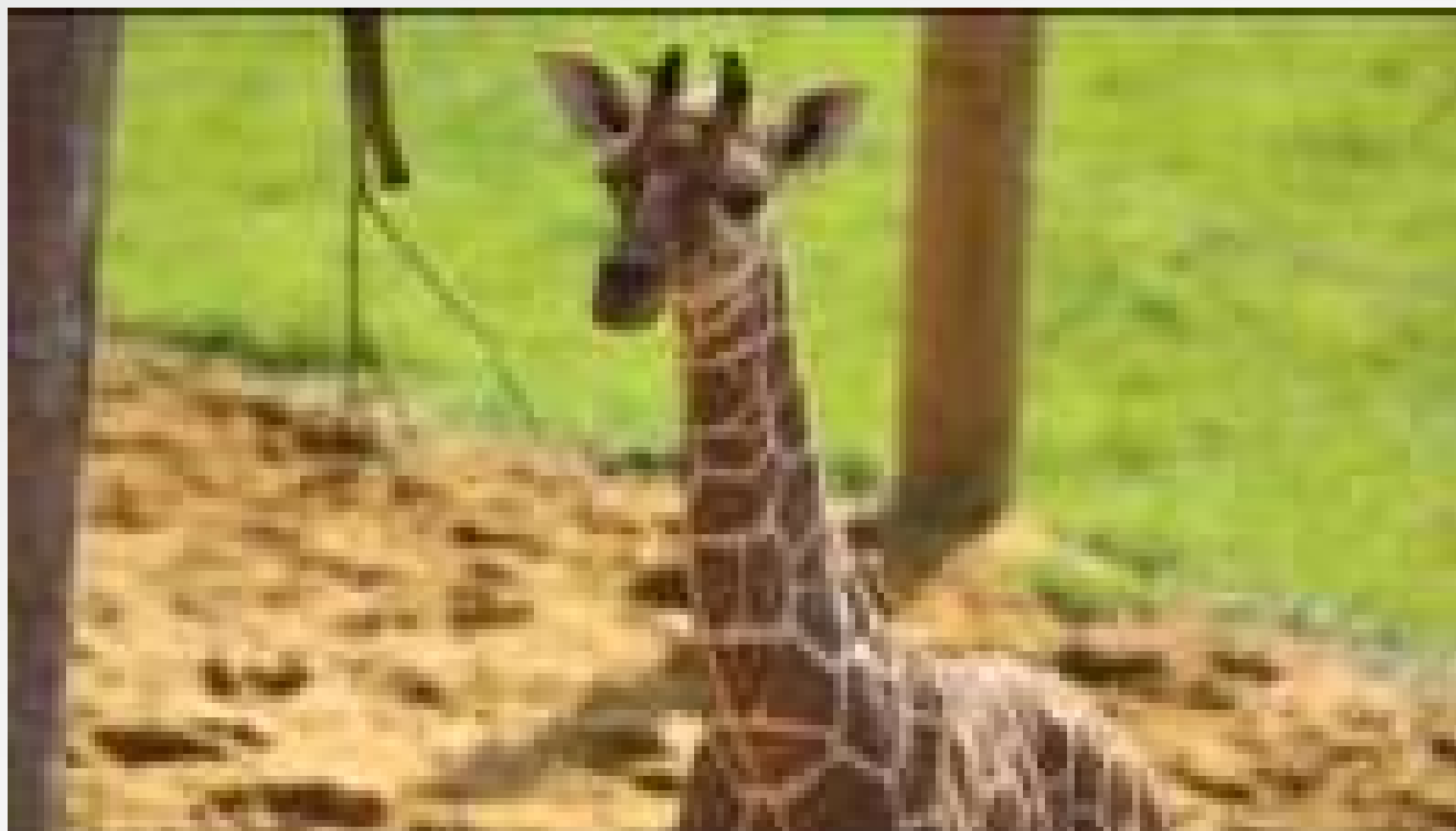


Psychologically speaking, what does it mean to be a child?

ⓘ Start presenting to display the poll results on this slide.

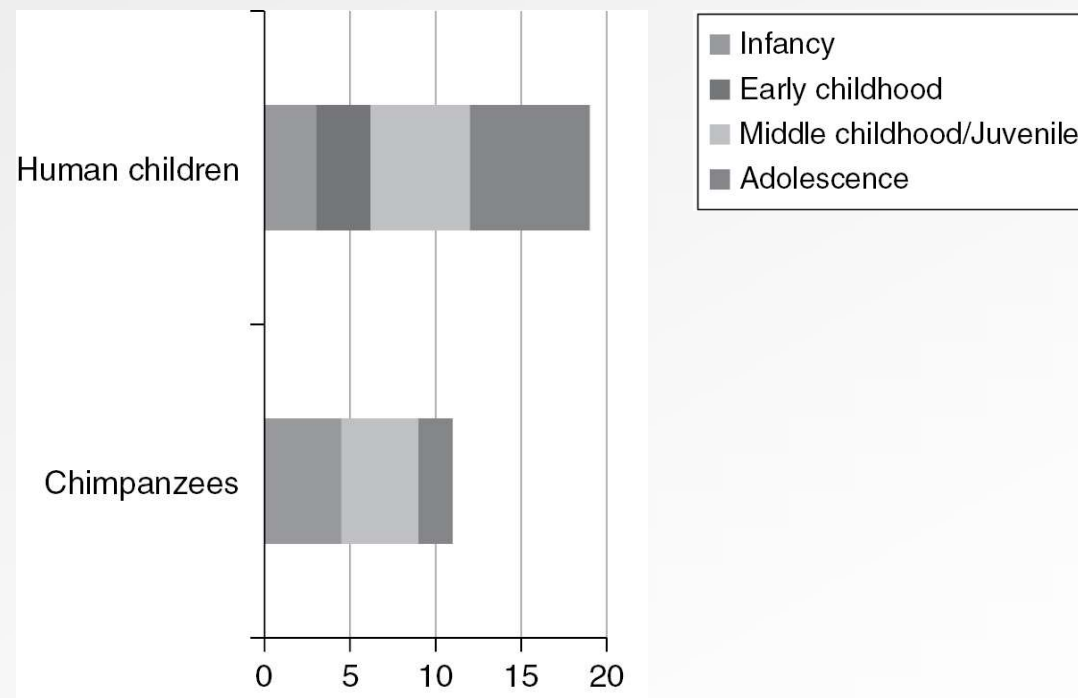
# What does it mean to be a child?

- **Dependent on adult caregivers**
  - Longer childhood compared to other species





# Long Childhood in Humans vs. Chimps



- Humans have longest childhoods amongst primates

# What does it mean to be a child?

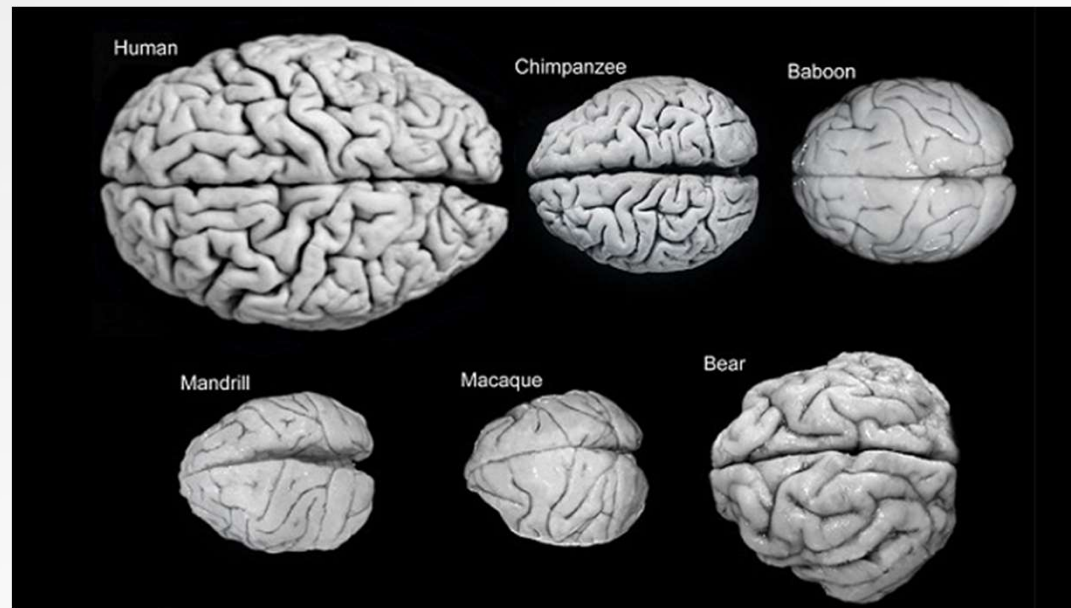
- **Dependent on adult caregivers**
  - Longer childhood compared to others species
  - Long childhood makes children very vulnerable, thus caring for them is very time-consuming

# Why is human childhood so long?

- Large-brain, narrow hips trade-off

# Large Brain, Narrow Hips Trade-Off

- Our brains are large for our size and more complicated/ neuron-dense than any other animal

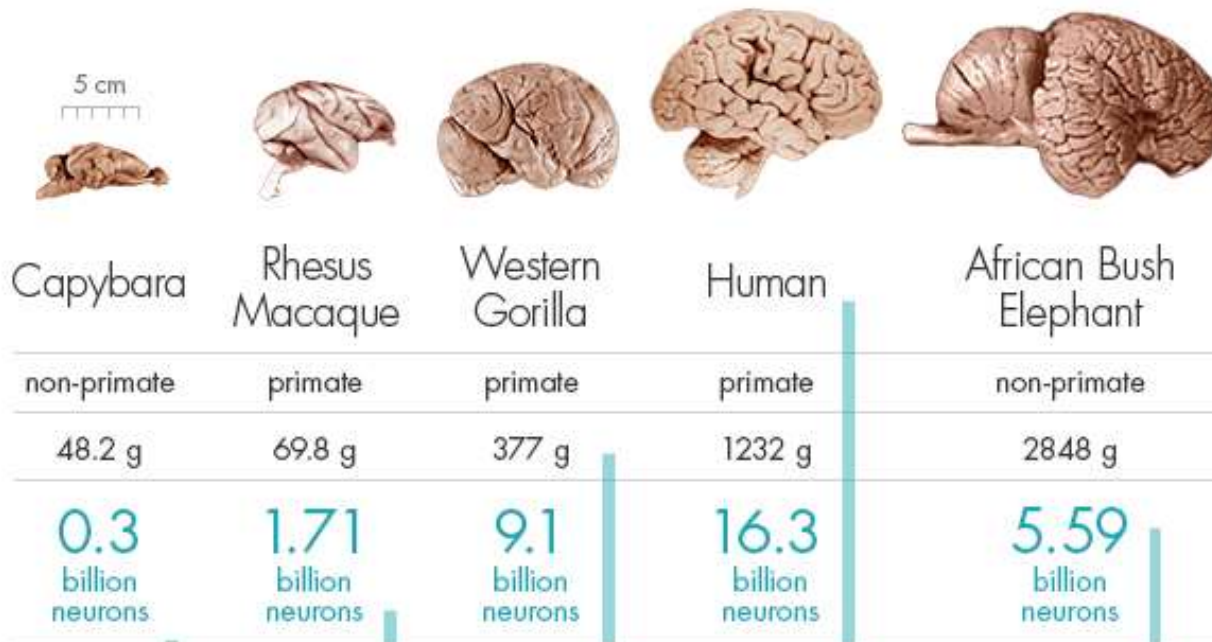


DeFelipe, 2011



# BRAIN SIZE AND NEURON COUNT

Cerebral cortex mass and neuron count for various mammals.



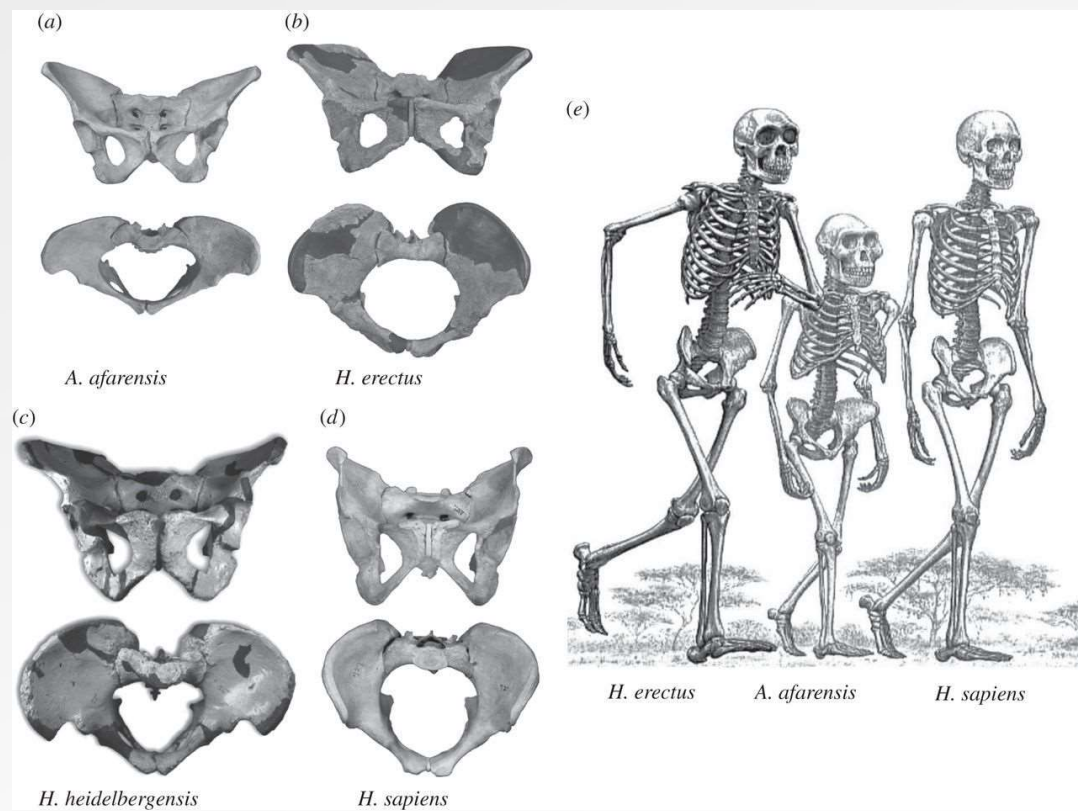
Olena Shmahalo/Quanta Magazine;

source: [BrainMuseum.org](http://BrainMuseum.org) and [Herculano-Houzel et al.](#)

# Large Brain, Narrow Hips Trade-Off

- Our brains are large for our size and more complicated/ neuron-dense than any other animal
  - Larger brains necessitate larger heads
- At the same time, the evolution of our ability to stand upright favoured narrower hips

# Pelvic Evolution In Human Ancestors



Gruss & Schmitt, 2015

# Large Brain, Narrow Hips Trade-Off

- Conflict between large head and narrow hips
- To solve this conflict, babies evolved to be born earlier
  - Brain continues to develop once born

# Why is human childhood so long?

- Large-brain, narrow hips trade-off
- Being born not fully formed **allows** for more learning

# What does it mean to be a child?

- **Dependent on adult caregivers**
  - Longer childhood compared to others species
  - Long childhood makes children very vulnerable, thus caring for them is very time-consuming
- **Fundamentally about learning**
  - Long childhood is adaptive for maximizing learning

# Childhood is Fundamentally about Learning

- Many aspects of childhood demonstrate that children are “adapted” to focus on learning
  - Highly curious
  - Highly suggestible, not critical thinkers
  - Readily imitate others
  - Overestimate own abilities
  - Brains are malleable

# What does it mean to be a child?

- **Dependent on adult caregivers**

- Longer childhood compared to others species
- Long childhood makes children very vulnerable, thus caring for them is very time-consuming

- **Fundamentally about learning**

- Many aspects of childhood demonstrate that children are “adapted” to focus on learning
- Focus on learning is only possible if taken care of by adults



# Child Development

- Process of learning of perceptual, cognitive, emotional, and social capabilities that allows an individual to grow from the dependence of infancy to the independence of adulthood

# Topics Covered in PSYC 304

- Early developmental processes
  - Visual development
  - Motor development
  - Auditory development and music cognition
- Cognitive development
  - Learning about the physical world
  - Social cognition
  - Language
- Social development
  - Emotional development
  - Attachment
  - Family and peer relationships
  - Moral development

# Learning Objectives

- Understand the use of the scientific method to answer questions about children's development.
- Understand what develops and when.
- Understand how nature and nurture work together to shape children's development.
- Understand major research paradigms and methodological approaches used to address developmental questions during infancy, childhood, and adolescence.