Winter 2015
EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT AND PUBLIC POLICY: 31520

Monday & Wednesday 1:30-2:50
Instructor: Professor Amy Claessens (aclaessens@uchicago.edu)
Office Hours: By appointment

Course Overview
The goal of this course is to provide students with the theoretical, empirical, and methodological foundations for understanding early childhood development and public policies. The course takes an interdisciplinary approach drawing upon a range of disciplines and perspectives. The course will emphasize research on early childhood from the prenatal period through age 5 (kindergarten). We will examine why the early childhood period is considered important for policy, and students will learn about critical and sensitive periods in development, nature vs. nurture, and the influence of school, child care, parents, and policies on young children. We will critically examine the evidence on whether the influences on children’s development are amenable to intervention and the costs and benefits of different policy approaches.

Course Requirements
NO LATE ASSIGNMENTS ACCEPTED

Class participation (30%): Class participation grades will be based on questions and comments students pose in class and submit online each week. Students are expected to attend class and be active participants. Students are expected to submit two discussion questions by 10AM each Monday and Wednesday that the class meets for that day’s readings.

Midterm Exam (30%): There will be a midterm exam due February 6. It will be a short policy memo in response to a problem distributed January 28. ~3 pages. (more information later in class)

Final Exam (40%): The final exam will be a take home exam covering the entire quarter. You will be given approximately 5 different questions to answer and the freedom to choose 3 of these for your exam. Each answer will be approximately 1.5 pages in length and require you to use course materials as supporting evidence for your answers. *Exams are due electronically Monday, March 16 by 4 PM

Course Materials
Course materials are available through links included on the syllabus. You can also access the articles online. Additional materials will be available through CHALK

January 5

Introduction to the course goals, requirements, topics


January 7

Investing in Children


Developmental Theory


January 12


Prenatal: Development


January 14


**January 19—NO CLASS**

**January 21**

**Parenting**


**January 26**

**Acquiring Skills**


**January 28**

**Stress, Deprivation, and Toxicity**


February 2


February 4

Poverty


February 9

Maternal mental health & employment


**February 11**

**Fathers and others**


**February 16**

**Family Structure**


**February 18**
Home visiting


February 23

Model interventions


February 25

Child care


**March 2**

**Head start**


**March 4**

**Preschool**


**March 9**

**Transition to school**


March 11

**Kindergarten**


