

COURSE SYLLABUS

Developmental and Learning Disorders

**Degree in Psychology
C.U. Cardenal Cisneros
University of Alcalá**

Academic Year 2024/25
3rd Year – 1st Term

COURSE SYLLABUS

Name of the subject:	Developmental and Learning Disorders
Code:	562022
Study:	Degree in Psychology
Department and Area of knowledge:	Learning Sciences and Psychology
Character:	Compulsory
ECTS credits:	6
Year and Term:	3rd Year, 1st Term
Lecturers:	María Cordero Cid Cristina Escribano Barreno
Office hours:	Request by email Mondays from 9:45 to 10:40 and Thursdays from 12:00 to 14:00 (Cristina Escribano) Wednesday from 10:45h to 11:40h and from 12:00h to 13:00h (Irene Sánchez) These will be confirmed at the beginning of the term
Office number:	1 (Irene Sánchez) Guidance (Cristina Escribano)
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Language:	Spanish

1. INTRODUCTION

The aim of this subject is to train the future psychologist in the identification, assessment and intervention of problems that may arise in the development and in the teaching-learning process.

It is part of the group of subjects of the curriculum named Life Cycle Psychology and Psychology of Education, which includes the following subjects: *Life Cycle Psychology I* (basic training, 1st year), *Life Cycle Psychology II* (basic training, 2nd year), *Psychology of Education* (compulsory, 2nd year) and *Developmental and Learning Disorders* (compulsory, 3rd year).

- The course content is distributed into four modules which focus on developmental disorders and various learning difficulties. The first module addresses the theoretical conceptualization of learning difficulties and developmental disorders. The second module is devoted to developmental disorders and explores difficulties associated with sensory, motor, and cognitive impairments, as well as pervasive developmental disorders

(such as Autism Spectrum Disorder) and those related to communication and self-regulation. The third module focuses on learning difficulties, specifically examining problems related to reading, writing, and mathematics. The final module provides an overview of students with special educational needs, reviewing key concepts that support the understanding of educational support. This course aims to equip students with essential competencies for professional practice in both formal (e.g., schools) and informal (e.g., families, associations) learning contexts.

- This course is linked to our university's "Academic Skills Development in Undergraduate Degrees" programme, specifically in relation to research assignments. As such, it includes activities that will be assessed within this framework.
- The course can be taken in an "English Friendly" modality, with some materials provided in English. In any case, one of the practical activities included in the course will be conducted in English, as detailed below.
- Students are reminded that, when completing any academic assignment, it is essential to consult the teaching staff regarding the acceptable use of artificial intelligence (AI) tools. Unless explicitly authorized in the course syllabus or the specific instructions for an assignment or practical activity, the use of AI is strictly prohibited. Unauthorized use of such technologies—for example, generating work with AI without explicit permission—may be considered academic misconduct. Students are therefore strongly encouraged to review the university's guidelines on AI use, act with integrity and transparency throughout the learning process, and seek clarification from instructors whenever in doubt.

Prerequisites y Recommendations

It is important for students to be familiar from the outset with the structure and procedures that will be followed throughout the course, as outlined in this syllabus, and to keep them in mind during the course's development.

Success in this course requires consistent work over the entire academic term. Therefore, students are expected to engage actively, complete the proposed tasks and activities regularly, and dedicate sufficient time to mastering the course content. Personal work must extend beyond attendance in scheduled class hours (see student workload for reference).

Students should also have basic digital literacy, and use of the TEAMS platform may be required.

SUBJECT DESCRIPTION

The subject *Developmental and Learning Disorders* is a compulsory subject consisting of 6 ECTS credits. It is taught in Spanish in the 3rd year and 1st term of the Degree in Psychology. This subject aims to teach the future psychologist how to identify, assess and intervene in problems that may arise in the developmental and learning process. Contents are distributed into two blocks: 1) Developmental disorders, and 2) Different learning difficulties: problems related to reading, writing and mathematics are included. This subject also aspires to help students develop the basic competences for practicing their profession in both formal (e.g. school) and informal learning (e.g. family, associations, etc.) contexts. This subject requires the reading and analysis of articles and texts in Spanish. Students who wish to take this subject must have at least a B2 level of Spanish.

This subject is included within the 'English Friendly' programme and international students will have a teaching guide, readings, exams, and tutorials available in English. In any case, this subject has an English practice.

2. COMPETENCES

Generic competences:

GC1	To acquire the knowledge and understand the principles of Psychology as a scientific discipline, including theory, methods and application fields, with the support of advanced textbooks and documentation incorporating cutting-edge knowledge in this field of study.
GC3	To be able to collect and interpret relevant data on human behaviour, at both individual and social levels and in different contexts, and to express reasoned opinions of social, scientific or ethical nature in the psychological field.

Scientific competences:

SC3	To know and understand the processes and main stages of psychological development throughout the life cycle in their aspects of normality and abnormality.
SC10	To be able to analyse and identify differences, problems, needs and demands of either individual, group, intergroup, organisational and interorganisational target populations in the different areas of application.

3. CONTENTS

Modules	Hours (total)
Module 1: Conceptual delimitation of developmental disturbances and learning difficulties. Unit 1: Conceptual delimitation of developmental disturbances and learning difficulties.	• 4 hours
Module 2: Developmental disorders and disturbances. Unit 2. Disorders and disturbances of language, speech and voice. Unit 3. Intellectual disability. Unit 4. Sensory and motor disabilities. Unit 5. Autism spectrum disorder. Unit 6. Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD).	• 14 hours

Module 3: Apprentices with learning difficulties. Detection, assessment and intervention. Unit 7. Reading difficulties. Unit 8. Writing difficulties. Unit 9. Mathematic difficulties. Unit 10. Learning and performance problems related to psychological, sociocultural and behavioural aspects.	• 16 hours
Module 4: Needs for educational support. Unit 11. Students with Specific Need for Educational Support: historical approach and key concepts.	• 14 hours

4. TEACHING-LEARNING METHODOLOGY. FORMATIVE ACTIVITIES

Organisation:

The classes, corresponding to one third of ECTS credits, will be structured throughout the term in three different modalities: theoretical classes, practical classes and seminars.

- ✓ **Theoretical classes.** Different methodologies will be employed. Part of the theoretical contents will be provided and/or explained by the teacher, and others will be sought out and elaborated by the students. When requested by the teacher, students must attend class with the lesson prepared and the content will be commented on, debated or clarified in class. Some lessons can follow the cooperative learning methodology. Theoretical self-learning activities are included in this modality.
- ✓ **Practical classes.** Throughout the course, students will participate in practical activities, either individually or in small groups, under the supervision of the lecturer. These activities may include case studies, practical problem-solving, and the analysis and discussion of both documentary and audiovisual materials (e.g., academic articles, videos, and scientific documentaries). Students will also engage in critical reading of scholarly texts. In addition, the practical sessions will provide specific guidance to support students' autonomous work—both individually and in groups.
- ✓ **Seminars.** Students will carry out an in-depth study on specific aspects of the course content. The learning process will be active, requiring students to search for and elaborate on information through reciprocal collaboration with their peers and ongoing interaction with the lecturer. Progress will be monitored during class sessions and, if necessary, through tutorial meetings with the designated student groups. A portion of students' independent work hours will be allocated to the completion of this project.

Independent work accounts for two-thirds of the total ECTS credits assigned to the course (102 hours). To succeed in the course, it is essential that students dedicate this time to engaging with the subject matter. Independent work includes the following tasks:

- Completion of activities or assignments introduced during class sessions, to be submitted to the lecturer or presented in class.
- Preparation and development of coursework.
- Personal study.
- Exam preparation.

The lecturer will offer scheduled office hours to provide students with personalized academic support, addressing their questions and guiding them through the learning process.

4.1. Credit distribution

Total number of hours (6 ECTS): 150	
Number of hours of classroom attendance 50:	30 hours of whole-group lessons
	15 hours of practical lessons

	3 hours of seminars 2 hours of assessment tasks
Number of hours of independent learning 100:	100 hours

4.2. Methodological strategies, materials and didactic resources

Teaching-learning methodology:

The course will follow an active and participatory methodology, encouraging students to take an active role in their learning process.

To work through the course content, students will be provided with materials prepared by the lecturer, along with the corresponding explanations and analyses. Based on these, they will carry out various activities, including case analysis, review of research studies, examination of socio-educational intervention experiences, analysis of academic articles, and collaborative work.

Materials and resources:

There is no single textbook for this course. Instead, a variety of support materials and resources will be used to address the different topics and carry out practical activities. These include documents provided by the lecturer, scientific journal articles, audiovisual materials, theoretical and practical book chapters, assessment tools, case studies, and practical scenarios.

The university's virtual learning platform will be used as a key tool to ensure quick and efficient access to the materials required for the course. In addition, various digital resources and tools will be employed throughout the course.

5. ASSESSMENT: assessment criteria, report criteria and assessment procedures

Assessment Criteria

These criteria serve as indicators of the learning outcomes that students must achieve in order to pass the course. It is therefore essential that students pay close attention to them, as they outline the key aspects on which they will be evaluated. The criteria are as follows:

Competence	Assessment criteria
To know and understand the processes and main stages of psychological development throughout the life cycle in their aspects of normality and abnormality (SC3).	Understands the development and conceptual boundaries of developmental disorders and learning difficulties. Identifies the main educational support needs arising from developmental disorders and learning difficulties and is able to propose appropriate intervention strategies.
To be able to analyse and identify differences, problems, needs and demands of	Is able to describe, identify, and assess the main developmental disorders and learning difficulties.

either individual, group, intergroup, organisational and interorganisational target populations in the different areas of application (SC10).	Analyzes academic articles and scholarly documents.
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Learning Outcomes

The following learning outcomes are aligned with the specific competencies associated with this course:

Competence	LEARNING OUTCOMES
CG1	Analyzes and compares the functions, characteristics, and limitations of theoretical models in Lifespan Psychology. Searches for and uses relevant documentary sources within the discipline.
CG3	Knows and applies fundamental concepts related to human development across different life stages.
CT1	Produces oral presentations and written reports with formal accuracy.
CT2	Is able to understand and analyze texts related to the subject in English and use them in their own academic work.
CT5	Knows and applies fundamental concepts related to human development across different life stages. Identifies differences, problems, and needs throughout the various stages of human development.
CT6	Collaborates with others and contributes to a shared project. Takes individual responsibility within group work.
CE3	Understands the concepts of developmental disorders and learning difficulties. Knows the main developmental and learning difficulties during childhood and adolescence, as well as procedures for their detection, prevention, and intervention.
CE10	Understands the foundations of the assessment process for developmental and learning disorders, including relevant techniques and assessment tools.

Report criteria:

The following learning outcomes are aligned with the specific competencies associated with this course:

Assessment criteria	Percentage
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The student understands the development and conceptual boundaries of developmental disorders and learning difficulties.	20%
The student can describe, identify, and assess the main developmental disorders and learning difficulties.	50%
The student identifies the main educational support needs arising from developmental disorders and learning difficulties and can propose appropriate intervention strategies.	20%
The student analyses academic articles and scholarly documents.	10%

Assessment procedure:

The assessment procedure is based on the **Normativa reguladora de los procesos de evaluación de aprendizajes de la Universidad de Alcalá** (Regulatory policy of the learning assessment procedure of the University of Alcalá). This policy states, among others, the following rules:

1. This subject has **two assessment periods**: an **ordinary one** in **January** and an **extraordinary one** in **June**.
2. The **ordinary assessment period** employs **continuous assessment**.
3. If a student is unable to follow the continuous assessment process during the regular examination period, **they must submit a written request** to the course lecturer to opt for final assessment. This request must be made within the first two weeks of class. The request will be reviewed by the management team and may be accepted or rejected. If the request is accepted, the student must contact the lecturer during the first weeks of the course to agree on the specific activities to be completed. These activities must be submitted prior to the final exam, on a date previously agreed upon with the lecturer.
4. The **extraordinary assessment period** is intended for students who failed the ordinary one and will use the same assessment criteria as the ordinary assessment period (continuous or final). The passing marks obtained in the different activities will be saved.
5. The characteristics of the continuous and final assessment for this subject are detailed in this course syllabus.
6. For more information about the assessment procedures, please see the following document: <https://www.uah.es/export/sites/uah/es/conoce-la-uah/organizacion-y-gobierno/galleries/Galeria-Secretaria-General/Normativa-Evaluacion-Aprendizajes.pdf>

Requirements for Continuous Assessment during the Regular Examination Period:

- Class attendance and participation. Any absences must be justified in writing, as explained below, especially for practical sessions and seminars.
- Completion and timely submission of assigned tasks and activities.
- Active participation in the teaching and learning process.

If a student does not meet the requirements for continuous assessment, they will not be able to pass the course during the regular examination period. However, they may pass the course during the resit (extraordinary) examination period under the final assessment modality.

Students under the final assessment modality must contact the course lecturer in advance of the scheduled exam date to agree on the specific activities to be completed. These activities must be submitted by the agreed-upon deadline prior to the exam.

Some considerations to take into account for continuous assessment:

- In **continuous assessment**, any absence should be justified in writing (for example, a doctor's note), as simply notifying the absence is not sufficient. The minimum percentage of class attendance required to pass the continuous assessment will be determined at the beginning of the term, depending on the practical sessions' distribution. In any case, absence is limited to 1 of the 3 hours of seminars.
- When the student does not attend the lesson and/or fails to turn in the requested activity, it should be for a justified reason (illness with a doctor's note, accident, serious family problem, etc.). In any case, the justification of the absence preserves the student's right to continuous assessment, but it does not mean that the teacher will accept the activity after the deadline or that the absence can be compensated with another activity; each individual case will be studied. When the absence is not excused, there will be no possibility to make up the work not done.
- Absence, even if justified, could be considered in the final mark or the evaluation of corresponding activities, considering when it happened (it is understood that missing a class that counts towards the mark is not equivalent to missing a class that does not).
- If the student exceeds the maximum percentage of absence allowed, even if justified, he/she cannot pass the subject at the ordinary assessment period. As already explained, he/she could pass the subject at the extraordinary period in the final assessment mode.
- Active participation in theoretical classes will also be considered. The completion of work and participation in class activities will be positively considered in the final mark of the subject.

Continuous Assessment Table (Ordinary and extraordinary assessment periods):

Assessment criteria \ Instruments	Seminars	Activities and tasks	Follow activities	Final exam	%
The student understands the concept of developmental disorders and learning difficulties.				X	20%
The student can describe, identify and evaluate the main developmental disorders.	X	X	X	X	25%
The student knows the main needs for educational support arising from developmental disorders and is able to propose intervention guidelines.				X	10%
The student can describe, identify and evaluate learning difficulties.	X	X	X	X	25%
The student knows the main needs for educational support arising from learning difficulties and is able to propose intervention guidelines.				X	10%
The student analyses articles and academic documents.	X	X	X		10%

Percentage	15%	37%	8%	40%	100%
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Final Assessment Table (Ordinary and extraordinary assessment periods):

Assessment criteria	Instruments	Activities	Final Exam	%
The student understands the concept of developmental disorders and learning difficulties.			X	20%
The student can describe, identify and evaluate the main developmental disorders.		X	X	25%
The student knows the main needs for educational support arising from developmental disorders and is able to propose intervention guidelines.			X	10%
The student can describe, identify and evaluate learning difficulties.		X	X	25%
The student knows the main needs for educational support arising from learning difficulties and is able to propose intervention guidelines.			X	10%
The student analyses articles and academic documents.		X		10%
Percentage		20%	80%	100%

Considerations on the calculation of the final grade:

In order to pass the course—whether in the regular or resit examination period—students must achieve a minimum score of 5 out of 10 in each of the assessment components: theoretical exam, coursework and assignments, and seminar (the latter applies only to students under continuous assessment). Additionally, students must demonstrate that they have achieved all the competencies outlined in this syllabus.

A maximum of one Distinction (Matrícula de Honor) may be awarded for every 20 students. However, the lecturer reserves the right not to award any distinctions.

Meeting all the requirements specified above is essential for participation in the continuous assessment process.

Grade Review Considerations:

Assessment Review Policy

Assessment review sessions are intended to provide formative feedback that supports student learning, rather than to negotiate specific grades.

Any instance of plagiarism will result in a grade of zero for all affected submissions, with no opportunity for resubmission or recovery.

If a student demonstrates disrespectful behaviour toward the lecturer during a review, the session will be immediately terminated.

Once grades for activities, tasks and seminars are published on the CUCC virtual campus, students will have approximately two weeks to check their results and report any errors or concerns regarding the grades received.

Throughout the course, students are encouraged to attend individual tutorial sessions to discuss and reflect on their work and progress.

The final official review session is reserved exclusively for reviewing the final exam and/or the overall course grade.

6. BIBLIOGRAPHY

Basic Bibliography

Defior, S. Serrano, F. y Gutiérrez, N. (2015) *Dificultades específicas de aprendizaje: Síntesis*.

This book addresses specific learning difficulties from the perspective of the need for evidence-based psychoeducational action. Therefore, it provides an updated view of this field, based on the idea that, for a proper understanding of learning disorders, it is essential to use explanatory models of skill acquisition. It takes into account the complexity of neurobiological, cognitive, behavioural and environmental factors influencing each difficulty assessed. This work is intended for undergraduate and postgraduate students, as well as professionals (speech therapists, guidance psychologists, pedagogues, psychopedagogues), and anyone who wants to update his/her knowledge about learning difficulties in general or about any particular one.

Fejerman, N. (2010) *Trastornos del Desarrollo en niños y adolescentes*. Paidós

A significant number of children have symptoms and/or signs related to behaviour, motility, learning, language and communication, which correspond to the well-defined clinical pictures of mental retardation, attention deficit disorder with or without hyperactivity, motor clumsiness, dyslexia and dyscalculia, language development disorders and autism spectrum disorders.

Fiuza, M.J. y Fernández, P. (2013) *Dificultades de aprendizaje y trastornos del desarrollo. Manual didáctico*. Pirámide

The handbook offers a pragmatic and highly applied vision of the different difficulties and disorders that can occur in classroom and that require special educational needs to which teachers must be able to satisfy from a multidisciplinary perspective of attention to diversity.

It not only provides an extensive conceptual overview of the topic, but also a series of very practical modules, which include activities, case studies and self-assessment questions, making this handbook useful for the teaching program of subjects included in the curriculum of university studies such as psychology, teaching, speech therapy and other educational professions.

García-Sánchez, J.N. (2014) *Prevención en dificultades del desarrollo y del aprendizaje*. Pirámide

This book provides keys for the optimization of development and advances produced in the last years in the field of the difficulties of development in early years and in specific learning later. The difficulties of development appear in the construction process of people and their world, where preventive assistance and action are therefore essential for achieving optimal and satisfactory levels of development.

Gómez, J.M., Royo, P. y Serrano, C. (2012). *Fundamentos psicopedagógicos de atención a la diversidad*. Escuela Universitaria Cardenal Cisneros.

This book addresses the psychopedagogical foundations of attention to diversity in order to help future teachers and educators to understand diversity, to make decisions about the most appropriate educational response in each case, and to design teaching-learning situations favouring the learning and integral development of all students.

López Justicia, M.D. y Polo Sánchez, M.T. (2014). *Trastornos del desarrollo infantil*. Pirámide

The contents of this book have been created with the aim of serving as a guide to students of degrees related to education, psychology and social education, that seek to find the guidelines of detection and action that could be used with boys and girls in early childhood education from an inclusive perspective.

The book presents the contributions of studies carried out in the psychological and educational fields, aiming to achieve a more functional development of children with visual, hearing, motor, intellectual or behavioural impairments. The authors highlight the importance of early detection and immediate action.

Martínez, C. y Hernández, L.A. (2019). *Guía para el éxito escolar del alumnado con dislexia*. Consejería de Educación, Juventud y Deportes de la Región de Murcia

This guide helps you understand what dyslexia is and the specific educational support needs associated with it. It also allows knowing the detection, identification and intervention protocol that teachers can follow to carry out the appropriate care, including, in addition, guidelines for families.

Priya, U. y William, B. (2020). Understanding Children with Learning Disabilities in The Classroom. IRE Journals (4) 55-58.

In this article the student will find a reflexion on how learning disabilities affect the ability of children to develop language, communication or maths. Attention is paid to how the teacher must adapt the class to guarantee learning in all students.

Vila Chaves, J.O. y Gutiérrez, F. (2013) *Manual básico de dificultades aprendizaje*. Sanz y Torres

The authors have tried to make a clear and simple drafting of the concept, evaluation and intervention of learning difficulties. The text is designed for students taking the subject *Learning Difficulties* of the Degree in psychology at the UNED, although it will also be useful to any reader

interested in the field of specific learning difficulties, particularly those professionals who carry out their work in educational contexts.

APA (2013). DSM-5. *Manual Diagnóstico y Estadístico de los Trastornos Mentales*.

Electronical resources:

AQUARI SOFT: Offers computer programs for special education students, speech therap, etc., with special attention given to people with motor disabilities. <http://www.aquari-soft.com>

CEAPAT: It is a service centre specifically dedicated to promoting the personal autonomy of disabled people in Spain. <http://www.ceapat.es>

CIDAT: It is a centre for research, development and tiftotechnical application. Projects, prototype evaluation, equipment and programs, designs and equipment development, and in-house products can be found here. <http://www.cidat.once.es>

DISCAPNET: Disability website: legislation, accessibility, books, and news. <http://www.dis-capnet.es>