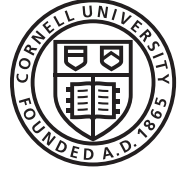


Human Development



Why people become who and what they are

Program highlights: Aging and health | Cognitive development | Human neuroscience | Law and human development | Social and personality development

Overview

Human Development (HD) is a multidisciplinary field that provides a strong foundation in the behavioral sciences while exploring the social, cultural, biological, and psychological development of humans across the life course. Students study the processes and mechanisms of growth and change throughout the life cycle and how experiences and social factors affect development. Coursework is organized into five areas of specialization: Aging and Health; Cognitive Development; Human Developmental Behavioral Neuroscience; Psychology, Law, and Human Development; and Social and Personality Development. An important emphasis is placed on the role that social factors such as schools, workplaces, neighborhoods, and culture play in human development, as well as the influence that developing humans have on their environment.

Courses in Human Development cover a range of issues and approaches, and are organized into two areas: *Mind, Health, and Emotion*, which is focused on the social aspects of human development, and *Cognition, Brain, and Behavior*, which is focused on the biological and cognitive aspects of development. Students will pursue coursework in each area and are encouraged to then specialize in one of five areas including Aging and Health; Cognitive Development; Human Behavioral Neuroscience; Law, Psychology, and Human Development; and Social and Personality Development.

The college's liberal arts-based requirements include the social and natural sciences, humanities, writing, and statistics. Human Development students build on foundation courses that cover Infancy and Childhood (HD 1150) and Adolescence and Emerging Adulthood (HD 1170).

Sample Courses

Human Development: Adulthood and Aging (HD 2180) introduces students to theories and research in adult development and aging. This course describes biological, psychological and social changes from youth through late adulthood. Identifies strategies to promote healthy aging at the individual and societal level.

Neurochemistry of Human Behavior (HD 3250) focuses on the complex interactions between neurochemicals and their receptors (pharmacodynamics) that drive human behavior. It will provide an overview of the principles of neurotransmission of chemicals as well as how alterations in their normal function can manifest in pathological behavior/mind processes.

Cultural Psychology (HD 2800) focuses on the cutting-edge research from the recently emerged, exciting field of cultural psychology. Major theories and findings that integrate cultural perspectives into psychology, and consider methodological issues unique for studying the role of culture in psychological processes and functioning are discussed. Drawing on recent work in social psychology, developmental psychology, cognitive psychology, environmental psychology, and cultural anthropology, a variety of topics (e.g., cognition, conceptual systems, the self, morality, emotion, epistemologies, environmental thought) are considered from cultural perspectives.

Psychology of Gender (HD 3310) explores psychological research on gender, examining the interactions between biology and social learning, gender identity, stereotypes, gender non-conformity, and discrimination. We will critically evaluate sex-related comparisons in cognition, attitudes, leadership, close relationships, psychological development, achievement, communication, and health. We will use an intersectional approach that acknowledges that gender development and expression are deeply impacted by race, social class, sexuality, and culture.

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College of Human Ecology: Examining human life from a scientific, social and design perspective

Research

The department's faculty research provides an ecological view of human development across the life span to answer questions of real-world relevance. Basic and translational research are integrated to enhance development and well-being in diverse contexts and populations. The research is characterized by themes of interdisciplinarity, cultural diversity, and multiple approaches, methods, and levels of analysis.

Undergraduates are active in the development, implementation, and analysis of research inquiries as participants on faculty research teams, as well as through independent research projects.

Experiential Opportunities

Beyond the required course work, students may take advantage of many other educational opportunities, most of which involve working with Cornell faculty members or other professionals.

Human Development students may earn credit toward the major by taking courses designed to teach laboratory and other research techniques, including study design, data collection, and data analysis.

Professional Pathways

Human Development majors gain excellent preparation for rewarding careers in advocacy, business, clinical psychology and other mental-health professions, education, law, medicine (particularly pediatrics, geriatrics, and psychiatry) and other health-related professions, and not-for-profit management.

The major also provides a solid foundation for those planning to pursue academic careers in human development, psychology, or sociology. Students can prepare for professional degree programs, including those in medicine, dentistry, law, public health, clinical and counseling psychology, education, and business, as well as for immediate employment, through an area of specialization listed above.

Research examples

- Early development of spatial skills, the acquisition of spatial language, and links and causal relations across these two domains
- Epidemiology of elder mistreatment
- Growth mindset, free will and future thinking
- Healthcare decision-making
- Intersection of purpose/identity processes and psychopathology
- Neurobiological basis of personality
- Risk-taking during adolescence
- Whether the gender of a perpetrator of a crime affects the levels empathy from jurors

Honors program

The Honors Program is designed to give talented Human Development undergraduates the opportunity to formulate and carry out an independent research investigation under the supervision of a member of HD departmental faculty. The Program provides excellent preparation for graduate work in psychology, sociology, neuroscience, medicine and related fields. Students apply to the Honors Program during the first semester of their junior year.

Field placements

In addition to study-away programs, Human Development majors can arrange field placements in local agencies and institutions. Recent placements have included projects with Tompkins County Office of Aging; Tompkins County Human Service Coalition; Tompkins County Youth Bureau; Kendal of Ithaca; local schools; and Citizens Concerned for Children, Inc.

Internship examples

Legal Intern, The Mercer County Prosecutor's Office

Performance and Programmatic Marketing Intern, IBM

Research Assistant, University of Michigan-Dearborn/Primate spatial cognition

Research Assistant, Weill Cornell Medicine/Department of Neurological Surgery

Research Intern, Regeneron Pharmaceuticals

Summer Camp Director, Gallup Day Camp

One-Year Master's Degree

The Department of Human Development offers a one-year master's degree that can be treated as an extension of a four-year undergraduate degree or that can stand alone.

Sample career paths

Assistant professor of psychiatry, University of Maryland School of Medicine

Attorney, Fitzmaurice & Freeman

Business analyst, Deloitte Consulting

Communications adviser, DKT Indonesia

Health policy analyst, Department of Health and Human Services

Medical doctor, Winthrop University Hospital

Psychologist and coordinator of family support service programs, Metropolitan Hospital Center

Researcher, National Institutes of Health

Senior Scientist, Braceland Center for Mental Health and Aging