

**Texas A&M University**  
**RPTS 679: Special Topics Research and Analysis of Issues and Trends in Youth Development**  
**Online**

**Instructor:** Dr.  
**E-mail:**  
**Phone:**

**Office:**  
**Office Hours:** by appointment

**TA:**  
**Email:**

**Office:**  
**Office Hours:**

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***COURSE OVERVIEW and INTRODUCTION (Syllabus)***

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**Credits:** 2  
**Stacked with RPTS 479**

**Course Purpose:**

Youth development is a dynamic field with multiple contemporary issues to address and trends to analyze. This course gives students an opportunity to study a special topic affecting youth from a bioecological systems approach. Students will have the opportunity to analyze current research and the influences of the special topic on the child as determined through interactions within microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, macrosystem, and chronosystem perspectives. (The class will meet four hours weekly for 7 weeks and be offered as a concentrated 2-credit course, 8 weeks in length with the special topic identified in the catalogue. A graduate student may receive credit for no more than 6 credit hours of special topics coursework in 3 different areas of emphasis as part of a degree plan).

**Course Description:**

In-depth examination and analysis of a contemporary issue or trend in youth development from a bioecological systems approach with applications to research and best practices.

**Required Texts and Readings:**

- Selected special topic readings and documents from academic journals and other sources available through eCampus or purchase.

**Method of Instruction:**

A variety of teaching methods will be used in this online class to meet the needs of different learning styles and enable students to learn the course content. All course materials will be provided on the eCampus website. <http://ecampus.tamu.edu/>. Technical Help for eCampus can be found:

Help Desk <http://helpdesk.tamu.edu/> (979-845-8300)  
eCampus Help Site <http://ecampus.tamu.edu/student-help.php>

**Software & Technical Skills:**

- Students will need to access the internet and eCampus.
- All assignments will be submitted online. Students will upload and download files (Images, Adobe PDFs, MS Word Documents, and MS PowerPoints).

**Grading:**

The course is organized in modules with various assignments for each of them. Refer to the Course Schedule at the end of this syllabus for additional details. Clarity, quality, completeness and demonstrated professionalism in work submitted will serve as the basis for evaluation. The following point system and evaluation criteria determine grades.

<b>End of Module Quiz</b> <b>(6 @ 20 points each) = 120</b>  <b>End of Module Journal Entries</b> <b>(6 @ 20 points each) = 120</b>  <b>Research Brief = 100</b> (this assignment is for RPTS 479; graduate students enrolled in RPTS 679 will complete a different assignment)  <b>Course Summary and Reflection = 60</b>  <b>Total = 400</b>		This class focuses on the learning and application of skills and competencies needed to be successful in the youth development field.  Unless otherwise noted, all assignments will be submitted through eCampus by due dates and no later than: 11:55 on Sunday  Late assignments will be reflected in the grading.
<b>Percentage of Points</b> <b>Total Points = 500</b>	<b>Letter Grade</b>	<b>Evaluation</b>
90- 100% (360 + points)	A	Assignments must be virtually free from errors in writing, word usage, and sentence structure. The paper will be distinguished by clear and logical thinking and will include evidence of advanced critical thinking skills.
80 - 89% (320 - 355 points)	B	Assignments will be organized and written well although there may be writing errors and a partial lack of focus. The paper will demonstrate a good understanding and application of the topic but may not be as clear or logical as an A submission.
70 - 79% (280 - 319 points)	C	Assignments in this grade category will show serious difficulty in managing completion of the assignment, weakness in analytical thinking, and/or writing errors that interfere with readability. The paper will illustrate a basic understanding of the topic.
60 - 69% (240 - 279 points)	D	Assignments in this category will fail to meet the major requirements of the assignment, including tasks or questions that are ignored, misconstrued or redefined to accommodate what the students' wants or is able to say. Work at this level will include: little or no development of ideas, no clear progression from one section to the next, numerous spelling and grammatical errors, all which give the impression of inferior writing though indications of the students attempt to understand the assignment will be present.
Less than 60% (239 or fewer points)	F	Assignments in this category will fail to meet minimal standards of acceptability and competence and will illustrate little or no understanding of the topic and/or basic writing skills.

## **STUDENT RESPONSIBILITY, UNIVERSITY & CLASSROOM INFORMATION**

### **Student-Instructor Communication:**

- **Office visits:** I am available to meet with you and encourage you to set up a meeting (in person or by phone). I recommend that you try to schedule an appointment ahead of time as I have offices in two locations. If you have any questions, ideas you wish to explore, problems related to the class, or just need to talk, please contact me.
- *In most cases, office visits are more helpful before a “crisis” than after.*
- **Emails:** Emails sent Sunday-Thursday will be answered within 24 hours. Emails sent Friday-Saturday will be answered on Monday.
- **Grading:** Assignments will be graded by the Friday following the deadline. Due to work related travel, there may be an occasional exception.
- **Announcements:** Check the class link regularly on eCampus. If changes are made to the syllabus/schedule or there are delays in grading, you will be notified there.

**Assignments** Students must submit written assignments on or before due dates. **Late assignments will be reflected in grades.** Exceptions will be made only if arrangements have been made prior to the deadline or students provide documentation of a University-excused absence as described in Student Rule 7: <http://student-rules.tamu.edu/rule07>

**Papers** *must be typed with the use of proper grammar and formal English composition.* Points will be subtracted for inaccurate or informal written language. **Review your work,** use spell check and a dictionary or thesaurus as needed. Follow the *American Psychological Association, APA, 6th edition*, publication manual for references.

**AGGIE HONOR CODE - AGGIE HONOR CODE** - “An Aggie does not lie, cheat, or steal or tolerate those who do.” Upon accepting admission to Texas A&M University, a student immediately assumes a commitment to uphold the Honor Code, to accept responsibility for learning, and to follow the philosophy and rules of the Honor System. Students will be required to state their commitment on examinations, research papers, and other academic work. Ignorance of the rules does not exclude any member of the TAMU community from the requirements or the processes of the Honor System. For additional information please visit: <http://aggiehonor.tamu.edu/>

- **Diversity** is the strength of our society. In this class, I ask that you maintain an open mind to the differences around you, and I encourage you to respect those differences. Points of view may and should be argued but each speaker/writer is to be respected. I encourage you to acknowledge your diversities by actively engaging with one another. It is especially important that you are tolerant of other students, whose opinions differ from your own, while debating the opinions and remaining respectful of the individuals who hold them.
- **The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)** The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you would like to be considered for disability accommodations, you must first register with Disability Services and provide medical documentation to support your request for consideration. Disability Services is currently located at the White Creek complex on west campus. For additional information, call 979-845-1637 or visit <http://disability.tamu.edu>.
- **Writing Center** - provides one-to-one consultations on writing or public speaking with a College Reading and Learning Association certified consultant. Two types of consultations are available: online or in-person. Locations: Evans Library or West Campus Library locations or call the Write Line at (979) 845-2160. <http://writingcenter.tamu.edu/>
- **Student Learning Center (Peer Academic Services)** - provides academic support free of charge to all TAMU students. They offer Supplemental Instruction (SI), tutoring, transfer student services and Independent Study Labs (ISL)

for developmental education students. PAS provides training for SI leaders, tutors and peer mentors.

<http://slc.tamu.edu>

### Course Outcomes:

<b>Module 1 - Introduction - Course Syllabus and Overview of Special Topic in Youth Development Issues and Trends</b>
<p>Upon completing this module, students will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify course expectations and requirements for the course</li> <li>Analyze the macrosystem and chronosystem effects of the special topic on youth</li> <li>Demonstrate learning through applications in EOM assignments</li> </ul>
<b>Module 2: The Importance of (Special Topic) and Developmental Outcomes</b>
<p>Upon completing this module, students will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Analyze the special topic interface with youth development and other theoretical perspectives</li> <li>Demonstrate learning through applications in EOM assignments</li> </ul>
<b>Module 3: Special Topic and the Individual</b>
<p>Upon completing this module, students will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Explore the impact of the special topic on a child's development</li> <li>Compare the techno subsystem effects of the special topic on the developing child</li> <li>Demonstrate learning through applications in EOM assignments</li> </ul>
<b>Module 4: Microsystem, Mesosystem Effects</b>
<p>Upon completing this module, students will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use a mesosystem approach to analyze and evaluate the microsystem effects of the family on the child</li> <li>Demonstrate learning through applications in EOM assignments</li> </ul>
<b>Module 5: Special Topic and Peers, School, Community</b>
<p>Upon completing this module, students will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use a mesosystems approach to analyze and examine the microsystem effects of the immediate environment on a child</li> <li>Analyze the contribution of youth development programs to the microsystem</li> <li>Demonstrate learning through applications in EOM assignments</li> </ul>
<b>Module 6: Special Topic and State/National Effects</b>
<p>Upon completing this module, students will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use an mesosystems approach to analyze and examine the exosystem effects of the indirect environment on a child</li> <li>Demonstrate learning through applications in EOM assignments</li> </ul>
<b>Module 7: Special Topic and Research, Practitioner Applications</b>
<p>Upon completing this module, students will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use the course materials and other research to create a research brief synthesizing a defined area of a bioecological system effect on youth development as related to the special topic.</li> </ul>
<b>Module 8: Curriculum Completion</b>
<p>Upon completing this module, students will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Share a synthesis of their product with other students</li> </ul>

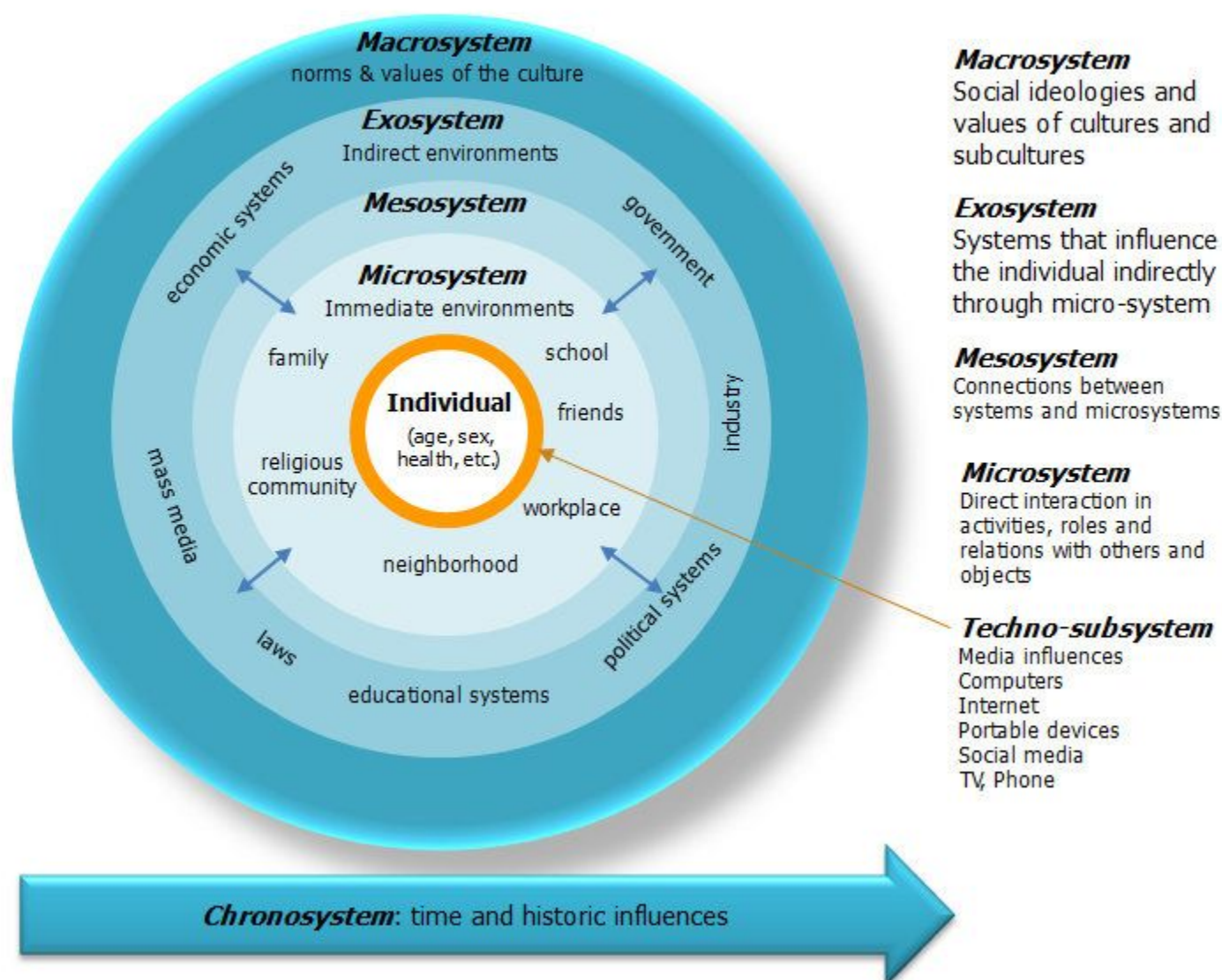
RPTS 679 Outline	Topic/Lecture	COURSE SCHEDULE  Practitioner Resources and Academic Readings (Completed when topic is identified)	Assignment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reflect on learning and apply it to career and professional goals</li> </ul>			

### Course Schedule:

The course schedule found on the following page outlines the entire semester and includes the weekly focus of instruction, supporting readings and resources, practicum assignments and end of module assignments. Lectures will cover some of the material in the readings but it is the student's responsibility to read them for clarity and additional background information.

Because all assignments build on previous work – it is imperative that students complete work as assigned and on time.

## Bronfenbrenner's Bioecological Model of Human Development



<b>Module 1</b> Intro Week Macrosystem and Chronosystem Effects	Welcome, Syllabus  History and Scope of Special Topic and Youth Development	P  A	Describe your experiences in the field of youth development related to this topic and career/professional goals.  EOM - Based on your reading, identify 3 questions related to YD programming and this topic that you would like to have answered.
<b>Module 2</b> The Importance of (Special Topic) and Developmental Outcomes	Special Topic and the Interface of Youth Development and other Theoretical Perspectives	P  A	EOM Quiz from readings Journal Entry
<b>Module 3</b> Mesosystem Techno subsystem Effects	Special Topic and the Individual	P  A	EOM Quiz from readings Journal Entry
<b>Module 4</b> Microsystem, Mesosystem Effects	Special Topic and the Family	P  A	EOM Quiz from readings Journal Entry
<b>Module 5</b> Microsystem Mesosystem, Effects	Special Topic and Peers, School, Community	P  A	EOM Quiz from readings Journal Entry
<b>Module 6</b> Exosystem, Mesosystem Effects	Special Topic and State/National Effects	P  A	EOM Quiz from readings Journal Entry
<b>Module 7</b> Research Applications	Special Topic and Research, Practitioner Applications	P  A	Read 3 or more additional academic research articles related to a specific area of a systems effect included in Modules 1-6 and write a YDI research brief.
<b>Module 8</b>	Project Completion and Reflection  2		Present a research brief summary on eCampus  7