

## Ph.D. in “Life Course Research” – Psychological curriculum

Academic Year 2023-2024

### Title: Life Span theories in specific domains: cognition, identity, social relations

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#### Objectives

- The first unit will be focused on acquiring knowledge about the developmental trajectories, from early childhood to adulthood, of cognitive control processes that predict individual's adaptation to the environment. According to the model by Hendry, Jones, and Charman (2016), four early predictors of the development of cognitive control processes and adult adaptation will be identified: attentional control, individual responsiveness to environmental stimuli and self-regulation, processing speed, and early cognitive flexibility abilities.
- The second unit will provide knowledge about the main stages of self-development throughout the entire lifespan. In line with the tradition initiated by William James, particular emphasis will be placed on the physical, psychological, and social dimensions of the self, in a perspective that primarily views personal identity as a defensive construct against the threat of disintegration.
- The last unit will address how and to what extent personal characteristics such as the ability to control one's own emotions, thoughts, and behaviors, social withdrawal and aggressive behavior at early stages show continuity or discontinuity across life span and set the stage for short and long term outcomes in the life course. Possible outcomes will include educational attainment, career success, healthy lifestyles and longevity. Some prospective studies of children, adolescents, and adults will be presented in relation to specific outcomes such as better midlife aging and aging preparedness, such as the health, financial, and social reserves that may help prepare individuals for longer life span and better health.

#### Program

- *Monday afternoon (11.20.2023): Prof. Minna Tormeman. Development of cognitive control and self-regulation. Introduction and moderation: Prof. Chiara Pecini*
- *Tuesday afternoon (11.21.2023): Prof. Cristina Meini. La costruzione del sé. Introduction and moderation: Prof. Annalaura Nocentini*
- *Wednesday afternoon (11.22.2023): Prof. Ersilia Menesini. Development of social relations across the lifespan: continuities and discontinuities.*

## Suggested lecture

- Hendry, A., Jones, E.J. e Charman, T. (2016). Executive function in the first three years of life: Precursors, predictors and patterns. *Developmental Review*, 42, 1-33.
- Moffitt TE, Arseneault L, Belsky D, Dickson N, Hancox RJ, Harrington H, Houts R, Poulton R, Roberts BW, Ross S, Sears MR, Thomson WM, Caspi A. A gradient of childhood self-control predicts health, wealth, and public safety. *Proc Natl Acad Sci U S A*. 2011 Feb 15;108(7):2693-8. doi: 10.1073/pnas.1010076108. Epub 2011 Jan 24. PMID: 21262822; PMCID: PMC3041102.
- Bourassa KJ, Moffitt TE, Harrington H, Houts R, Poulton R, Ramrakha S, Rasmussen LJH, Wertz J, Caspi A. (2023). Childhood Adversity and Midlife Health: Shining a Light on the Black Box of Psychosocial Mechanisms. *Prevention Science*. 24(5):817-828. doi: 10.1007/s11121-022-01431-y.
- Langevin S, Caspi A, Barnes JC, Brennan G, Poulton R, Purdy SC, Ramrakha S, Tanksley P, Thorne PR, Wilson G, Moffitt TE. (2022). Life-course persistent antisocial behavior and accelerated biological aging in a longitudinal birth cohort. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*. 19, 14402. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph192114402>

## Requirements

Theories and Methods of Developmental Psychology