

PNP 496: Core Knowledge  
Spring 2023

Meeting Time: Thursday 1:00-3:50 pm

Location: Wilson 104

Instructor: Dr. Zoe Jenkin

Email: zoejenkin@wustl.edu

Office: Wilson 112

Office Hours: Tuesdays 12-2, appointment required (see below for scheduling)

**Course Description:** This seminar will investigate the body of core knowledge that structures our cognition from infancy to adulthood. We will read the new monograph by developmental psychologist Elizabeth Spelke, *What Babies Know: Core Knowledge and Composition Volume 1*. This book covers a variety of domains of core knowledge, including vision, objects, place and space, number, forms, agents, social cognition, and language.

**Format:** We will meet in person once a week. Course materials, announcements, assignments, grading rubrics, submission portals, and office hours scheduling can all be found on the Canvas site.

**Office Hours:** My office hours are **Tuesdays from 12-2 in Wilson 112**.

Appointments are required and must be reserved before **midnight on Monday night**. You can schedule an appointment on Canvas as follows:

Canvas → calendar → find appointments → select a timeslot → reserve

If you would prefer a Zoom meeting, sign up for an office hours slot and then email me (zoejenkin@wustl.edu) to let me know you prefer Zoom. The Zoom office hours link is: <https://wustl.zoom.us/j/2527540537>. It is also provided in the calendar appointment description. You can also email me to schedule a meeting outside of regular office hours.

**Course Goals:**

- You'll develop an understanding of debates over how much of our knowledge is innate.
- You'll develop a working knowledge of several research programs in developmental psychology.
- You'll become familiar with various experimental methodologies that probe innateness and learning.
- You'll hone your abilities to understand and explain theories, arguments, and empirical results.
- You'll improve your skills at constructing arguments that bridge developmental psychology, evolutionary psychology, neuroscience, philosophy of mind, and epistemology.
- You'll develop your own views on core knowledge and its role in our mental lives.

**Requirements:**

*Readings:* There will be one to two required readings for each class meeting. Our discussions will presuppose that you have done the reading carefully.

*Attendance:* Attendance is mandatory. You need to be in class to 1) learn the material and 2) get credit for participation. However, you should stay home if you are experiencing **any symptoms of illness and your absence will be excused**. This is a list of reasons for excused absences:

- Illness
- Covid-19 diagnosis, symptoms, known exposure, or quarantine
- Mental health
- Family emergencies
- Doctor's appointments
- Religious observances

If you are going to be absent for one of these reasons, **email me** (zoejenkin@wustl.edu) letting me know. **You do not need to explain your absence or provide proof**. You can just say "I will be absent today" and I will trust you have a good reason. Any absences that I am not notified of will detract from your attendance and participation grade.

*Participation:* This course is a discussion seminar. The more you participate, the better it will be. You should aim to make at least one contribution per class meeting. Your participation will factor into your attendance and participation grade.

*Presentation:* You will each give one 15-minute presentation during the semester on one of the readings from the syllabus. Your presentation should provide an opinionated summary the reading, offer your reaction and analysis, and pose some questions for group discussion. You should use either a handout or slides to facilitate your presentation.

*Response Papers:* In the first half of the semester, there will be a response paper assignment each week. These will be 1-page papers that will hone your skills at succinctly summarizing evidence and developing clear and tight arguments. These papers will also help with generating ideas for your term paper. You must complete **four** out of **five** of these response paper assignments (so everyone gets one free skip). The response papers will be graded out of five (each is worth five points toward your final grade out of 100).

*Term Paper:* There will be one term paper for the course. You will submit a paper proposal and then a draft for peer review, both of which will factor into your term paper grade. You'll have a good amount of time to develop this paper over the second half of the semester and get feedback from me and your peers.

### **Grading:**

Attendance and participation: 30%  
Presentation: 10%  
Response papers: 20%  
Term paper: 40%

### **Course Policies:**

### Academic Integrity

Please read the WashU Academic Integrity Policy (<https://wustl.edu/about/compliance-policies/academic-policies/undergraduate-student-academic-integrity-policy/>). Students who violate the academic integrity policy will receive an F on any plagiarized work and risk failing the course.

**Note:** Using an AI-content generator (such as ChatGPT) to complete coursework without proper attribution or authorization is a form of academic dishonesty. If you are unsure about whether something may be plagiarism or academic dishonesty, please contact me to discuss the issue

Collaboration: While all work submitted must be your own, you should feel free to discuss ideas with your classmates, read each other's paper drafts, and provide feedback. Some of the best philosophy happens this way. If you use an idea that originates with a classmate, you can cite them in your paper.

Late Papers: For response papers, for each day the paper is late it will lose 1 point (out of 5 total). For your term paper, for each day it is late it will lose 1/3 of a grade (e.g., from A- to B+).

Extensions: For response papers, extensions will only be given in extreme circumstances because 1) these papers are meant to be done on schedule with the course readings and discussion, and 2) everyone has one free skip. For the term paper, I will be more lenient with extensions because I know that the end of semester can be busy. In either case, please ask for an extension 2-3 days in advance.

Email: You can email me ([zoejenkin@wustl.edu](mailto:zoejenkin@wustl.edu)) with questions about logistics or assignments. Substantive questions are best dealt with in office hours. I aim to respond to emails within two business days (excluding weekends). Make sure to email me in advance because I cannot guarantee an immediate response.

### **Texts:**

The course will focus on the book *What Babies Know: Core Knowledge and Composition* by Elizabeth Spelke. The book is available in the university bookstore. If you have trouble getting a copy of the book for financial or other reasons, please let me know and I will try to help.

### **Schedule:**

<i>Thurs., Jan. 19</i>	No reading—Introduction
<i>Thurs., Jan. 26</i>	<b>CLASS CANCELLED</b> (Prof. Jenkin out of town for conference)
<i>Thurs., Feb. 2</i>	Prologue and Chapter 1: Vision <b>Response Paper 1 due</b>
<i>Thurs., Feb. 9</i>	Chapter 2: Objects <b>Response Paper 2 due</b>
<i>Thurs., Feb. 16</i>	Chapter 3: Places <b>Response Paper 3 due</b>

<i>Thurs., Feb. 23</i>	Chapter 4: Number and Chapter 5: Core Knowledge <b>Response Paper 4 due</b>
<i>Thurs., Mar. 2</i>	Chapter 6: Forms <b>Response Paper 5 due</b>
<i>Thurs., Mar. 9</i>	Chapter 7: Agents
<i>Thurs., Mar. 16</i>	<b>NO CLASS – Spring Break</b>
<i>Thurs., Mar. 23</i>	Chapter 8: Core Social Cognition Lesson on database searching with PNP librarian Sam Lindgren <b>Term Paper Proposal due</b>
<i>Thurs., Mar. 30</i>	Chapter 9: Language Lesson on citation managers with PNP librarian Sam Lindgren
<i>Thurs., Apr. 6</i>	<b>CLASS CANCELLED</b> (Prof. Jenkin out of town for a conference)
<i>Thurs., Apr. 13</i>	Chapter 10: Beyond Core Knowledge
<i>Thurs. Apr. 20</i>	No reading—Zoom with Liz Spelke (to be confirmed) and in-class peer review <b>Term Paper Draft due</b>
<i>Thurs. Apr. 27</i>	No reading—end of semester party <b>Term Paper Final Draft due</b>

## University-Wide Policies

### COVID-19 Health and Safety Protocols

Students experiencing symptoms consistent with COVID-19 or concerned about a possible exposure should contact Habif Health and Wellness Center (314 935-6666) to arrange for testing as indicated. If instructed by Habif to quarantine or isolate, students should notify their instructor as soon as possible by forwarding the email they received from Habif. Any accommodation needs for COVID-related absence not covered in an instructor's standard course policies should be discussed between the student and instructor.

While on campus, it is imperative that students follow all public health guidelines established to reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission within our community. The full set of University protocols can be found at <https://covid19.wustl.edu/health-safety/>. This includes:

**Strongly recommended masking in indoor spaces.** Masking remains a valuable tool in the mitigation of COVID-19, particularly in light of new and emerging variants. Students and instructors are encouraged to treat requests to mask with care and consideration,

keeping in mind that some individuals may be at a higher risk, caring for others at a higher risk, or feeling less comfortable in a mask-optional environment. Based on monitoring of regional and campus conditions, a mask requirement may be implemented as needed. For current masking policies, see the [WashU Together website](#).

Students with disabilities for whom masked instructors or classmates create a communication barrier are encouraged to contact Disability Resources ([www.disability.wustl.edu](http://www.disability.wustl.edu)) or talk to their instructor for assistance in determining reasonable adjustments. Adjustments may involve amplification devices, captioning, or clear masks but will not allow for the disregard of mask policies should a requirement be in place.

**Maintaining physical distancing as needed.** While distancing requirements have been removed for vaccinated students, those who are not fully vaccinated are strongly encouraged, for their own health, to maintain a distance of 6 ft from others in the classroom. If you are not able to be vaccinated or have conditions that may put you at increased risk of failed immunity and classroom activities would bring you in frequent proximity to other students, contact your instructor to discuss alternatives.

**Practicing healthy personal hygiene**, including frequent handwashing with soap and warm water for at least 20 seconds and/or using hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol.

#### Reporting Sexual Assault or Harassment

If a student discusses or discloses an instance of sexual assault, sex discrimination, sexual harassment, dating violence, domestic violence or stalking, or if a faculty member otherwise observes or becomes aware of such an allegation, the faculty member will keep the information as private as possible, but as a faculty member of Washington University, they are required to immediately report it to the Department Chair or Dean or directly to Ms. Cynthia Copeland, the University's Associate Title IX Coordinator, at (314) 935-3411, [cmcopeland@wustl.edu](mailto:cmcopeland@wustl.edu). Additionally, you can report incidents or complaints to the Office of Student Conduct and Community Standards or by contacting WUPD at (314) 935-5555 or your local law enforcement agency. See <https://titleix.wustl.edu/>

#### Disability Resources (DR)

WashU supports the right of all enrolled students to an equitable educational opportunity, and strives to create an inclusive learning environment. In the event the physical or online environment results in barriers to the inclusion of a student due to a disability, they should notify the instructor as soon as possible.

Disabled students requiring adjustments to equitably complete expectations in this course should contact WashU's Disability Resources (DR), and engage in a process for determining and communicating reasonable accommodations. Because accommodations are not applied retroactively, DR recommends initiating requests prior to, or at the beginning of, the academic term to avoid delays in accessing accommodations once classes begin. Once established, responsibility for disability-related accommodations and access is shared by Disability Resources, faculty, and the student. Disability Resources: [www.disability.wustl.edu](http://www.disability.wustl.edu); 3147-935-5970

### Statement on Military Service Leave

Washington University recognizes that students serving in the U.S. Armed Forces and their family members may encounter situations where military service forces them to withdraw from a course of study, sometimes with little notice. Students may contact the Office of Military and Veteran Services at (314) 935-2609 or [veterans@wustl.edu](mailto:veterans@wustl.edu) and their academic dean for guidance and assistance. See: <https://veterans.wustl.edu/policies/policy-for-military-students/>

### Preferred Names and Gender Inclusive Pronouns

Washington University in St. Louis recognizes that many students prefer to use names other than their legal ones to identify themselves. In addition, in order to affirm each person's gender identity and lived experiences, it is important that we ask and check in with others about pronouns. This simple effort can make a profound difference in a person's experience of safety, respect, and support. See: <https://students.wustl.edu/pronouns-information/>, <https://registrar.wustl.edu/student-records/ssn-name-changes/preferred-name/>

### Emergency Preparedness

Before an emergency, familiarize yourself with the building(s) that you frequent. Know the layout, including exit locations, stairwells and the Emergency Assembly Point (EAP). Review the "Quick Guide for Emergencies" that is found near the door in many classrooms and main lobby areas of buildings for specific emergency information and instructions. For additional Information and EAP maps, visit <https://emergency.wustl.edu/>. To ensure that you receive emergency notifications, make sure your information and cell phone number is updated in SIS, and/or download the [WashU Safe app](#) and enable notifications.

To report an emergency:

Danforth Campus: (314) 935-5555

School of Medicine Campus: (314) 362-4357

North/West/South and Off Campus: 911 then (314) 935-5555

### Academic Integrity

Effective learning, teaching and research all depend upon the ability of members of the academic community to trust one another and to trust the integrity of work that is submitted for academic credit or conducted in the wider arena of scholarly research. Such an atmosphere of mutual trust fosters the free exchange of ideas and enables all members of the community to achieve their highest potential.

In all academic work, the ideas and contributions of others must be appropriately acknowledged and work that is presented as original must be, in fact, original. Faculty, students and administrative staff all share the responsibility of ensuring the honesty and fairness of the intellectual environment at Washington University in St. Louis.

For additional details on the university-wide Undergraduate Academic Integrity policy, please see: <https://wustl.edu/about/compliance-policies/academic-policies/undergraduate-student-academic-integrity-policy/>

Resources for Students

### Confidential Resources for Instances of Sexual Assault, Sex Discrimination, Sexual Harassment, Dating Violence, Domestic Violence, or Stalking

The University is committed to offering reasonable academic accommodations (e.g. a no-contact order, course changes) to students who are victims of relationship or sexual violence, regardless of whether they seek criminal or disciplinary action. If a student needs to explore options for medical care, protections, or reporting, or would like to receive individual counseling services, there are free, confidential support resources and professional counseling services available through the Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention (RSVP) Center. If you need to request such accommodations, please contact RSVP to schedule an appointment with a confidential and licensed counselor. Although information shared with counselors is confidential, requests for accommodations will be coordinated with the appropriate University administrators and faculty. The RSVP Center is located in Seigle Hall, Suite 435, and can be reached at [rsvpcenter@wustl.edu](mailto:rsvpcenter@wustl.edu) or (314) 935-3445. For after-hours emergency response services, call (314) 935-6666 or (314) 935-5555 and ask to speak with an RSVP Counselor on call. See <https://students.wustl.edu/relationship-sexual-violence-prevention-center/>

### Bias Report and Support System (BRSS)

The University has a process through which students, faculty, staff, and community members who have experienced or witnessed incidents of bias, prejudice, or discrimination against a student can report their experiences to the University's Bias Report and Support System (BRSS) team. See: <https://students.wustl.edu/bias-report-support-system/>

### Mental Health Services

Mental Health Services' professional staff members work with students to resolve personal and interpersonal difficulties, many of which can affect a student's academic experience. These include conflicts with or worry about friends or family, concerns about eating or drinking patterns, and feelings of anxiety, depression, and thoughts of suicide. See <https://students.wustl.edu/mental-health-services/>

The Division of Student Affairs also offers a telehealth program to students called **TimelyCare**. While students are encouraged to visit the Habif Health and Wellness Center during business hours, this additional service also provides after-hours access to medical care and 24/7 access to mental telehealth care across the United States, with no cost at the time of your visit. Students who pay the Health and Wellness fee are eligible for this service. Additionally, see the mental health services offered through the RSVP Center listed above.

### WashU Cares

WashU Cares specializes providing referrals and resources, both on, and off campus for mental health, medical health, financial and academic resources by using supportive case management. WashU Cares also receives reports on students who may need help connecting to resources or whom a campus partner is concerned about. If you are concerned about a student or yourself, you can file a report here: <https://washucares.wustl.edu/>

### The Writing Center

The Writing Center offers free writing support to all Washington University undergraduate and graduate students. Staff members will work with students on any kind of writing project, including essays, writing assignments, personal statements, theses, and dissertations. They can help at any stage



of the process, including brainstorming, developing and clarifying an argument, organizing evidence, or improving style. Instead of simply editing or proofreading papers, the tutors will ask questions and have a conversation with the writer about their ideas and reasoning, allowing for a higher order revision of the work. They will also spend some time looking at sentence level patterns to teach students to edit their own work. The Center is located in Mallinckrodt and open Sunday through Thursday from 11:00 am to 9:00 pm and Friday from 11:00 am to 5:00 pm. Students are seen primarily by appointment, but walk-ins will be accepted as the schedule allows. Both in-person and online appointments are available. To make an appointment, go to [www.writingcenter.wustl.edu](http://www.writingcenter.wustl.edu).

### The Learning Center

The Learning Center provides [support programs](#), including course-specific mentoring and academic skills coaching (study and test-taking strategies, time management, etc.), that enhance undergraduate students' academic progress. Contact them at [learningcenter@wustl.edu](mailto:learningcenter@wustl.edu) or [ctl.wustl.edu/learningcenter](http://ctl.wustl.edu/learningcenter) to find out what support they may offer for your classes

### The Center for Diversity and Inclusion (CDI)

The Center for Diversity and Inclusion (CDI) supports and advocates for undergraduate, graduate, and professional school students from underrepresented and/or marginalized populations, collaborates with campus and community partners, and promotes dialogue and social change to cultivate and foster a supportive campus climate for students of all backgrounds, cultures, and identities. See: <https://diversityinclusion.wustl.edu/>

### Gephardt Institute

Students play an essential role in a vibrant and functioning democracy! In addition to the November 2022 midterm elections, state and local elections will take place throughout the year and have a direct impact on our communities. You can register to vote, request an absentee ballot, confirm your polling location, and get Election Day reminders at <http://wustl.turbovote.org> for any of the 50 states and Washington D.C. WashU students are considered Missouri residents, and eligible student voters can register to vote in the state of Missouri or their home state. The deadline to register to vote in Missouri in this year's midterm election is **Wednesday, October 12, 2022**. The election will take place on **Tuesday, November 8, 2022**. If you are ineligible to vote, you can participate by encouraging your friends to register and vote, engaging your peers in local issues, and taking part in other civic and community engagement activities. For more resources on voting and other civic and community engagement opportunities, please visit <http://washuvotes.wustl.edu> and <http://gephardtstitute.wustl.edu/>.