CHDV 242
Lifespan and Emerging Theories

I. Introduction/Assumptions
   A. Development is a life-long process

   B. Multidirectionality

   C. Plasticity

   D. Contextualism
      1. Age-graded influences
      2. History-graded influences
      3. Nonnormative influences

   E. Study of development as multidisciplinary

II. Lifespan approaches and methodology
   A. Review - Cross-sectional and Longitudinal methods

   B. Cohort problems

   C. Trajectories of change

   D. Appreciation for individual differences

III. The role of Biology and Culture in the Lifespan view
   A. Evolutionary selection decreases

   B. Need for cultural structures/influences increases

   C. Effects of environment and culture decline with age

IV. Discussion
   1) Baltes suggests that a lifespan approach might be useful for the study of child development. How so?
   2) What do you think about the idea that later experience might be as important as early experience in predicting development and functioning? What arguments can you make for or against this idea? How might you go about testing whether early experience is more important than later experience?
   3) What does a lifespan approach have to offer that other theoretical approaches we've studied thus far do not?
   4) Compare/contrast the lifespan approach with an information processing approach.

V. Emerging Approaches
   A. Theory-Theory
      1. Assumptions
      2. Differences between Theory-theories and Piaget
      3. Evaluation

   B. **Modularity Nativism**
      1. Assumptions
      2. Evaluation

   C. **Developmental Systems Approaches**
      1. Assumptions
      2. Example theories
         Bioecological theory (Bronfenbrenner)
         Lifespan development (Baltes, above)
         Life Course Theory (Elder)
         Dynamic Systems Theory (Thelen/Smith)