

**CHDV 242**  
**An Introduction**  
 8/31/10

*Give us theories, theories, always theories. Let every man who has a theory pronounce it.*

*-James Mark Baldwin*

**I. Theory and its role in studying children/development**

- organizes and gives meaning to facts
- guides research

**A. Questions about theories:**

1. *What is a theory?*
2. *What is a developmental theory?*
3. *What makes a good theory?*

**B. Examples**

**II. Major Theoretical Issues - Discussion**

*In your group, consider the following questions:*

- 1) What constitutes development?** What is it that develops?
- 2) What is the basic nature of human beings?** Are human beings inherently bad or good? What do humans strive for? How much does the individual direct his or her development? (and why is this question relevant to developmental theory?)
- 3) How can we characterize the developmental process?** Is development qualitative (stage-like) or quantitative (continuous) in nature? What explains developmental change?
- 4) What role do “biology”, “environment” and “context” play in development?** Be sure to define these terms for yourself first!
- 5) How do think culture and historical time affect theory? How do you think developmental theory affects culture and practice?**