

# Adolescence and Emerging Adulthood

A CULTURAL APPROACH

fourth edition

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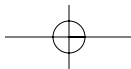
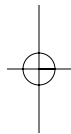
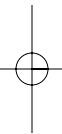
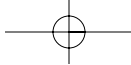
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*To  
Robin, Kelly, Nathan,  
Raina, Paris,  
and Miles—  
so much to look forward to!*



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# Preface

## New to the Fourth Edition

I am delighted that with this edition of *Adolescence and Emerging Adulthood* we have added an online component called *MyDevelopmentLab* (visit [www.pearsonhighered.com](http://www.pearsonhighered.com) or ask your Pearson publishing representative for access information). This website contains terrific video material to illustrate topics such as ethnic identity and eating disorders. In addition, the website contains the following pedagogical materials:

- **chapter learning objectives** to help students focus on key concepts.
- **online quizzes** that include instant scoring and coaching responses.
- **web links** specific to each chapter that provide a valuable source of supplemental materials for learning and research.
- **built-in gradebook** that gives students the ability to forward essay responses and graded quizzes to their instructors.
- **an extensive faculty module** that includes PowerPoint slides, presentation graphics, and lecture ideas and activities.

This is the first edition of the book to include *My Development Lab*, and we will be continuing to develop it in future editions.

Another major change in this edition was that I eliminated Chapter 14. In the first three editions of the book, there was a brief Chapter 14 entitled “Adolescence and Emerging Adulthood in the 21st Century” that provided a summary of the cultural background and experiences of adolescents in different regions of the world. In this edition I decided this material would be better placed in Chapter 1 as a way of giving students a broad cultural perspective for the chapters that follow.

In reviews and responses to the first three editions of this book, instructors and reviewers have consistently mentioned three key strengths: (1) the cultural approach; (2) the inclusion of emerging adulthood along with adolescence; and (3) the quality of the writing. I have sought to enhance those strengths in the fourth edition. Research on adolescence around the world is growing, so there is even more cultural information than before. Recently I served as Editor-in-Chief of the two-volume *International Encyclopedia of Adolescence*, which appeared in 2007 and contained chapters from nearly 100 countries around the world. This position made it possible for me to enhance the cultural content of the text-

book as never before, with new material from Africa, Asia, Europe, and the Americas. Every chapter in the fourth edition includes new material, from the encyclopedia and other sources, that will enhance students’ understanding of cultural similarities and differences and how the development of adolescents and emerging adults is influenced by the culture they live in.

Encouraged by the response to the material on emerging adulthood in the first three editions, I have continued to expand it in the fourth edition. Exciting developments in theory and research are taking place in this area, as more and more scholars recognize its importance and turn their attention to it, and I have sought to reflect those developments in this edition. Every chapter includes the latest, most up-to-date theory and research related to emerging adulthood. It has been gratifying to me to see how other textbooks have now incorporated theory and research on emerging adulthood, but as the originator of the idea I think it is not unreasonable for me to state that if you would like to have the most comprehensive and recent material on emerging adulthood in a textbook you will find it here.

As for the writing style, I have continued to strive to make the book not only highly informative but also lively and fun to read. The best textbooks achieve both these goals.

In addition to enhancing the aspects of the book that were so favorably received in the first three editions, I have made numerous changes, large and small, to each chapter. Hundreds of new citations from 2006–2009 have been added to this edition, incorporating the most recent findings in the field. Other changes have been made in response to comments and suggestions by instructors who reviewed the third edition. Still other changes were made on my own initiative, as I read the chapters before embarking on the fourth edition and made judgments about what should be added, changed, or deleted. For example, I added a section on bullying to the chapter on Friends and Peers, including information on “cyberbullying” through the Internet.

I have added new material to the fourth edition, but also deleted material that was in the third edition. There is an unfortunate tendency for textbooks to add additional material with each edition, so that eventually they become about as thick as the phone book (and just about as interesting to read). I have tried to head off that tendency early on by resolving with each edition to make judicious cuts for each addition I make. I hope this approach will continue to make the textbook both up-to-date and enjoyable to read.

## Distinctive Features of This Book

Adolescence is a fascinating time of life, and for most instructors it is an enjoyable topic to teach. For many students taking the course, it is the time of life they have just completed or are now passing through. Learning about development during this period is for them a journey of self-discovery, in part. Students who are beyond this period often enjoy reflecting back on who they were then, and they come away with a new understanding of their past and present selves. What students learn from a course on adolescence sometimes confirms their own intuitions and experiences, and sometimes contradicts or expands what they thought they knew. When it works well, a course on adolescence can change not only how students understand themselves, but how they understand others and how they think about the world around them. For instructors, the possibility the course offers for students' growth of understanding is often stimulating. My goal in writing this textbook has been to make it a book that will assist instructors and students in making illuminating connections as they pursue an understanding of this dynamic and complex age period.

I wrote this book with the intention of presenting a fresh conception of adolescence, a conception reflecting what I believe to be the most promising and exciting new currents in the field. There are four essential features of the conception that guided this book: (1) a focus on the cultural basis of development; (2) an extension of the age period covered to include "emerging adulthood" (roughly ages 18 to 25) as well as adolescence; (3) an emphasis on historical context; and (4) an interdisciplinary approach to theories and research. All of these features distinguish this textbook from other textbooks on adolescence.

## The Cultural Approach

In teaching courses on adolescence, from large lecture classes to small seminars, I have always brought into the classroom a considerable amount of research from other cultures. I am trained mainly as a developmental psychologist, a field that has traditionally emphasized universal patterns of development rather than cultural context. However, my education also included three years as a postdoctoral student at the Committee on Human Development at the University of Chicago, and the program there emphasized anthropology, which places culture first and foremost. Learning to take a cultural approach to development greatly expanded and deepened my own understanding of adolescence, and I have seen the cultural approach work this way for my students as well. Through an awareness of the diversity of cultural practices, customs, and beliefs about adolescence, we expand our conception of the range of developmental possibilities. We also gain a greater understanding of adolescent development in our own culture, by learning to see it as only one of many possible paths.

Taking a cultural approach to development means infusing discussion of every aspect of development with a cul-

tural perspective. I present the essentials of the cultural approach in the first chapter, and it then serves as a theme that runs through every chapter. Each chapter also includes a *Cultural Focus* box in which an aspect of development in a specific culture is explored in-depth—for example, male and female circumcision in north Africa, adolescents' family relationships in India, and young people's sexuality in the Netherlands.

My hope is that students will learn not only that adolescent development can be different depending on the culture, but how to *think culturally*—that is, how to analyze all aspects of adolescent development for their cultural basis. This includes learning how to critique research for the extent to which it does or does not take the cultural basis of development into account. I provide this kind of critique at numerous points throughout the book, with the intent that students will learn how to do it themselves by the time they reach the end.

## Emerging Adulthood

Not only is adolescence an inherently fascinating period of life, but we are currently in an especially interesting historical moment with respect to this period. Adolescence in our time begins far earlier than it did a century ago, because puberty begins for most people in industrialized countries at a much earlier age, due to advances in nutrition and health care. Yet, if we measure the end of adolescence in terms of taking on adult roles such as marriage, parenthood, and stable full-time work, adolescence also ends much later than it has in the past, because these transitions are now postponed for many people into at least the mid-20s.

My own research over the past decade has focused on development among young people from their late teens through their mid-20s in the United States and Europe. I have concluded, on the basis of this research, that this period is not really adolescence, but it is not really adulthood either, not even "young adulthood." In my view, the transition to adulthood has become so prolonged that it constitutes a separate period of the life course in industrialized societies, lasting about as long as adolescence. This view is now widely held by other scholars as well.

Thus, a second distinguishing feature of the conception guiding this textbook is that the age period covered includes not only adolescence (ages 10–18) but also "emerging adulthood," extending from (roughly) ages 18 to 25. In theoretical papers, research papers, and two books, I have presented a theory of emerging adulthood, conceptualizing it as the age of identity explorations, the age of instability, the self-focused age, the age of feeling in-between, and the age of possibilities. I describe this theory in some detail in the first chapter, and use it as the framework for discussing emerging adulthood in the chapters that follow. This is mainly a textbook on adolescence, and in any case there is not as much research on emerging



adulthood as there is on adolescence, so the balance of material in each chapter is tilted quite strongly toward adolescence. However, each chapter contains material that pertains to emerging adulthood.

## The Historical Context

Given the differences between adolescence now and adolescence in the past, knowledge of the historical context of development is crucial to a complete understanding of this age period. Students will have a richer understanding of adolescent development if they are able to contrast the lives of young people in the present with the lives of young people in other times. Toward this end, I provide historical material in each chapter. Furthermore, each chapter contains a *Historical Focus* box that describes some aspect of young people's development during a specific historical period—for example, adolescents' family lives during the Great Depression, the "Roaring Twenties" and the rise of youth culture, and work among British adolescents in the 19th century.

An emphasis on the historical context of development is perhaps especially important now, with the accelerating pace of cultural change that has taken place around the world in recent decades due to the influence of globalization. Especially in economically developing countries, the pace of change in recent decades has been dramatic, and young people often find themselves growing up in a culture that is much different than the one their parents grew up in. Globalization is a pervasive influence on the lives of young people today, in ways both promising and troubling, and for this reason I have made it one of the unifying themes of the book.

## An Interdisciplinary Approach

The cultural approach and the emphasis on historical context are related to a fourth distinguishing feature of the conception offered in this book, the interdisciplinary approach to theories and research. Psychology is of course represented abundantly, because this is the discipline in which most research on adolescent development takes place. However, I also integrate materials from a wide range of other fields. Much of the theory and research that is the basis for a cultural understanding of adolescence comes from anthropology, so anthropological studies are strongly represented. Students often find this material fascinating, because it challenges effectively their assumptions about what they expect adolescence to be like. Interesting and important cultural material on adolescence also comes from sociology, especially with respect to European and Asian societies, and these studies find a place here. The field of history is notably represented, for providing the historical perspective discussed above. Other disciplines used for material include education, psychiatry, medicine, and family studies.

The integration of materials across disciplines means drawing on a variety of research methods. The reader will find many different research methods represented here, from questionnaires and interviews to ethnographic research to biological measurements. Each chapter contains a *Research Focus* box, in which the methods used in a specific study are described.

## Chapter Topics

My goal of presenting a fresh conception of young people's development has resulted in chapters on topics not as strongly represented in most other textbooks. Most textbooks have a discussion of moral development, but this textbook has a chapter on cultural beliefs, including moral development, religious beliefs, political beliefs, and a discussion of individualistic and collectivistic beliefs in various cultures. The chapter on cultural beliefs provides a good basis for a cultural understanding of adolescent development, because it emphasizes how cultural beliefs shape the socialization that takes place in every other context of development, from family to schools to media.

Most textbooks include a discussion of gender issues at various points, and some include a separate chapter on gender, but in this textbook there is a chapter on gender that focuses on cultural variations and historical changes in gender roles, in addition to discussions of gender issues in other chapters. Gender is a fundamental aspect of social life in every culture, and the vivid examples of gender roles and expectations in non-Western cultures should help students to become more aware of how gender acts as a defining framework for young people's development in their own culture as well.

This textbook also has an entire chapter on work, which is central to the lives of adolescents in developing countries because a high proportion of them are not in school. The work chapter includes extensive discussion of the dangerous and unhealthy work conditions often experienced by adolescents in developing countries as their economies enter the global economy. In industrialized societies, the transition from school to work is an important part of emerging adulthood for most people, and that transition receives special attention in this chapter.

An entire chapter on media is included, with sections on television, music, movies, cigarette advertising, computer games and the Internet, and a new section in the fourth edition on social-networking websites such as Facebook and MySpace. Media are a prominent part of young people's lives in most societies today, but this is a topic that receives surprisingly little attention in most other textbooks. In fact, my textbook is the only major textbook on adolescence to include an entire chapter on media. This neglect is puzzling, given that adolescents in industrialized societies spend more time daily using media than they spend in school, with family, or with friends. I find young people's media uses to be not

only an essential topic but a perpetually fascinating one, and students today almost invariably share this fascination, since they have grown up immersed in a media environment.

One chapter found in most other textbooks but not this one is a chapter on theories. In my view, having a separate chapter on theories gives students a misleading impression of the purpose and function of theories in the scientific enterprise. Theories and research are intrinsically related, with good theories inspiring research and good research leading to changes and innovations in theories. Presenting theories separately turns theory chapters into a kind of Theory Museum, separate and sealed off from research. Instead, I present theoretical material throughout the book, in relation to the research the theory has been based on and has inspired.

Each chapter contains a number of *Thinking Critically* questions. Critical thinking has become a popular term in academic circles and it has been subject to a variety of definitions, so I should explain how I used the term here. The purpose of the critical thinking questions is to inspire students to attain a higher level of analysis and reflection about the ideas and information in the chapters than they would be likely to reach simply by reading the chapter. With the critical thinking questions I seek to encourage students to connect ideas across chapters, to consider hypothetical questions, and to apply the chapter materials to their own lives. Often, the questions have no “right answer.” Although they are mainly intended to assist students in attaining a high level of thinking as they read, instructors have told me that the questions also serve as lively material for class discussions or writing assignments.

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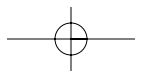
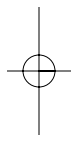
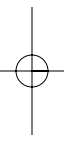
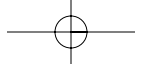
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The author with his wife Lene Jensen and soon-to-be adolescents Miles and Paris, age 9.

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