



Psychology 2950 (Sec. 01): Psychology of Adulthood and Aging Fall 2009

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Office: Webster Hall 304

#Office hours: Mondays and Wednesdays 1:00 pm – 2:00 pm.

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#Although I have an “open door policy,” advance notice is certainly welcome and appreciated.

*Email is the preferred method of communication and is the best way to reach me.

Historically, much of the research on human development has focused primarily on infancy, childhood, and adolescence. However, taking a life-span perspective, we recognize that development is a lifelong process. The adult years comprise as much as 75% of the human life span, yet much of what many individuals know about this period is based on stereotypes and myths. Consequently, this course will focus on development from during the adult years while also considering the role of early-life factors in later development. Further, because development is multidimensional, we will examine various domains of adult development, including biological, psychological, and social, and how these domains interact with one another.

Successful completion of this course will enable you to understand and evaluate the major historical trends, perspectives, research methods, theories, and findings within the field of adult development and aging, and to apply this knowledge to your everyday life. Further, students who complete this course should come away with a greater appreciation about the diversity of the aging experience.

Course Details:

The Fall 2009 edition of this course (3 CR) is scheduled to meet MONDAYS, WEDNESDAYS, and FRIDAYS from 10:00 – 10:50 am in Webster Hall (WEBH) 323.

Prerequisite(s):

PSYC 1100 or permission of instructor. In addition, all students who take this course should be capable of integrating and evaluating information, thinking critically, and writing at the college level.

Required Text:

Whitbourne, S. K. (2008). *Adult Development and Aging* (3rd ed.). Wiley: Hoboken, NJ.

Need for Accommodations:

If any student in this course has a need for special arrangements, such as note-taking assistance or other accommodations because of a documented disability, please feel free to discuss this with me privately. The college has professionals to guide, counsel, and assist students with disabilities or learning differences. The Academic Resource Center (Loretto Hall Rm. 6; x7495) will evaluate and approve your accommodation needs. If you receive services from the Academic Resource Center that require accommodations in this class, you will need to inform me, but I will hold any information you share in strictest confidence unless you inform me otherwise. Again, please feel free to make an appointment with me to discuss any specific needs you may have. If you have a disability and have no need for accommodation, the use of the Academic Resource Center or discussing the issues with me is voluntary.

Course Objectives:

Objective 1: To gain a better understanding of the field of adult development and aging, both historic and current.

Objective 2: To increase your basic knowledge of the individual and interactive influences of biology and the environment on adult development and aging.

Objective 3: To help you imagine your own future, as well as the future of your family, friends, and society.

Objective 4: To become familiar with research methods commonly used by developmental psychologists and the scientific method, as well as the benefits and limitations of this method of inquiry, as it related to adult development and aging.

Objective 5: To develop critical thinking skills related to the application of empirical (research) findings.

Objective 6: To develop a greater appreciation about the diversity of the aging experience.

Objective 7: To foster an awareness of “best practices” that you can apply to your own life.

Course Policies and Expectations:

1. Given the multidisciplinary nature of the study of adult development and aging, the field is quite broad and thus there is a great deal of information to cover. With this in mind, **class attendance is expected and strongly encouraged**, given that material will be presented that is not in the book and missing class can adversely impact your grade.

2. It should be noted that, as is common in many university-level courses, class meetings will be devoted primarily to enhancing, rather than duplicating, the textbook material. Thus, other than for the first meeting, **I expect you to have read the assigned material in advance**. This expectation allows the class to be more interactive, which will (ideally) result in class meetings characterized more by “us” discussing the material instead of you simply listening to me lecture. Please come to class with your thoughts, questions, and comments ready to contribute and participate.

Note that a portion of your final grade will be determined by your active participation in the course. If it becomes apparent that students are not reading the material, I reserve the right to give pop quizzes at the beginning of the class.

3. Missed notes cannot be borrowed from me. Therefore, I strongly encourage you to get to know at least a few of your fellow classmates and once you do, consider jotting down their email addresses in case you need to catch up on notes or announcements in the event that you miss a class.

4. I will be using WorldClassRoom (aka “Blackboard”), an online course management program, to post grades, select notes, announcements, and other course information. I will also use the email function within WorldClassRoom in order to communicate most efficiently with the class. This means that you are **EXPECTED** to periodically access the course site and to retrieve (and respond to, when appropriate) the information emails I send through this software. You should spend some time on the course website as soon as possible, particularly if you are “new” to WorldClassRoom. If you’re having trouble, just ask!

WorldClassRoom may be accessed in your “Student” tab through your Webster University Connections account. If you have any problems accessing WorldClassRoom information for this course, please contact the University’s Help Desk at 426-5995.

5. Please respect others in the class by turning off all cell phones and pagers before entering the room. As members of a professional community, your behavior should communicate a respect for your colleagues. Thus, out of respect for others, please turn off all electronic devices before class begins. Laptops may be used in class but are only to be utilized for class related activities (e.g., taking notes) and their use is restricted to the back or sides of the classroom so that other students are not distracted during lecture. This expectation falls under “Class Participation” (discussed in greater detail below).

6. Note that I do not give Incompletes and thus students who fail to complete any and all course requirements will receive final grades corresponding to points earned.

Academic Integrity:

Academic dishonesty includes but is not limited to: stealing or altering test instruments or other course materials; offering, giving, or receiving unauthorized assistance on course assignments; and submitting another’s work as your own.

Any student who deliberately or unintentionally submits an assignment as his/her own work which is in any part taken from another person’s work without proper acknowledgment is guilty of plagiarism. That includes downloading papers or other information from the internet, and claiming it as one’s own. Punitive action for a student guilty of plagiarism or cheating may include a grade of **“F” for the assignment OR dismissal from the course with a grade of “F” – at the discretion of the instructor.** **Note:** All papers submitted for this course are subject to review using TurnItIn, the University’s plagiarism database.

Ignorance regarding any form of cheating or plagiarism is not an excuse. Here are some websites that may help you avoid the issue of plagiarism, particularly plagiarism due to paraphrasing too closely to the original source(s):

- [Establishing Authorship by Paul C. Smith, Alverno College](http://www.webster.edu/~woolfm/author1.htm)
(<http://www.webster.edu/~woolfm/author1.htm>)
- [APA's Style Guide](http://www.uwsp.edu/PSYCH/apa4b.htm) (<http://www.uwsp.edu/PSYCH/apa4b.htm>)
- [Avoiding Plagiarism](http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/589/01/) (<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/589/01/>)
- [The University of Indiana's Online Plagiarism Tutorial](http://www.indiana.edu/~istd/)
(<http://www.indiana.edu/~istd/>) - You can print out a certificate of completion!

Course Requirements and Grading:

Your final course grade will be based on the number of points you earn through various assessments including:

1. **THREE (3) objective in-class examinations, each worth 100 pts (Total = 300 pts possible).** I strongly believe that assessment should be multidimensional. Thus, I believe it is important that you not only demonstrate your understanding of the course material, but that you are able to articulate and apply your knowledge in a variety of ways. Therefore, each exam will include items from both the assigned readings and additional lecture information. **Please note, lecture does not entirely duplicate the text, and some important topics will only be covered in the readings.**

Please note: All exams must be taken on the date scheduled except in case of an emergency. If you know you will miss an exam for a credible reason (e.g., death in family, university-sponsored event, illness), you should speak with me in order to try to schedule a time to take the exam early. NO make-up exams will be made available to make up for a missed exam.

2. **Attendance and participation in FIVE (5) family meetings, each worth 20 points (Total = 100 pts possible).** At the beginning of the semester you will be assigned to a classroom family for the duration of the semester. Within this family, you will develop and assume a particular role (e.g., 45 year old working mom, 78 year old widower, 25 year old slacker son who lives in the basement and appears to be on the seven year plan) for meetings with your family. During certain periods of the semester when an exam is not scheduled, we will break into our families for meetings to discuss and address a particular issue relevant to your family. All issues will relate to a particular topic we've covered in class. Examples of issues include Grandma Helen slipping in the driveway (physical aging), the birth of a child (family roles), Grandpa Pete's impairment due to Alzheimer's disease (caregiving), and your great aunt's desire to remain in a home that is probably too large for her current needs and lifestyle (successful aging).

During family meetings, family members will explore with each other how they might deal with the issue, how they might each experience it differently by virtue of their

different roles, and how their ethnic and socio-economic context might affect their experience. During each meeting, one person will take notes and be designated the family's representative for that meeting. The representative will present to the class a brief summary of the family's response to the issue at hand and submit the notes (signed by all family members who participated in the meeting) to the instructor. Note that all family members are required to take notes and serve as the family representative at least once during the course of the semester. Although it probably makes the most sense to serve as representative on the day you take notes, this is certainly not a requirement. As with most family responsibilities, contributing roles should be negotiated with the other members of your family.

- 3. THREE (3) written assignments, each worth 25 points (Total = 75 pts possible).** In addition to attendance and participation in the family meetings, each student is responsible for completing three written assignments corresponding to the topics discussed during the family meetings. These assignments will require you to explain in detail how the issue facing your family affected **you** (well, not you personally, but "you" in your fictional role) and how **you** dealt with it. These papers are an opportunity for you to demonstrate your knowledge of a particular developmental issue faced in the adult life course and apply your knowledge to a real life scenario. Thus, it will be important to draw from lectures, the textbook and other sources (e.g., PsychInfo journal articles) as you compose your responses. Although family meetings will be critical to helping you think through the issues for yourself, the papers **should not** be simple summaries of those family meetings. Papers should be typed (Times New Roman or Arial 12-point font, 1" margins) and no more than two double-spaced pages. Note that you are only required to submit three written assignments, although families will meet five times over the course of the semester.
- 4. Class participation (Total = 25 pts possible).** Although I do not necessarily believe in "attendance points" at the university-level, your involvement as an active, contributing member of the class IS certainly valued. As discussed in the "Course Policies and Expectations" section, it is expected that you will come to class having read the material and that you will be conversant on the readings listed for each date. And as discussed in Expectation #5 above, your behavior should communicate a respect for your colleagues and clearly, those who disrupt the class adversely affect everyone's learning. Although the vast majority of students do contribute positively to the class, students who are disrespectful or distracting will be asked to leave class and should expect to see a significant reduction in his or her grade. Thus, your grade for class participation will include, but will not be limited to, attendance, attention, asking questions, answering questions, and contributing opinions.
- 5. OPTIONAL research participation (Total = 10 pts possible):** Research is a critical component in the behavioral and social sciences. The experience of being a research participant can further your understanding of psychological concepts and help you become a better consumer of research. Thus, you may earn extra credit towards your final grade by:

(1) Completing up to 2 credit hours (approximately 60 minutes) of social science research participation during the course of the semester. Each credit hour is worth 5 points towards your final grade (for a total of 10 possible points of extra credit).

(2) Reviewing two journal articles. Articles selected for this option must be from a reputable psychology journal (not *Cosmo*, *Psychology Today*, etc.) and be approved by me beforehand. Please let me know if you require assistance locating suitable articles. If you select this option, you will be required to type out your review (double-spaced with one inch margins) following specific guidelines that will be accessible via the course website. Each review is worth a maximum of 5 points.

Please note: You may earn a maximum of 10 points of extra credit from the research participation options. If interested, you are free to accumulate these 10 points in any combination of research participation and/or article reviews.

With these requirements in mind, there are a maximum of **500 points** available in this course. Final grades will be assigned according to the following scale:

90 – 100%	450 – 500	A-,A Superior Work
80 – 89%	400 – 449	B-,B,B+ Good Work
70 – 79%	350 – 399	C-,C,C+ Satisfactory Work
60 – 69%	300 – 349	D,D+ Passing, but less than Satisfactory
< 60%	0 – 299	Failing

Please note: Aside from the optional research participation, there are NEITHER bonus points NOR extra credit offered in this course. There are sufficient points that may be earned through exams, in- and out-of-class activities, and participation. To do well in this course, you should:

1. Read the assigned materials on time.
2. Attend and actively participate in every scheduled class.
3. Attend and actively participate in every family meeting.
4. Review your notes and readings regularly.
5. Complete in- and out-of-class assignments and activities on time.
6. Use the resources available to you. A link to a great resource is included in your textbook. You can access a variety of interesting and helpful course materials at the companion website: <http://www.wiley.com/college/whitbourne>.

COURSE CALENDAR AND ASSIGNMENTS

Date	Topic/Plan (Corresponding Readings)	Assignments and Special Notes
<i>Week 1 (Aug. 24th – 28th)</i>		
	Course Introduction (Syllabus); What is development?	
	Themes and Issues in Adult Development and Aging (Ch. 1)	
	Themes and Issues (cont'd)	Assign families

<i>Week 2 (Aug. 31st – Sep. 4th)</i>	
Models of Adult Development and Aging (Ch. 2)	
Models of Adult Development and Aging (cont'd)	
Models of Adult Development and Aging (cont'd)	Aug. 28th – Family Meeting 1
<i>Week 3 (Sep. 7th – Sep. 11th)</i>	
Sep. 7th NO CLASS: Labor Day	
How do we study adult development and aging? (Ch. 3)	
How do we study adult development and aging? (cont'd)	
<i>Week 4 (Sep. 14th – Sep. 18th)</i>	
Section wrap-up; review	
Sep. 16th Exam 1 (Chapters 1-3)	
Physical Changes (Ch. 4)	
<i>Week 5 (Sep. 21st – Sep. 25th)</i>	
Physical Changes (cont'd)	
Cognitive Changes (Ch. 6)	
Cognitive Changes (cont'd)	
<i>Week 6 (Sep. 28th – Oct. 2nd)</i>	
Summary of physical and cognitive changes (Review Ch. 4 and 6)	Sep. 28th – Family Meeting 2
Language, Problem Solving, and Intelligence (Ch. 7)	
Language, Problem Solving, and Intelligence (cont'd)	
<i>Week 7 (Oct. 5th – 9th)</i>	
Health and Wellness (Ch. 5)	
Oct. 7th NO CLASS: WebsterWorks Worldwide Community Service Day http://www.webster.edu/www/	
Health and Wellness (cont'd)	
<i>Week 8 (Oct. 12th – 16th)</i>	
Health and Wellness (cont'd)	
Mental Health (Ch. 11)	
Mental Health (cont'd)	
October 19th – 23rd NO CLASSES: Fall Break	
<i>Week 9 (Oct. 26th – 30th)</i>	
Summary of health	Oct. 26th – Family Meeting 3
Section wrap-up; Review	
Oct. 30th Exam 2 (Chapters 4 -11)	
<i>Week 10 (Nov. 2nd – Nov. 6th)</i>	

End-of-life Issues: Long-term Care (Ch. 12)	
End-of-life Issues: Long-term Care (cont'd)	
End-of-life Issues: Death and Dying (Ch. 13)	
<i>Week 11 (Nov. 9th – Nov. 13th)</i>	
End-of-life Issues: Death and Dying (cont'd)	
Summary of end-of-life issues	Nov. 11th – Family Meeting 4
Personality and Coping (Ch. 8)	
<i>Week 12 (Nov. 16th – Nov. 20th)</i>	
Personality and Coping (cont'd)	
Personality and Coping (cont'd)	
Relationships (Ch. 9)	
<i>Week 13 (Nov 23rd – Nov. 27th)</i>	
Relationships (cont'd)	
Summary of personality, relationships, and coping	
Nov. 27th	
NO CLASS: Eat turkey, nap, watch football (if you're into such things)	
<i>Week 14 (Nov. 30th – Dec. 4th)</i>	
Work, Retirement, and Leisure (Ch. 10)	
Work, Retirement, and Leisure (cont'd)	
Successful Aging (Ch. 14)	
<i>Week 15 (Dec. 7th – Dec. 11th)</i>	
Successful Aging (cont'd)	Dec. 7th – Family Meeting 5
Course wrap-up; review	
Dec. 11th	
NO CLASS: University Reading Day in Preparation for Finals	
<i>Week 16 (Dec. 14th – 18th)</i>	
Dec. 16th	
Final Exam (Chapters 8-10; 12-14) 8:00 am – 10:00 am.	

DISCLAIMER

These dates are somewhat flexible and are subject to change at my discretion. I will notify you of any such changes in class as soon as possible (which is yet another great reason to attend class). I also reserve the right to have in class activities and/or assignments with or without notice.