

9-2014

# PSYX 233.50: Fundamentals of the Psychology of Aging

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## Recommended Citation

O'Brien, Patricia Anne, "PSYX 233.50: Fundamentals of the Psychology of Aging" (2014). *Syllabi*. 1587.  
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# Psyx 233: Fundamentals of the Psychology of Aging

## Fall 2014

### **Instructor Information**

Instructor: Patricia O'Brien

Email: [patricia.obrien@umontana.edu](mailto:patricia.obrien@umontana.edu)

Email is the best way to contact me. It is my policy to respond to all e-mails within 24-hours during the school week (Monday-Friday). I will gladly meet with students by request at the UM University Center or Skaggs Building.

[Psychology Department Website](#)

### **Required Text**

[Adult Development and Aging](#) (6th edition), by Cavanaugh, J. C. & Blanchard-Fields, F. (2011), published by Wadsworth/Thomson Learning.

### **Additional Readings:**

Additional supplemental readings will be posted throughout the class. These readings will be posted online through your Moodle account.

### **Course Overview:**

The primary objective of this course is to provide an overview of issues relevant to adult development and aging. The class is taught from a biological, psychological, and social perspective.

Specific topics to be covered include developmental theoretical orientations, developmental research design, physical and sensory changes, relationships, personality, memory, dementia, wisdom, death and dying, and other topics.

The required text, digital course content, and online discussion forums will be used. Online course materials and discussions will expand upon information presented in the text. Students will be graded on the timely completion and quality of required weekly discussion postings, four assignments and five exams.

### **Structure of the Course:**

Online lecture materials and online discussion forums will be used. Lectures and discussions will expand upon information presented in the text; thus, it is highly recommended that you read the required chapter before participating in class discussions. Due to the high volume of information that needs to be presented, frequent engagement in the forum is essential to satisfactory performance.

CRITICAL NOTE: I do not allow technical issues as a reason for late or incomplete work. To ensure your own protection, please keep technical support contact information available offline and please do not wait until the last minute to complete your work each week!

## Course Assignments and Grading:

Your final grade will be based on 805 possible points, distributed as follows:

- Responses to weekly discussions:  
(14 forums total at 30 points each + Week1 at 15pts) = 435 Discussion Points
- Four written assignments: (30 points each) = 120 Assignment Points
- Five Exams: (50 points each) = 250 Exam Points
- = **805 Total points**

## Grading Scale:

A = 724-805 (90-100%)

B = 644-723 (80- 89%)

C = 563-643 (70-79%)

D = 483-562 (60-69%)

F = 0-482 (0-59%)

## Exams:

- Five exams will be given during the semester, each worth 50 points.
- Exams will be multiple-choice, true/false, and short answer.
- Exams will be available for one week via Moodle, and must be submitted by 11:59pm on the Sunday of the week they are due.
- Once you start the exam, you have 2 hours to complete it. It is your responsibility to choose a time and place in which you will be able to complete the exam in one sitting.
- Late exams will not be accepted, regardless of technical difficulties.
- Makeup exams will not be offered without prior notice and appropriate documentation.
- Exams are open-book and open-note. However, 2-hours is not enough time to look-up answers to all of the questions. It is highly recommended that you study prior to each exam.
- You are expected to take the exam alone, without the assistance of others (Honesty Policy).

## Written Assignments:

- Students will complete four written assignments, each worth 30 points.
- Students will have the option to select four assignments from a list of several options posted on the course Moodle site.
- Assignments should be uploaded to Moodle by 11:59pm on the Sunday of the week they are due.
- Late assignments will be docked 5 points for each day they are late, including weekends.
- Assignments should be 2 (min) to 4 (max) pages, written in APA format: Double spaced, 1-inch margins, Times New Roman font, APA citation/reference format
- Papers will be graded according to quality of content, grammar, APA format and overall readability.
- Plagiarism (including other students' current or previous work) will result in a zero on the assignment and disciplinary action from the University.

## Discussion Forums:

Doing well on the Discussion Forum assignments requires consistent and detailed participation.

Grades are based on:

- Attendance
- Quality of posts

The three charts below explain how your discussion posts are graded.

### Attendance Score

Students are first graded on whether you met the requirement that to post a minimum of 3 days/week. Ten points are docked for each day you are short of the requirement.

<u>ATTENDANCE GRADING (30 points possible)</u>		
Students must post (respond) a <u>minimum of three separate days per week</u> . You can post more than three days, and post more than three times, but at a minimum, you must post on three separate days.	3 days	30 points
	2 days	20 points
	1 day	10 points
	0 days	0 points

Once the number of days is calculated, students are then graded based on their contributions to the discussion. Points are deducted, not added, from the points earned above, to yield a final weekly “attendance” score. (Students cannot earn negative points. The lowest possible score is zero.)

### Quality Score

Students must make a post to the discussion question (DQ) in the weekly discussion forum.	Each day late	2 pts lost
Each weekly DQ post will be due by Monday		
Students must post (respond) to a <u>minimum of three of their peers</u> . You can post to more than three, but at a minimum, you must reply to three of your peers. This promotes student engagement with each other, rather than just responding to the DQ posted by the instructor	3 peers	0 pts lost
	2 peers	3 pts lost
	1 peer	6 pts lost
	0 peers	9 pts lost

Once I have calculated your final weekly “attendance” score, then I grade the quality of your posts, as explained in greater detail on the following page. Again, these points are deducted, not added, from the

final weekly attendance score, to yield a final weekly “Discussion” score. (Students cannot earn negative points. The lowest score is a zero.)

<u>QUALITY GRADING</u>		
Students must to make detailed and thoughtful posts that reflect an appropriate application of emerging knowledge and vocabulary in the topic area. Each post must add value to the discussion and be related to the required readings for the week. Below are additional details of how I grade the quality of your posts.	Superior	0 pts lost
	Above Average	4 pts lost
	Average	8 pts lost
	Below Average	12 pts lost
	Unacceptable	16 pts lost

**Superior:** Your contributions demonstrate a complete mastery of the materials assigned. Your responses might integrate multiple views and/or show strong analysis and reflection on topics and other student’s posts. You provide evidence that you are reading the assigned materials and other student postings and are responding accordingly, bringing out interesting interpretations. You know the facts and are able to analyze them, apply them to real life scenarios and handle conceptual ideas. It is highly unlikely that you could get full credit in less than two paragraphs.

**Above Average:** Your responses build on the ideas of other participants and dig deeper into assignment questions or issues. When you make intelligent posts during the week, including some good critique of the course material, then you have demonstrated you have an understanding of the material, are reading posts of your colleagues, and are contributing to the class. Your posts demonstrate confidence with the materials, but may be just a bit off target in one area or another.

**Average:** You have meaningful interaction with other participants' postings. Posts that state, “I agree” or “I disagree” and include a detailed explanation of what is disagreed or agreed upon and why, or introduce a perspective or concept that adds to the discussion. However, you may have rambling, lengthy posts with no clear point, your writing has a lack of clarity and comprehension, or there are considerable typos and grammatical errors.

**Below Average:** You answer questions asked by me or other students but do not expand upon your response or you answer questions based only on your opinion, rather than on research or proper evidence. Your posts are unusually short (one paragraph or less) and you fail to demonstrate a clear working knowledge of the material covered for the week.

**Unacceptable:** You will receive little credit in the week's discussion by just showing up and making trivial comments, without adding any new thought to the discussion. At the low end of the spectrum, no participation gets a "0." If you are not in the discussion, you do not earn any points. Comments such as “I agree” or other one-sentence responses will result in zero points. Copying and

pasting from a website without providing your own substantial insight is also an unacceptable post- even if you have properly cited your sources. This assignment is an assessment of your understanding of the information covered in this class. Copying and pasting from websites does not demonstrate a working knowledge of the material.

**Special Note:** I check very carefully for plagiarism in the discussion posts. If you have plagiarized, you will get a zero for the entire assignment. If you plagiarize a second time, you will fail the course. If you engage in flaming behavior in the posts, you will get a zero for the entire assignment.

**Course Schedule:** Schedule is subject to change. Additional supplemental readings may be added.

<b>Date</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Readings</b>	<b>What's Due</b>	<b>Exams</b>
<b>Week 1</b> 8/25-8/29	Welcome & Introduction	See Moodle for assigned readings	Week 1 Discussion	
<b>Week 2</b> 9/2-9/5	Research Methods	Chapter 1	Week 2 Discussion	
<b>Week 3</b> 9/8-9/12	Neuroscience	Chapter 2	Week 3 Discussion	
<b>Week 4</b> 9/15-9/19	Physical Changes	Chapter 3	Week 4 Discussion	<b>Exam 1</b> Chapters 1-2
<b>Week 5</b> 9/22-9/26	Longevity, Health and Functioning	Chapter 4	Week 5 Discussion <b>Assignment #1</b>	
<b>Week 6</b> 9/29-10/3	Person-Environment Interactions	Chapter 5	Week 6 Discussion	
<b>Week 7</b> 10/6-10/10	Attention and Memory	Chapter 6	Week 7 Discussion	<b>Exam 2</b> Chapters 3-5
<b>Week 8</b> 10/13-10/17	Intelligence	Chapter 7	Week 8 Discussion <b>Assignment #2</b>	
<b>Week 9</b> 10/20-10/24	Social Cognition	Chapter 8	Week 9 Discussion	
<b>Week 10</b> 10/27-10/31	Personality	Chapter 9	Week 10 Discussion	<b>Exam 3</b> Chapters 6-8
<b>Week 11</b> 11/3-11/7	Assessment & Mental Health	Chapter 10	Week 11 Discussion <b>Assignment #3</b>	
<b>Week 12</b> 11/10-11/14	Relationships	Chapter 11	Week 12 Discussion	
<b>Week 13</b> 11/17-11/21	Work, Leisure & Retirement	Chapter 12	Week 13 Discussion	<b>Exam 4</b> Chapters 9-11
<b>Week 14</b> 11/24-11/28	Dying and Bereavement	Chapter 13	Week 14 Discussion <b>Assignment #4</b>	
<b>Week 15</b> 12/1-12-5	Successful Aging	Chapter 14	Week 15 Discussion	
<b>Week 16</b> 12/8-12/12	<b>Finals Week</b>			<b>Exam 5</b> Chapters 12-14

## **Course Policies**

### **Announcements**

Students are responsible for all announcements made in class. These may include changes in policy, due dates, or assignment requirements. Announcements are posted in the announcements section of the course or are directly emailed to the students. Students are responsible for checking their official UM e-mail account (or forwarding their UM account to an email address that is regularly used).

### **Technology Policies**

Please contact UM Online if you experience technical difficulties. Though I would love to be able to help, I am not qualified to do so. Critical Note: I do not allow technical difficulties, or not having the proper software as reasons for late or incomplete work. To ensure your own protection, please keep technical support contact information available offline and please do not wait until the last minute to complete your work each week! To access technical support (and save their contact information offline) please click on the "Tech Support" link to the left of the page.

### **Technical Alternatives**

Also, keep in mind your technical alternatives if you have computer difficulties. If you live near the University, campus computers are an option. Otherwise, consider the public library, an internet café, a computer at work, or a friend or family member's computer. Have a plan of action in mind so that you can complete the required work each week if an issue arises.

### **Assignment Due Dates, Late Work, and Make-up Work**

Written assignments are due on Sunday by 11:59 pm MST, of the week they are assigned.

Please be sure to start your assignments early enough to complete them by the time the week closes.

As a rule, I do not accept late work or allow make up work, except for one "freebie". No reason is required to take advantage of this opportunity, and it is the student's responsibility to contact the instructor to make this happen. Students have 24 hours to make up the work from the time I send the make-up assignment email, and students are not permitted to use the "freebie" at any time during finals week.

### **Students cannot, under any circumstance, make up the discussion posts assignment.**

Due to the interactive nature of this assignment, students must be engaged in this process throughout the week each week in order to receive credit.



To make up multiple missed assignments it is mandatory that you:

- Notify your Instructor before the time of the assignment and,
- Provide proper documentation verifying the reason for your absence. Examples of proper documentation include a medical note or a death or family emergency. Remember, prior notification and documentation is mandatory! You can provide documentation by (a) scanning and emailing the documents, (b) mailing the documents, or (c) arranging to bring them to me in person. I do not allow students to make up work until I have received the proper documents. I do not allow make up work during the week of final exams.

### **Grades of Incomplete**

Departmental and university policies regarding incompletes do not allow changing “incomplete” grades after one year has passed since the “I” was granted.

### **Academic Misconduct**

All students must practice academic honesty. Academic misconduct is subject to an academic penalty by the course instructor and/or a disciplinary sanction by the University. All students need to be familiar with the Student Conduct Code.

### **Plagiarism**

The Student Conduct Code discusses plagiarism. However, it is a serious offense worth re-mentioning. This course requires students to adhere to APA format when citing, paraphrasing, or referencing sources. **If you have plagiarized, either intentionally or accidentally, you will receive a zero on the entire assignment. If you plagiarize a second time, you will fail the course.**

### **Netiquette**

Students must engage in proper “netiquette.” Netiquette, or “network etiquette,” is a professional and mannerly way of communicating with others in the online medium. Failure to engage in proper netiquette will result in earning a zero for each assignment where an incident has occurred.

### **Disability modifications**

The University of Montana assures equal access to instruction through collaboration between students with disabilities, instructors, and Disability Services for Students. If you think you may have a disability adversely affecting your academic performance, and you have not already registered with Disability Services, please contact Disability Services in Lommasson Center 154 or call 406.243.2243. I will work with you and Disability Services to provide an appropriate modification.

### **Dropping/Adding/Changing grade option**

Please refer to the Registrar's website for Add/Drop/Change options