

1-2014

PSYX 233.01: Fundamentals of the Psychology of Aging

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Fundamentals of the Psychology of Aging
Psychology 233- Spring 2014

Instructor: Nicole McCray, Ph.D.

Day/Time: TR 2:10-3:30

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Teaching Assistant: Laurel Anne Yorgason

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COURSE OBJECTIVES:

The primary purpose of this course is to provide students with 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, etc. Students are expected to think critically about the issues and to actively participate in class discussions. The format of the course will rely on both lecture and discussion.

In order to accomplish this objective, it is expected that students will exhibit professional behavior throughout the course. This includes, for example, student attendance, preparedness, and active participation and involvement in class. Students not exhibiting professional behavior may be asked to leave.

RECOMMENDED TEXT:

Cavangaugh, J.C., & Blanchard-Fields, F. (2011/2006). *Adult development and aging* (6th ed.). CA: Wadsworth/Thompson Learning.

GRADING:

Your final course grade will be based upon 260 total possible points that will be distributed as follows:

| | |
|--------------------------|-----|
| 4 Exams (50 points each) | 200 |
| 1 Assignment (50 points) | 50 |
| In-class Activities | 10 |

Course grading will be based on the following point scale:

| | | |
|----|---------|-----------|
| A= | 234-260 | (90-100%) |
| B= | 208-233 | (80- 89%) |
| C= | 182-207 | (70-79%) |
| D= | 156-181 | (60-69%) |
| F= | 0-155 | (0-59%) |

EXAMS:

Four exams will be given during the semester, each worth 50 points. The exams will test your knowledge of topics covered by the course text and information from lecture.

| | |
|----------------------|---|
| Exam format: | Multiple choice. (NCS 50/50 blue/green scantron forms are needed for tests) |
| Exam make-up policy: | When possible, give prior notice of a missed exam. Be prepared to provide reasonable evidence and documentation for missing an exam. Make-up exams may be in a different format than the original exam. |
| Missed exam: | If you miss an exam and do not make arrangements for a make-up exam, you will receive a zero as your grade for that exam. |

ASSIGNMENTS:

There will be an assortment of individual assignments of which you are to pick 1. A total of five options are listed on the last page of your syllabus. These assignments are designed to increase your understanding of a theory/topic. This assignment will contribute 50 points to your final course grade.

NOTES:

1. **Students with disabilities** have the responsibility to disclose their disability to the instructor at the beginning of the course if they require accommodations. Students have the responsibility to arrange for such accommodations with Disability Services for Students (DSS).
2. **Attendance** is not mandatory and role will not be taken. However, your course grade is mostly determined by exams (which will include material from lecture as well as the text).
Course notes are not posted – if you miss class, you are responsible for material covered.
3. **Cell phones** are to be turned off during class, please.
4. **Courtesy** is expected. Come to class on time and stay for the entire session. If you have an emergency and must come in late or early, please do so quietly. Be respectful of the instructor and classmates, do not be a distraction to others.
5. **April 7 is the last day to drop classes with an add/drop form. After that date, no petitions to drop the course will be signed and no Incompletes will be given except in documentable emergency situations.**
6. **The instructor reserves the right to change the syllabus if necessary.**

Class Schedule: Spring 2014

| Date | Topic | Material |
|------------------------------------|---|-----------------------|
| Jan. 28 | Course Overview | |
| Jan. 30 | Theoretical background & Research Methods | Chapter 1 |
| Feb. 4-6 | Neuroscience | Chapter 2 |
| Feb. 11-13 | Physical Changes | Chapter 3 |
| Feb. 18-20 | Longevity, Health, and Functioning | Chapter 4 |
| Tuesday, Feb. 25 | Exam 1 | Chapters 1-4 |
| Feb. 27-Mar. 4 | Person-Environment Interactions | Chapter 5 |
| Mar. 6-11 | Attention and Memory | Chapter 6 |
| Mar. 13-18 | Intelligence | Chapter 7 |
| Mar. 20-25 | Social Cognition | Chapter 8 |
| Thursday, Mar. 27 | Exam 2 | Chapters 5-8 |
| March 31-April 4 | Spring Break! | |
| April 8-10 | Personality | Chapter 9 |
| April 15-17 | Mental Health/Disorders | Chapter 10 |
| Tuesday, April 22 | Assignment Due | |
| April 22-24 | Relationships | Chapter 11 |
| Tuesday, April 29 | Exam 3 | Chapters 9-11 |
| May 1 | Work, Leisure, and Retirement | Chapter 12 |
| | | |
| May 6 | Dying and Bereavement | Chapter 13 |
| May 8 | Successful Aging | Chapter 14 |
| Tuesday, May 13 (1:10-3:10) | Final Exam | Chapters 12-14 |
| | | |

Potential Assignments

From this list of 5, please choose 1 to complete as the assignment portion of this class. Independent of choice, the assignment is due on TUESDAY APRIL 22 - AT THE START OF CLASS. Late assignments will be docked 10 points each day late, including weekends. No emailed submissions will be accepted.

Please note, some of these assignments may take some planning. You must specify the number of the assignment you choose when you turn your paper in.

Assignments must be well-written and complete, as grading will depend on grammar, APA style (if appropriate) and general readability. Assignments should be between 2-4 pages in length, typed, double-spaced, no weird fonts or spacing, and stapled. PAPERS EXCEEDING 4 PAGES (not including references/title page) WILL BE DOCKED 5 POINTS. As always, plagiarism will not be accepted, resulting in action from the psychology department and earning no points for the assignment.

1. Movie Review. Choose a film featuring the elderly and evaluate the portrayal of older adults based on what you have learned in class. Are older adults portrayed in a positive or negative light in the film? Use the myths about aging quiz completed in class and discuss which of the myths were present in the film you choose. Be sure to integrate concepts discussed in class.
2. You have been hired by a large nursing home corporation to aid in the design of their newest facility. Use what you have learned from this course to design the ideal nursing home. Be sure to consider the changing sensory, physical, health, cognitive, and social abilities of older adults. What types of activities would you plan for the residents to contribute to positive outcomes? How would your nursing home contribute to successful aging? Be sure to integrate concepts discussed in class.
3. Write a case study of an older adult. Remember that a case study is a detailed description of the experience of one person. If your fictional older adult suffers from a particular disease, describe their experience, what contributed to the disease, and what factors might influence future outcomes for them. If your fictional adult has “aged successfully,” describe the factors that contributed to this outcome. Be sure to integrate concepts discussed in class.
4. Choose a facility that works with older adults in the community (i.e. The Senior Citizen Center or a nursing home) and arrange a time for you to observe the facility for an hour or more. Perhaps you could attend a lunch or dinner where there are older adults spending time together. Be sure to describe at least 4 concepts outlined in the text (i.e. aging stereotypes, declines in sensory systems, etc.).
5. Choose your own assignment. Must be approved by the instructor. Assignments not previously approved will not be accepted.