

PSYC 415.001: Psychological Factors in Aging  
MWF 12:30p – 1:20p, 205 Innovation Hall

Instructor: Nathan A. Tatro

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Office Hours: Wednesdays, 1:45 – 2:45p and by appointment

Required Text: Hoyer, W.J., & Roodin, P.A. (2003). *Adult Development and Aging, fifth edition*. Boston: McGraw Hill.

Journal Articles Used Throughout the Semester:

Article 1: (**to be e-mailed**): Snowdon, D. A. (1997). Aging and Alzheimer's Disease: Lessons from the Nun Study. *Gerontologist*, 37(2), 150-156.

Article 2 (**to be e-mailed**): Salthouse, T. A. (2006). Mental exercise and mental aging: Evaluating the validity of the “use it or lose it” hypothesis.

Article 3 (**available online**): Charness, N., Kelley, C.L., Bosman, E.A., & Mottram, M. (2001). Word-processing training and retraining: Effects of adult age, experience, and interface. *Psychology and Aging*, 16(1), 110-127.

Article 4 (**available online**): Bookwala, J., & Schulz, R. (1996). Spousal similarity in subjective well-being: The cardiovascular health study. *Psychology and Aging*, 11(4), 582-590.

Article 5: (**to be e-mailed**): Stewart, A.J., & Ostrove, J. M., (1998). Women's personality in middle age: Gender, history and mid-course corrections. *American Psychologist*, 53(11), 1185-1194.

**Course Goals:**

This course explores in-depth the various psychological theories of aging. Lectures will address how the human experience is multidirectional—one shaped by the multiple cognitive, emotional, biological, personality and social changes we experience as we progress from our twenties and into older adulthood. A general theme of this course will be to discuss the underlying mechanistic, organismic, and contextual factors that contribute to typical versus atypical development throughout adulthood, with an emphasis on the variables that are conducive to successful aging.

**Policies:**

- As quizzes and exams will include material not covered in the textbook, all students are expected to attend lecture regularly.
- All students should complete a substantial amount of the assigned reading prior to lecture. Also, because of the small class size, students should come to class prepared to engage in thoughtful discussion.
- Research papers must be turned in on-time in class. Late papers will be accepted, but with a penalty of having one letter grade (i.e., 10 raw points) deducted from the initial grade. Papers handed-in more than 4 days late will receive a zero.
- No in-class quizzes may be made-up. A missed quiz will result in a zero; All article summaries (and the web assignment) must be handed-in on time. No late summaries will be accepted.

- Class participation is expected. Although you will not receive a letter grade for class participation, I will be maintaining a log to track and to quantify student participation (this includes in-class activities and general discussion/debate).

### **Honor Code**

Students are expected to be familiar with and to abide by the **GMU Honor Policy**. All work must be your own and must be cited properly using APA format . Students should be advised that the honor code specifically applies to and has enforced disciplinary procedures for: Plagiarism, lying (to administration or faculty) or falsifying documents, cheating or attempted cheating, and stealing. Please review the honor code: <http://mason.gmu.edu/~montecin/plagiarism.htm>

### **Disabilities Resources:**

If you are a student with a disability and you need academic accommodations, please see me and contact the Disability Resource Center (DRC) at 703-993-2474. All academic accommodations must be arranged through that office.

### **Exams**

Exams will cover both in class lectures, videos, readings from the text, and any assigned journal articles. The three mid-term exams will be comprised of multiple choice, short answer, and essay questions. Students are required to take all exams and no make-up exams will be given; however, the lowest mid-term exam grade (i.e., from exams 1, 2, or 3) will be dropped. If a student misses an exam (for any reason) this will count for the dropped exam grade. **Final exam:** All students must take the final exam. However, if a student has achieved an “A” average by completing all three mid-term exams, as well as all assignments, quizzes and the research paper, that student is exempt from taking the final exam. Exams 1, 2, and 3 will cover the chapters denoted in the class-by-class outline below. The final exam will focus mainly on course material covered during the last third of the course. However (especially for the essay question), students are expected to demonstrate knowledge of some cumulative information. Each exam is worth 100 points. Aside from the aforementioned exemption, the final exam may not be dropped.

### **Quizzes**

There will be 3 quizzes that cover main ideas from the textbook throughout the semester. These quizzes will be all multiple-choice and are worth 15 points each.

### **Research Paper**

Students will choose a topic relevant to the aging process that interests them and write a paper (approximately 5 pages in length) that explores this topic using information from class, the textbook, other assigned readings, and independent sources (i.e. books, journal articles, etc.). Papers need to be the student’s original work, need to be in APA format, and need to cite at least 3 references that are not from class. Examples of appropriate topics will be discussed in class. Your paper topic must be submitted to me in person, or via email, no later than October 16, 2006; it is recommended that the student submit topics earlier. If you’re having trouble choosing a topic, I strongly encourage that you make an appointment to meet with me so that we can choose one together. Papers are to be turned in at the beginning of class on **December 12<sup>th</sup>, 2006**.

### **Article Summaries**

Journal articles used for in-class assignments are cited at the beginning of the syllabus. These articles are relevant to the topics we will be discussing. Each student will be responsible for obtaining, reading, and

providing me with a short summary of each article (three total). The summaries should be no longer than one page and are worth 15 points each.

**Web Assignment:** To be discussed in class

**Final Grade Determination:**

Your final grade in this class will be determined by the following: 3 Mid-term exams; 1 cumulative final exam; 3 in-class quizzes; 3 article summaries; 1 web assignment.

Breakdown of points: 300 (200 for mid-term exams, 100 for final exam) + 45 (3 quizzes at 15 points each), + 45 (3 article summaries at 15 points each) + 10 (one web assignment) + 100 (one research paper) = 500 total possible points. Thus:  $\text{Your total points} / 500 * 100 = \text{Your grade}$ .

<b><u>Date</u></b>	<b><u>In-Class</u></b>	<b><u>Assignment (due)</u></b>
M 8/28	Introduction; syllabus	NONE
W 8/30	Theoretical issues; Determinants of adult developmental change	Chapter 1, pp. 1-11
F 9/01	Successful aging; developmental paradigms	Chapter 1, pp. 11 - 20
<b>Tuesday, 09/05</b> (no class on 09/04 due to Labor Day)	How long will we live?	Chapter 2, pp. 22-38
W 9/06	Class & Longevity	Chapter 2, pp. 22-38
F 9/08	Sex, Ageism & Life Expectancy; <b>Quiz 1</b>	Chapter 2, 39-47
M 9/11	Our Aging Bodies	Chapter 3, 51-62
W 9/13	CNS, PNS and Age Effects	Chapter 3, 62-78
F 9/15	Alzheimer's Disease; The Nun Study; <b>Article Summary 1 Due</b>	Chapter 3, 78-94
M 9/18	Coping: Life Events, Stress & Adaptation	Chapter 4, 99-110
W 9/20	When Kids & Spouses Become Caregivers	Chapter 4, 110 - 132
F 9/22	Autonomy: Too old to be behind the wheel?; Religiosity	Chapter 4, 132 - 141
M 9/25	<b><u>EXAM 1</u></b>	NONE
W 9/27	Review Exam 1; Mental Health in the Elderly	Chapter 5, 147 - 152
F 9/29 ( <b>Last day to drop</b> )	Clinical Depression, Alcohol & Suicide	Chapter 5. 160 - 177
M 10/02	Clinical Intervention Techniques; <b>Quiz 2</b>	Chapter 5, 183 - 199
W 10/04	Functional Abilities	Chapter 6, 205 - 216
F 10/06	Institutionalization	Chapter 6, 228 – 238; <b>Web Assignment #1 Due</b>
<b>Tuesday, 10/10</b> (10/09 is Columbus Day)	Health Risks in the Elderly	Chapter 6, 238 - 252
W 10/11	Promotion of Wellness	Chapter 6, 252 - 268

F 10/13	Age Differences in Memory Systems	Chapter 7, 274 - 291
M 10/16	Nondeclarative & Implicit Memory Differences; <b>Research Paper Topics Due</b>	Chapter 7, 291 - 299
W 10/18	Attention, Learning, & Explanations for Age Differences in A/L/Memory	Chapter 7, 297 - 307
F 10/20	Am I As Smart as I Was: Aging and Intelligence	Chapter 8, 311 - 330
M 10/23	Aging and Creativity	Chapter 8, 330 - 340
W 10/25	Intervention for Intellectual Decline; <b>Article Summary #2 Due</b>	Read Article II: Salthouse
F 10/27	<b>EXAM 2</b>	NONE
M 10/30	Review Exam 2; Cognitive Development: Piaget, Postformal; the Encapsulation Model	Chapter 9, 344 - 357
W 11/01	Wisdom & Expertise	Chapter 9, 357 - 371
F 11/03	Selective Optimization with Compensation; <b>Article Summary #3 Due</b>	Chapter 9, 372 - 375
M 11/06	Personality Theories: Stages and Beyond	Chapter 10, 378 - 392
W 11/8	Longitudinal Studies of Personality Traits	Chapter 10, 392 - 407
F 11/10	Moral Development	Chapter 10, 407 - 418
M 11/13	Interpersonal Relationships	Chapter 11, 429 - 440
W 11/15	Marriage, Parenting and Grandparenting	Chapter 11, 440 - 450
F 11/17	Divorce & Sexuality; <b>Quiz 3</b>	Chapter 11, 450 - 458; Also, read Article 4 (NO summary due)
M 11/20	Death and Decisions	Chapter 13, 513 - 526
W 11/22	Euthanasia and Attitudes Toward Death	Chapter 13, 527 - 536
F 11/24	Coping with Death & Grieving	Chapter 13, 546 - 542; 551 - 562
M 11/27	<b>EXAM 3</b>	NONE
W 11/29	Choosing a Career; Mid-life Career Changes	Chapter 12, 463 - 479
F 12/01	Career Orientations in Middle-Aged Women	Read Article 5 (NO Summary due)
M 12/04	Exam 3 Review; Leisure & Retirement	Chapter 12, 488 - 509; <b>Research Papers Due</b>
W 12/06	Aging Across Cultures	NONE
F 12/08	End Notes; Final Exam Review	NONE
M 12/18	<b>FINAL EXAM</b>	NONE

