

PSYS 423G: Psychology of Adult Development & Aging

Section 751: Online Web Course

Syllabus, Spring 2018

Instructor: Dr. Matthew C. Shake, Ph.D.
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Course Overview & Philosophy

Welcome to PSYS 423! This course examines individual development in human adults, focusing specifically on late/older adulthood. While much of our cultural and educational systems focus on child development, this course will focus exclusively on adulthood, which is the period of life most of us spend the majority of our lives! As we will see in this course, “development” does not happen *only* as a child; rather, the ways in which we learn, think, feel, and behave change dynamically throughout our entire life. In this course we will examine many aspects of aging, such as: physiological changes, healthy functioning, memory, intelligence, psychopathology, relationships, and death/dying. You will gain experience evaluating both theoretical contributions and empirical evidence in developmental psychology.

In this course, you will be exposed to many views, theories, and explanations for human thoughts and behavior. I encourage you to rationally question the information you learn: a crucial part of responsibly producing and consuming research includes not only learning sound arguments for your views, but understanding and appreciating other views as well. This course will focus on psychological aspects of aging; having some background knowledge of psychological principles will be quite helpful, but it is not necessary to complete the course. Many students from outside of psychology take this class, because aging research is often very interdisciplinary. Also keep in mind that psychology is a science, and as an upper-level course you will be expected to read and write about primary scientific research on aging.

I am happy to meet with students and welcome your questions. **However, since this is a web course conducted entirely online, it may be best to reach me by e-mail** (matthew.shake@wku.edu), or less regularly in my office at (270) 745-4312. I usually respond to e-mails within a few hours, unless I am out of town or in class. Please come visit me during office hours, or feel free to schedule other times to meet me.

Graduate Student Expectations

This is a graduate course, and as such, a greater emphasis will be placed on reading, analyzing, and writing about primary scientific research in psychological aging. While much of the work graduate students do will be similar to the undergraduate students in the class, other assignments will be different and are **highlighted in yellow**. Please be sure to consult the syllabus and Dr. Shake if you have any questions about the graduate-level coursework.

Class Policies & Expectations

Active participation is crucial to perform well in this class!

Active participation is necessary in this class. Even though the course is online, students who follow instructions closely and fully participate in assigned coursework tend to do the best in the class. The course will adhere to strict deadlines and all students will be held to the same standards. Please be aware that if you stop participating in the course after the first half of the semester, you may receive a failing grade due to non-attendance (F/N). Grades of Incomplete (X) are only given in extreme emergencies where students have finished more than 50% of the class but can no longer attend class or participate in coursework.

Course Policies:

Announcements regarding any aspect of this class will be done through your university e-mail and/or our Blackboard webpage only. **Therefore, please check your e-mail and Blackboard regularly.**

Academic Integrity:

Enrollment at Western Kentucky University requires adherence to the University's standards of academic integrity. Student work will be checked by plagiarism detection software! **All infractions of academic integrity are serious offenses and are grounds for disciplinary action, including a failing grade, withdrawal from the course, and/or recommendation of suspension from the University. See the university's student handbook for definitions of academic dishonesty, including: cheating, plagiarism, fabrication, obtaining an unfair advantage, aiding/abetting academic dishonesty, falsification of records/documents, and unauthorized access. ANY INFRACTIONS OF ACADEMIC INTEGRITY IN THIS CLASS MAY RESULT IN A GRADE OF "F" FOR THE COURSE.**

Class Evaluations

Final Grades will be assigned based on the following points, using a standard letter grade system:

Quizzes (Best 12 of 13; 45 points each)	540
Reflection Summaries (Best 11 of 13; 20 points each)	220
Adult Development in Action Responses (Choose 5; 20 pts ea.)	100
Aging With Grace Review	80
Aging With Grace Updated Literature Review	200
Life Story Interview	60
Biopsychosocial System Analysis Paper	200
TOTAL	1400

Grades are then converted to percentages, rounded to the nearest whole percentage (i.e., .5 or higher is rounded up, less than .5 is rounded down).

Quizzes:

There will be 13 multiple-choice quizzes during the semester, each on a separate topic. Each exam will cover material from your textbook; therefore, you must keep up with the course readings each week. Only your best 12 quizzes will count toward your final grade. For each quiz, you will have two attempts, and **the average of your two attempts** will be your final score. Therefore, you should be sure you have read and studied the course material prior to

attempting each quiz. Quiz questions may vary on each attempt! Quizzes will be timed, and once you start the quiz the timer cannot be stopped. Quizzes MUST be completed by the deadlines posted in the syllabus (see last page). Because you will have an entire week (in most cases) to take the quiz, there will be no make-ups for missed quizzes. Do not wait until the last minute to complete your quiz.

Reflection Summaries:

There will be 13 short Reflection Summary assignments during the semester. You're your best 11 Reflection Summaries will count toward your grade; the lowest 2 will be dropped. These summaries will provide an *opportunity for you to synthesize the ideas you learn from readings and to creatively apply this material*. These papers will generally be based on an activity, reading, or question, and will generally be 1 or 2 double-spaced pages long (depending on the assignment). Due dates for Reflection Summaries are in the syllabus (see last page). You will receive specific information about each Reflection Summary as they are assigned throughout the semester. Late work will be penalized 10% for each day that it is late.

Adult Development in Action Responses:

Each week in the semester, I will post questions about larger issues/challenges in adult development and aging, and randomly assign a subset of students to respond to them on Blackboard (using the Discussion Board). You will be asked to complete five of these responses during the semester; they will be graded on accuracy, thoroughness, and clarity. Late work will be penalized 10% for each day that it is late.

Aging With Grace Review:

One of your assigned texts is a book by David Snowdon which talks about his research on cognitive abilities and dementia in a group of nuns living together in a convent. You will write a short review during the semester on what his findings were and your impressions of the implications of the research. Specific instructions will be given during the semester. Late work will be penalized 10% for each day that it is late.

Aging With Grace Annotated Bibliography:

Snowdon's book was published in 2002. In the 15 years since then, many studies have been conducting to investigate risk factors and preventive approaches to forms of dementia (e.g., Alzheimer's disease). You will write a literature review that contains at least 8 scientific, peer-reviewed, studies that have come out since 2002 either risk factors and/or preventive approaches for Alzheimer's. Specific instructions will be given during the semester. Late work will be penalized 10% for each day that it is late.

Life Story Interview:

You will conduct a "Life Story Interview" of an older adult, which is an in-depth interview designed to reveal biopsychosocial themes of aging and development. Your interviewee's responses will form part of the basis for your final paper in the course. Specific instructions for writing up the interview responses will be described during the class. Late papers will be penalized 10% for each day that it is late.

Biopsychosocial Systems Analysis Paper:

At the end of the semester you will submit a final paper that focuses on combining the varying facets of aging that we have covered and considers the integrative biopsychosocial system in an aging/adult development context. The paper will require you to draw upon what you have learned during the class, plus additional primary scientific sources and your life story interview. Specific instructions for this final paper will be described during the class. Late papers will be penalized 10% for each day that it is late.

Extra Credit Policy for This Course:

There is NO extra credit available in this course.

Course Materials

There are two required texts for this course:

- Cavanaugh, J.C., & Blanchard-Fields, F. (2015). *Adult development and aging*, 7th ed. Belmont, CA: Cengage Learning.
- Snowdon, D. (2002). *Aging with grace: What the Nun study teaches us about leading longer, healthier, and more meaningful lives*. New York, NY: Bantam Books.

Special Requirements/Accommodations

In compliance with university policy, students with disabilities who require accommodations (academic adjustments and/or auxiliary aids or services) for this course must contact the Office for Student Disability Services in Downing University Center A-200. The OFSDS telephone number is (270)745-5004; TTY is (270)745-3030. Per university policy, please DO NOT request accommodations directly from the professor or instructor without a letter of accommodation from the Office for Student Disability Services.

Class Schedule (Subject to Change) – SEE NEXT PAGE

NOTE: Although this is an online class, there will be specific due dates for course assessments, which are shown below. Pay close attention to the class schedule!

WEEK	DATE	DAY	TOPICS & READINGS	DEADLINES
1	1/22/16	M	Chapter 1 Textbook (Studying Adult Development/Aging); Snowdon Book Pgs. 1-25	
	1/26/16	F		Reflection Summary 1 Due 11:59 PM; Adult Development in Action Response Due 11:59 PM
2	1/29/16	M	Chapter 2 Textbook (Neuroscience in Adult Development/Aging); Snowdon Book Pgs. 26-51	Quiz 1 Due by 9:00 AM
	2/2/16	F		Reflection Summary 2 Due 11:59 PM; Adult Development in Action Response Due 11:59 PM
3	2/5/16	M	Chapter 3 Textbook (Physical Changes); Snowdon Book Pgs. 52-83	Quiz 2 Due by 9:00 AM
	2/9/16	F		Reflection Summary 3 Due 11:59 PM; Adult Development in Action Response Due 11:59 PM
4	2/12/16	M	Chapter 4 Textbook (Longevity, Health, Functioning); Snowdon Book Pgs. 84-119	Quiz 3 Due by 9:00 AM
	2/16/16	F		Reflection Summary 4 Due 11:59 PM; Adult Development in Action Response Due 11:59 PM
5	2/19/16	M	Chapter 5 Textbook (Person-Environment Interactions); Snowdon Book Pgs. 120-158	Quiz 4 Due by 9:00 AM
	2/23/16	F		Reflection Summary 5 Due 11:59 PM; Adult Development in Action Response Due 11:59 PM
6	2/26/16	M	Chapter 6 Textbook (Attention & Memory); Snowdon Book Pgs. 159-219	Quiz 5 Due by 9:00 AM
	3/2/16	F		Reflection Summary 6 Due 11:59 PM; Adult Development in Action Response Due 11:59 PM
7	3/5/16	M	Chapter 7 Textbook (Intelligence, Reasoning, Wisdom)	Quiz 6 Due by 9:00 AM; Aging With Grace Review Due by 9:00 AM
8	3/9/16	F		Reflection Summary 7 Due 11:59 PM; Adult Development in Action Response Due 11:59 PM
	3/19/18	M	Chapter 8 Textbook (Social Cognition)	Quiz 7 Due by 9:00 AM; Life Story Interview Write-Up Due by 9:00 AM; Aging With Grace Literature Review Due by 9:00 AM
9	3/23/18	F		Reflection Summary 8 Due 11:59 PM; Adult Development in Action Response Due 11:59 PM
	3/26/18	M	Chapter 9 Textbook (Personality)	Quiz 8 Due by 9:00 AM
10	3/30/18	F		Reflection Summary 9 Due 11:59 PM; Adult Development in Action Response Due 11:59 PM
	4/2/18	M	Chapter 10 Textbook (Clinical Assessment, Mental Health)	Quiz 9 Due by 9:00 AM
11	4/6/18	F		Reflection Summary 10 Due 11:59 PM; Adult Development in Action Response Due 11:59 PM
	4/9/18	M	Chapter 11 Textbook (Relationships)	Quiz 10 Due by 9:00 AM
12	4/13/18	F		Reflection Summary 11 Due 11:59 PM; Adult Development in Action Response Due 11:59 PM
	4/16/18	M	Chapter 12 Textbook (Work, Leisure, Retirement)	Quiz 11 Due by 9:00 AM
13	4/20/18	F		Reflection Summary 12 Due 11:59 PM; Adult Development in Action Response Due 11:59 PM
	4/23/18	M	Chapter 13 Textbook (Dying & Bereavement)	Quiz 12 Due by 9:00 AM
14	4/27/18	F		
15	4/30/18	M	N/A - Work on Final Paper	Quiz 13 Due by 9:00 AM
	5/4/18	F	N/A - Work on Final Paper	
16	7-May	M		Final Paper (Biopsychosocial System Analysis) Due on 5/7 by 11:59 PM