

PSYCHOLOGY OF AGING (50:830:328)
SPRING, 2021

COURSE INFORMATION

Time: Wednesday, 6-8:50pm (*we will have a virtual meeting each week from **7-8pm**)

Location: Online

Course web page (Canvas): <https://rutgers.instructure.com/courses/119509>

Course pre-requisite: 50:830:255 or 256

INSTRUCTOR

Kristin August, Ph.D.

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Phone: (856) 225-6431

Office hours: Via Zoom or phone by appointment

TEACHING ASSISTANT

Stacey Alston

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is designed to give you a broad overview of the field of psychology of aging/gerontology. The focus on later life will be examined from a multidisciplinary perspective, using a lifespan developmental framework. We will cover fundamental theories, major topics, and characteristic methods in the psychology of aging. Topics include changes in physical, cognitive, social, and personality functions; mental health issues; retirement; long term care; death and dying; and successful aging.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

The learning objectives of this course are consistent with the goals of the department. Course readings, lectures, in-class activities, and assignments are designed to assess these learning objectives. Upon successful completion of this course, you should be able to:

- Identify key theories, concepts, and methods in the psychology of aging.
- Critically analyze psychology of aging-related research.
- Clearly and effectively communicate ideas related to the psychology of aging (orally and in writing).
- Increase personal awareness of issues in aging and the aging process

REQUIRED READINGS

- Whitbourne, S.K. & Whitbourne, S.B. (2020). *Adult development and aging: Biopsychosocial perspectives* (7th ed.). New York, NY: John Wiley and Sons.
*The text is available for purchase at the bookstore or online; it also is available on reserve at the Robeson Library.
- Additional required readings will be available on the Canvas course web page at least one week in advance (under each week's module).

GRADING

Grades will be determined as follows:

Discussion posts (8 @ 5 points)	40 points
Quizzes (5 @ 6 points)	30 points (weighted to =20 points)
Research paper	20 points
Reflections on aging assignment	10 points
Attendance/participation during virtual class sessions	<u>10 points</u>
	100 TOTAL POINTS

Letter grades:

- A: 90-100 points
- B+: 85-89 points
- B: 80-84 points
- C+: 75-79 points
- C: 70-74 points
- D: 60-69 points
- F: Less than 60 points

GRADES

You can view your grades using the Grades button in the Canvas course navigation. Please check your grades regularly to make sure that I have received all your assignments. If you have a question about a grade, please email me.

ONLINE FORMAT

This course involves readings, lecture material, videos, and frequent online assessments, including active discussions and quizzes; you will be doing most of this work on your own time. You also will also be expected to be available via Zoom at our regularly scheduled class period (Wednesday evenings) each week from 7-8pm. You are encouraged to use video during our virtual meetings, but you are not required to do so. This course will use Canvas for all course-related activities (for questions about using Canvas, see: <https://guides.instructure.com/m/4212>).

If you do not have a computer and reliable internet, as well as an up-to-date browser and Word processing software, please contact me as soon as possible. Some of the documents in this course will be available to you in PDF form. If you do not have Adobe Acrobat Reader software on your computer, you can download it by going to <http://get.adobe.com/reader/>. If you have word processing software other than Microsoft Word (.doc), you will need to save your document as a PDF first before uploading any assignments.

Deadlines are strictly enforced, as students work to achieve learning objectives. **The class follows a rigorous schedule and you should expect to be working at least as many hours as with a traditionally-scheduled class.**

As much as possible, we will be sticking with a consistent schedule during the week. All materials (e.g., readings, lecture, discussion questions, quizzes) will be posted by the Thursday prior to each week’s module.

Thur	Fri	Sat	Sun	Mon	Tues	Wednesday
Module						
Complete assigned readings, lecture, videos						Class meeting (7-8pm); Reflections on aging assignment /presentation DUE
			Discussion post (DUE by 11:59pm) *Only 10 will be assigned, with 8 required		Reply to a classmate’s discussion post (DUE by 11:59pm)	Quiz on modules (DUE by 11:59pm) *Only 7 will be assigned, with 5 required

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

DISCUSSION POSTS: To promote critical thinking about the course material, connect the material to your own experiences, and improve your written communication skills, you will be expected to respond to 8 discussion questions posted on Canvas (10 will be assigned, but you can choose whichever 8 to respond to; if you choose to do more than 8, your lowest grades will be dropped). You must respond to one of the questions AND also respond to one of your classmate's posts. Each discussion is worth 5 points. Your discussion posts will be **due by 11:59pm on Sunday** and your response to a classmate's post by **11:59pm on Tuesday** for that week. More detailed information about this assignment is posted on Canvas (under "modules" -> "course essentials"). Because part of the assignment is to comment on a classmate's post, **late discussion posts cannot be accepted. In addition, you cannot make up discussion posts.** All discussion posts will account for 40% of your overall grade.

QUIZZES: To assess your mastery of core concepts covered in assigned readings, lecture, and videos, you will take 7 quizzes in this course. Each quiz is worth 6 points. I will drop your 2 lowest quiz grades, so only 5 quizzes will be factored into your overall grade. **You cannot make-up a quiz**, but you can drop a quiz (or quizzes) that you miss. All quizzes will account for 20% of your overall grade.

RESEARCH PAPER: To promote critical analysis of research in the field and to enhance writing skills, you will be required to complete a research paper that involves reviewing and critiquing the literature on a specific topic related to the psychology of aging. You will select your own topic, but you must receive prior approval from me by Wednesday, April 7. The final paper should be approximately 5-7 pages long, *in addition* to a title page and reference list. More detailed information about this assignment is available on Canvas (under "modules" -> "course essentials"). This paper is **due Wednesday, May 5 by 6pm**. This assignment will account for 20% of your overall grade. Late assignments will lose 2 points per day.

REFLECTIONS ON AGING ASSIGNMENT: To increase personal awareness of issues in aging, and to enhance both written and oral communication skills, each student will complete an assignment that involves describing an instance in which you have observed something that has influenced your understanding of aging. We will take some time during each virtual class to allow students to share their observations and discuss how they relate to course material. Thus, each student should sign up for a day to turn in and share (informally) their assignment with the class. On this day, you will upload your assignment to Canvas. (You are required to **sign up** for a day to turn in/present your assignment during our virtual class meeting by **Monday, Feb. 1** otherwise, you will receive zero points on this assignment.) More detailed information about the assignment will be made available online (under "modules" -> "course essentials"). This assignment will account for 10% of your overall grade. Late assignments will lose 1 point per day, in addition to 1 point for not presenting during our virtual class meeting.

ATTENDANCE AND CLASS PARTICIPATION: To promote engagement in learning the course material, you are expected to attend and participate in our virtual class sessions. I welcome your comments, thoughts, and questions, and hope you take an active role in learning the course material. Activities during our class sessions will count toward your attendance grade. As we only meet for a limited amount of time once per week, if you miss more than *one* class, you will lose points from your attendance grade. If you will be out for an extended period of time (i.e., more than 2 classes) for an exceptional circumstance, please contact me as soon as you know you will be missing class. Part of your attendance points are completing a poll/quiz at the beginning of each virtual class session to assess your understanding of the material covered in that module; **thus, it is very important you join class on time.** Class attendance and participation will account for 10% of your overall grade.

COURSE POLICIES

It is my sincere hope that students are successful in this course and learn information that is useful for their academic and career goals as well as their daily lives. If you experience any difficulty in this course, please email me or your teaching assistant or contact us to schedule a time to talk – **please do not wait until the end of the semester to talk with us!** Many of the policies outlined below are evidence-based, and are in place to promote student success and provide an enriching and fair educational experience for all of my students.

- Course web page: All the materials you will need for each week will be organized by modules on the Canvas course web page (<https://canvas.rutgers.edu>). It is your responsibility to keep informed of any updates made to the syllabus and other assignments.
- Course communication:
 - *Announcements*: Announcements will be posted in Canvas on a regular basis. They will appear on your Canvas dashboard when you log in and/or will be sent to you directly from Canvas via your preferred method of contact. Please make sure the “announcements” feature is activated in Canvas (under “course notifications”) and be certain to check them regularly, as they will contain important information about the course.
 - *Email*: You may contact me or your teaching assistant by email. **Please use your Rutgers email to contact me, as emails from non-Rutgers’ accounts are sometimes filtered as spam.** Please do not submit your assignments via email. If you email me and do not receive a response within 24 hours during the week, I did not receive your email. *As we will always respond to your emails, if your teaching assistant or I contact you via email, please respond to us!* Please note that we will not respond to emails after 9pm, on weekends, during holidays, or during university breaks.
 - *Virtual office hours*: Your teaching assistant and I are available to meet virtually by phone or video chat. Please email us for an appointment.
- Class etiquette and code of conduct: Even though course activities and our interactions are online, all students are still expected to conduct themselves in a manner that does not interfere with the educational experience of other students in the course and adhere to the Student Code of Conduct: <https://deanofstudents.camden.rutgers.edu/student-conduct> (for “netiquette,” also see: <http://www.albion.com/netiquette/index.html>). Please join virtual class sessions on time and stay the entire time and avoid using offensive language in discussion posts. If you engage in any disruptive or disrespectful behaviors, you may lose points from your attendance grade or discussion posts.
- Missed class/meetings: If you miss a virtual class meeting, it is your responsibility to become informed of any announcements made and the material presented. Recordings of the virtual class meetings will be posted on Canvas under Zoom cloud recordings. If you do not provide at least 30 minutes notice for not being able to make an individual virtual meeting, you will lose .5 points from your attendance grade.
- Missed assignments: Please make sure “due dates” are activated on Canvas (under “course notifications”). You should also regularly check your “to-do” list on Canvas and follow the course schedule on pp. 6-9 closely to make sure that you turn in assignments when they are due. If you are experiencing an extenuating circumstance (e.g., severe illness such as COVID-19, death in the family, or other stressful life event) that interferes with your ability to turn assignments in on time, please contact the Dean of Students who can help facilitate accommodations for all of your classes (deanofstudents@camden.rutgers.edu).

- Academic integrity: Rutgers University takes academic dishonesty very seriously. You assume responsibility for familiarizing yourself with the Academic Integrity Policy and the possible penalties (including suspension and expulsion) for violating the policy. As per the policy, all suspected violations will be reported to the Office of Community Standards. Academic dishonesty includes (but is not limited to): cheating; plagiarism; aiding others in committing a violation or allowing others to use your work; failure to cite sources correctly; fabrication; using another person's ideas or words without attribution; re-using a previous assignment; unauthorized collaboration; and sabotaging another student's work. If in doubt, please consult me. Please review the Academic Integrity Policy at <https://deanofstudents.camden.rutgers.edu/sites/deanofstudents/files/Academic%20Integrity%20Policy.pdf>.
- Dropping the course/incompletes: Please consult the academic calendar for dates related to dropping this course with/without a W grade and tuition penalties: <https://registrar.camden.rutgers.edu/academic-calendar-2020-2021>. Incompletes will not be given in this course except under extremely rare circumstances that require documentation and adherence to university policies – and will only be considered if you are missing no more than three assignments. **If you do not think you can keep up with the required coursework, then you should consider dropping this course.**
- Disability services: Rutgers University welcomes students with disabilities into all of the University's educational programs. In order to receive consideration for reasonable accommodations, a student with a disability must contact the disability services office (Armitage, Room 231, (856) 225-6442), participate in an intake interview, and provide documentation: <https://ods.rutgers.edu/students/documentation-guidelines>. If the documentation supports your request for reasonable accommodations, the disability services office will provide you with a Letter of Accommodation. Please share this letter with me and discuss the accommodations with me no later than the second week of class. To begin this process, please complete the Registration form at <https://webapps.rutgers.edu/student-ods/forms/registration>.
- Additional resources available to you: Rutgers-Camden has a wide range of resources to help you stay on track both personally and academically. The Raptor Cares Report system (<https://deanofstudents.camden.rutgers.edu/reporting>) connects you to our Dean of Students Office who can assist you with a variety of concerns: medical, financial, mental health, or any life issue which impacts your academic performance. You can share a concern for yourself, a classmate, or a friend. The Office of Military and Veterans Affairs can assist our military and veteran students with benefits, deployment issues, and much more. Please contact Fred Davis (856)225-2791, frdavis@camden.rutgers.edu.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Note: You are expected to have readings, lecture, any videos, and discussion posts completed before our virtual meeting each Wednesday. **All materials will be posted by the Thursday before the start of each module.**

Thur	Fri	Sat	Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed
Module 1: Course Introduction/ Themes & Issues in Aging Jan. 14-20						
Review the syllabus/assignments on Canvas; complete assigned readings (textbook ch. 1), lecture						Class meeting
Module 2: Models of Development Jan. 21-27						
Complete assigned readings (textbook ch. 2 + readings on Canvas), lecture, videos						Class meeting; Reflections on Aging presentation/assignment DUE
			Discussion post #1 on module 1&2 (DUE by 11:59pm)		Reply to a classmate's discussion post (DUE by 11:59pm)	
Module 3: Research Methods Jan. 28-Feb. 3						
Complete assigned readings (textbook ch. 3 + readings on Canvas), lecture, videos						Class meeting; Reflections on Aging presentation/assignment DUE
						Quiz #1 on modules 1,2& 3 (DUE by 11:59pm)
Module 4: Physical Changes Feb. 4-10						
Complete assigned readings (textbook ch. 4 + readings on Canvas), lecture, videos						Class meeting; Reflections on Aging presentation/assignment DUE
			Discussion post #2 on module 3 & 4 (DUE by 11:59pm)		Reply to a classmate's discussion post (DUE by 11:59pm)	

Thur	Fri	Sat	Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed
Module 5: Health & Prevention Feb. 11-17						
Complete assigned readings (textbook ch. 5 + readings on Canvas), lecture, videos						Class meeting; Reflections on Aging presentation/assignment DUE
			Discussion post #3 on module 5 (DUE by 11:59pm)		Reply to a classmate's discussion (DUE by 11:59pm)	Quiz #2 on modules 4 & 5 (DUE by 11:59pm)
Module 6: Basic Cognitive Functions Feb. 18-24						
Complete assigned readings (textbook ch. 6 + readings on Canvas), lecture, videos						Class meeting; Reflections on Aging presentation/assignment DUE
			Discussion post #4 on module 6 (DUE by 11:59pm)		Reply to a classmate's discussion (DUE by 11:59pm)	
Module 7: Higher Order Cognitive Functions Feb. 25-March 3						
Complete assigned readings (textbook ch. 7 + readings on Canvas), lecture, videos						Class meeting; Reflections on Aging presentation/assignment DUE
			Discussion post #5 on module 7 (DUE by 11:59pm)		Reply to a classmate's discussion (DUE by 11:59pm)	Quiz #3 on modules 6 & 7 (DUE by 11:59pm)
Module 8: Personality March 4-10						
Complete assigned readings (textbook ch. 8 + readings on Canvas), lecture, videos						Class meeting; Reflections on Aging presentation/assignment DUE
			Discussion post #6 on module 8 (DUE by 11:59pm)		Reply to a classmate's discussion (DUE by 11:59pm)	

March 11-17: NO ASSIGNMENTS DUE/CLASS MEETING (SPRING BREAK)

Thur	Fri	Sat	Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed
Module 9: Relationships March 18-24						
SPRING BREAK			Complete assigned readings (textbook ch. 9 + readings on Canvas), lecture, videos			Class meeting; Reflections on Aging presentation/assignment DUE
						Quiz #4 on modules 8 & 9 (DUE by 11:59pm)
Module 10: Work, Retirement, & Leisure March 25-31						
Complete assigned readings (textbook ch. 10 + readings on Canvas), lecture, videos						Class meeting; Reflections on Aging presentation/assignment DUE
			Discussion post #7 on modules 9 & 10 (DUE by 11:59pm)		Reply to a classmate's discussion (DUE by 11:59pm)	
Module 11: Mental Health Issues April 1-7						
Complete assigned readings (textbook ch. 11 + readings on Canvas), lecture, videos						Class meeting; Reflections on Aging presentation/assignment DUE
			Discussion post #8 on module 11 (DUE by 11:59pm)		Reply to a classmate's discussion (DUE by 11:59pm)	Quiz #5 on modules 10 & 11 (DUE by 11:59pm)
Module 12: Long Term Care April 8-14						
Complete assigned readings (textbook ch. 12 + readings on Canvas), lecture, videos						Class meeting; Reflections on Aging presentation/assignment DUE
			Discussion post #9 on module 12 (DUE by 11:59pm)		Reply to a classmate's discussion (DUE by 11:59pm)	

Thur	Fri	Sat	Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed
Module 13: Death & Dying April 15-21						
Complete assigned readings (textbook ch. 13 + readings on Canvas), lecture, videos						Class meeting; Reflections on Aging presentation/assignment DUE
			Discussion post #10 on module 13 (DUE by 11:59pm)		Reply to a classmate's discussion (DUE by 11:59pm)	Quiz #6 on modules 12 & 13 (DUE by 11:59pm)
Module 14: Successful Aging April 22-28						
Complete assigned readings (textbook ch. 14 + readings on Canvas), lecture, videos						Class meeting; Reflections on Aging presentation/assignment DUE
						Quiz #7 on module 14 (DUE by 11:59pm)

Wednesday, May 5 by 6pm: Final Paper DUE

****There is no final exam in this course***