

**PSYCHOLOGY 366-01      PERSPECTIVES ON AGING**  
**SPRING 2022   TUESDAYS 12-3:20PM   ONLINE-SYNCHRONOUS/ASYNCHRONOUS**

**Instructor:** Jing Chen, Ph.D.                      Phone: 331-2867 (office)  
Office: ASH 2203                                      331-2195 (Psychology Department)  
**E-mail: chenj@gvsu.edu**

**Office hours:** Right after each synchronous class or by appointment (email me and I will schedule a zoom meeting with you at the earliest possible time).

**Covid-19 Related Information:** <https://www.gvsu.edu/lakerstogether/>

**Financial Hardship:**

GVSU remains committed to supporting you because of the impacts of the pandemic and is here to help you in times of financial need, including technology requirements. Financial hardship funds are available to help you meet basic needs and cover educational costs (such as housing, food, and textbooks) that you otherwise pay out of pocket. Please visit <https://www.gvsu.edu/financialaid/> for more information.

**Course format:**

The contents of this course will be delivered through synchronous and asynchronous lectures. The synchronous portion will be held via BB Collaborate Ultra during our scheduled class time on Tuesdays. All homework assignments, quizzes, and the final exam will be given and submitted through BB. Discussions will be conducted during synchronous meetings throughout this 6-week spring session.

As we all have learned from these past semesters during the pandemic, remote learning can be challenging in various ways. Although you have more freedom to learn at your own pace in online classes, you have to take more initiatives and be more in charge of your own learning. There are also more distractions when you are sitting in front of your computer without the presence of your fellow classmates. These challenges can be even greater for spring/summer session classes when the contents of a 15-week course are delivered in 6 weeks. Please make every effort to preempt possible distractions and create an environment for yourself so you can actively engage in your learning.

For this course, you are expected to spend approximately 8 hours per week outside of class to watch the lectures, read assigned readings, and work on various homework assignments. To do well in this class, you have to study, and you have to understand the information well enough to apply the concepts and theories to novel situations.

Let's all buckle up and get ready to explore the exciting journey of aging.

**Blackboard Website and technical requirements**

To access Blackboard, go to <https://lms.gvsu.edu> and enter your GVSU login name and password.

Please check the current [technical requirements \(https://www.gvsu.edu/online/technology-requirements-for-onlinehybrid-courses-8.htm\)](https://www.gvsu.edu/online/technology-requirements-for-onlinehybrid-courses-8.htm) and preferred browser information ([https://help.blackboard.com/Learn/Instructor/Ultra/Getting\\_Started/Browser\\_Support/Browser\\_Checker](https://help.blackboard.com/Learn/Instructor/Ultra/Getting_Started/Browser_Support/Browser_Checker))

**For this online class, you need to have access to the following things:**

- A desktop or laptop computer with a microphone and camera (this course cannot be completed with only a phone or tablet). Contact the Financial Aid Office (<https://www.gvsu.edu/financialaid/>) if you do not have a computer that meets the technical requirements for synchronous lectures.
- Stable internet access during scheduled class periods and multiple times throughout the week to submit your homework, complete assessments, or participate in group discussions.
- Software for Blackboard Ultra, Google Drive, and Microsoft Office (Word and Power Point) (free access for students). Check with IT: <https://www.gvsu.edu/it/>, (616) 331-2101, or [helpdesk@gvsu.edu](mailto:helpdesk@gvsu.edu).

**Course Description:**

This course will allow you to take an in-depth look at the process of aging from multiple perspectives. Biological aging, the evolving self, the styles of adult thinking, creative endeavors of the elderly, and the emergence of wisdom will be the main topics of this course. These topics will be approached from the psychological, social-cultural, and evolutionary perspectives with an emphasis on empirical research. An effort will also be made to integrate multiple views into a comprehensive understanding of the human aging.

In order to create more flexibility for in-depth examinations of certain important topics in aging, we will not be using a standard textbook. Instead, you will be reading original research articles and book chapters that have been carefully selected for each topic in this course.

Prerequisite: Psychology 101.

**Course Objectives:**

- Develop an understanding of the complex nature of the aging process and begin to view aging through different lenses.
- Appreciate the importance of having multiple perspectives on aging and the necessity of having empirical research in each perspective.
- Understand basic findings in aging research and apply them in real life to enhance the quality of older adults' lives.

**Course organization:**

This course consists of synchronous and asynchronous lectures, homework assignments, in-class discussions, a course project, three quizzes, and a final exam.

**The synchronous portion:** It will be carried out on Tuesdays starting at 12pm using zoom (access through BB). Key points in each topic and learning goals and expectations will be covered and group discussion will be conducted during these virtual meeting times.

**The asynchronous portion:** I will record the lectures for each of the six topics and posted them on BB. You need to watch these lectures on your own according to the weekly schedule provided on the last page of this syllabus.

**BB organization:** BB will be used to deliver the contents, collect assignments, and assess performance. The following are descriptions of the major content areas included on our BB main menu.

- **Announcements:** Each Friday an announcement on what is due in the following week will be posted. Please check Announcements on a regular basis.

- **Topic Folders:** There will be six folders, one for each of the six topics covered in this class. Each topic folder will contain:
  1. **A To-do-list:** A checklist of things that you will engage in the topic and a timeline for accomplishing these things.
  2. **Topic Notes/Outline:** A Word file that contains what will be covered in the lectures will be posted here for each topic. You need to print it out or download it to take notes with while watching the recorded lectures. This is a key document because it is used not only for notetaking but also as a study guide.
  3. **Readings and Assignments Folder:** We do not use a standard text book. All of the readings for this topic are posted here. The vast majority of your homework involves answering a set of questions for each of the assigned readings. All of the reading questions are posted here in a single Word file. Homework assignments are also set up here where you can submit your homework. The due dates for these homework assignments are linked to BB calendar.
  4. **Extra information folder:** Anything that come up during lectures that are interesting and relevant but not part of the required readings will be posted here.
- **Project Folder:** Instructions for your project anything related to the project will be posted here.
- **Quizzes and Final Exam:** You can access the quizzes and final exam from here.

### **Course Outcome Measures:**

Your final grade will be based on the total number of points that you accrue in the following categories.

**QUIZZES:** A quiz will be given after we complete each of the first three topics. It will consist of multiple-choice questions assessing your understanding of the readings and lectures. The length of the quiz varies with the amount of information covered in the respective topics.

Quizzes will be given on Thursdays. It will be released at 8am and remains accessible during the remainder of the day (will be closed at midnight). The quizzes will be timed. In other words, once you have opened a quiz, you will have a limited amount to complete it. The quizzes will be open note but only course-related materials can be used (notes, readings, and lectures).

**ASSIGNMENTS:** For each of your assigned reading, you will be given a set of reading questions that you have to answer. You have to submit your answers as an assignment before its due date. For this course, some of the articles maybe difficult to understand and these reading questions will guide you through the readings and help you learn more from these articles. In addition to the reading questions, there might be other homework assignments designed to facilitate your learning of the course content.

All of the homework assignments are due on Mondays before midnight. The assignments will be set up a few days before their respective due dates so you can submit your homework any time before the deadline. All homework should be submitted using the Assignment function on BB. Email attachments will not be accepted.

Assignments submitted within a week after their respective due dates will get a 50% deduction unless it is a result of an excused absence. You may not receive credits if the delay is substantial (i.e., longer than two weeks) or without an excused reason. **Grace:** You can miss one assignment without penalty.

**DISCUSSIONS/ACTIVITIES:** Small group discussions or activities will be carried out during our synchronous meetings. They will provide opportunities for you to exchange ideas with your peers and make connections between what you have learned in lectures and what you see in the real world. **Grace:** You are allowed to miss two discussions/activities without penalty.

**FINAL EXAM:** The final exam will cover the last three topics in this course. It may consist of multiple-choice and short-answer questions drawn from lectures, readings, assignments, and discussions in the last three topics. More information will be given during the last week of classes.

**PAPER/PROJECT:** In this project, you will engage in intergenerational co-mentoring activities that may allow you to have in-depth interactions with an older adult and see each other in a different light. This project consists of two parts. The 1<sup>st</sup> part involves reviewing research on the effects of intergenerational integration. The 2<sup>nd</sup> part involves journaling your co-mentoring activities and reflecting on your experience in the context of what you learned from lectures and readings. Specific instructions and due dates for each part will be posted in the Project Folder on BB.

**GRADING DISTRIBUTION AND SCALE:**

	Points	Percentage
Quizzes	115	23%
Assignments & Discussions/Activities	200	40%
Paper/Project	85	17%
Final Exam	100	20%
<b>Total</b>	<b>500</b>	<b>100%</b>

<b>A</b>	<b>465-500</b>	<b>C+</b>	<b>384-399</b>
<b>A-</b>	<b>450-464</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>365-383</b>
<b>B+</b>	<b>434-449</b>	<b>C-</b>	<b>350-364</b>
<b>B</b>	<b>415-433</b>	<b>D+</b>	<b>334-349</b>
<b>B-</b>	<b>400-414</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>300-333</b>
		<b>F</b>	<b>&lt;300</b>

**Make-up quizzes:**

Make-up quizzes will not be given unless there is a family emergency, illnesses, or a university sanctioned event. Please notify me by phone or email as soon as you can. In some cases, proper documentation (e.g., a coach's letter or a doctor's note) may need to be given to me before I can set up your make-up quiz. Things such as attending a wedding, going on vacation, or forgot to take it do not count as family emergencies. Make-up quizzes may be given in a different format (e.g., short answer/essay questions covering the same amount of material as the quiz that you have missed).

**Class Attendance and engagement:**

Although I will not take attendance, you are expected to attend each synchronous lecture. Attendance is especially important for this spring session class. I will use the class time to answer your questions and address the key points that you need to pay attention to when you watch the recorded lectures. Discussions and activities will also be conducted during these synchronous meetings.

In addition, you also need to make every effort to keep up with your reading and homework assignments, and perhaps more importantly, put real thoughts into your work instead of just going through the motions so you can truly learn something new about aging.

If you have trouble keeping up with the pace of this course, contact me as soon as possible. Please do not wait until the end when accommodations are difficult to make.

**Emails:**

The best way to communicate with me is through email. Please put PSY366 in the subject line. If you do not hear back from me within 48 hours, please email me again.

**Class Courtesy and support:**

The stress we are experiencing during this pandemic may affect the clarity of our thinking and communication. However, a respectful, professional, and friendly atmosphere in the synchronous classroom and during discussions is important for all of us. Without it, it would be difficult for each of us to freely express our ideas and to feel comfortable to learn and to teach. Let's work together to create an environment that truly nurtures learning.

**Withdraws:** The last day to withdraw is June 10, 2022 (by 5pm).

**Office Hours:**

Zoom will be used for office hours. I will stay after each synchronous class to talk to you. If you cannot stay after class, please email me and I will set up an alternative time for us to "meet" via zoom. You are strongly encouraged to discuss any of your concerns about the course with me. If you need special assistance, please contact me at the beginning of the semester.

**Academic Honesty:**

Violations of the standards of Academic Honesty will be met with severe penalties. In addition to referral to the appropriate university committee, anyone known to be plagiarizing material (all sources should be properly cited in your written work), copying from another person's exam or sites from the Internet will receive a grade of zero on that assignment or exam.

You are not allowed to copy & paste information from the Internet or your readings when you answer homework assignment or exam questions. You need to answer the questions using your own words. Otherwise, you will not receive credits for the "copied" work.

All of the assignments should be done individually unless I announce it otherwise. If I found two identical pieces of work, both of you will not receive credits for that assignment. Getting information about exams or assignments from previous students of this course is also prohibited. It is every student's responsibility to avoid even the appearance of cheating.

Academic honesty and integrity are expected from all student at all times.

**Safety Reminders:**

- Remember you are a university student and all [Student Code of Conduct](#) policies apply.
- **Do not film or photograph the screen during the lessons for any reason.**

**FERPA Guidelines for Remote Teaching**

- Participation in the class is limited to students who are officially registered for this course. Visitors to classes are allowed only with the instructor's permission. If participation without permission persists even after being told to discontinue, an [Academic Integrity Violation report](#) via the Dean of Students Office will be submitted.

**This course is subject to the GVSU policies listed at <http://www.gvsu.edu/coursepolicies/>.**

**Given the uncertainty with the pandemic, we may have to make changes in information included in this syllabus (course schedule, assignments, grading procedure). Any consequential changes to this syllabus will be announced on Blackboard.**

<b>COURSE SCHEDULE* &amp; READING ASSIGNMENTS</b>
---

**TOPIC ONE: AN OVERVIEW (WEEK 1 & WEEK 2)**

The objectives of this course will be discussed in the context of liberal education.

Basic methods used in aging research will be presented.

A comprehensive overview of the aging process will be introduced:

How is old age viewed in history and by different cultures?

What are involved in the psychological studies of human aging and what are the psychological perspectives on aging?

**Readings:**

1. Cronon, B (1998). "Only Connect...." The goals of a liberal education. *American Scholar*, 67, 73-80.
2. Stage/Journey. Excerpts from *The Oxford Book of Aging* (1994) – Edited by T. R. Cole & M. G. Winkler.
3. Swift, H. J., & Chasteen, A. L. (2021). Ageism in the time of COVID-19. *Group Processes & Intergroup Relations*, 24, 246-252. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1368430220983452>
4. McKee, P., & Kauppinen, H (1987). *The Art of Aging: A Celebration of Old Age in Western Art*. New York, Human Sciences Press. (Not on Course Reserves. It will be discussed in class)

**TOPIC TWO: A NATURAL HISTORY OF AGING (WEEK 2 AND WEEK 3)**

How does the human body age? - An overview of biological aging will be presented first.

Why do we age? Is aging universal among different kinds of organisms? Why do different organisms exhibit different patterns of aging? How to explain human aging from the evolutionary perspective? How may the human life span evolve in the future?

**Readings:**

1. Marx, J. (2004). Coming to grips with bone loss. *Science*, 305, 120-1422.
2. Clynes, M. A., Harvey, N. C., Curtis, E.M., Fuggle, N. R., Dennison, E.M., & Cooper, C. (2020). The epidemiology of osteoporosis. *British Medical Bulletin*, 133, 105-117.
3. Epel, E. S. (2009). Telomeres in a life-span perspective: A new "Psychobiomarker"? *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 18, 6-10.
4. Ricklefs, R. E., & Finch, C. E. (1995). Patterns of aging. In *Aging: A Natural History* (pp.1-17). Scientific American Library, New York.
5. Kirkwood, T. B. L., & Melov, S. (2011). On the programmed/non-programmed nature of ageing with the life history. *Current Biology*, 21, R701-707.

**TOPIC THREE: SELF, CULTURE, SOCIETY, AND AGING (WEEK 3 AND WEEK 4)**

How does the *self* evolve over the adulthood? What are the psychological forces that drive these changes? How do individuals define their identities through narratives and life reviews? What are the cultural impacts on these self identities and representations exhibited in autobiographical memories? Can age-related stereotypes and perception of aging alter the process of aging?

**Readings:**

1. Erickson, E. H. (1997). Major stages in psychosocial development. In *The Life Cycle Completed* (pp. 55-72). Boston, MA: Norton.
2. Weiss, D., & Lang, F. R. (2012). The two faces of age identity. *GeroPsych: The Journal of Gerontopsychology and Geriatric Psychiatry*, 25, 5-14.
3. Weiss, D., Reitz, A., Stephan, Y. (2019). Is age more than a number? The role of openness and (non)essentialist beliefs about aging for how young and old people feel. *Psychology and Aging*, 34, 729-737.
4. Martinelli, P., Anssens, A., Sperduti, M., Piolino, P. (2013). The influence of normal aging and Alzheimer's disease in autobiographical memory highly related to the self. *Neuropsychology*, 27, 69-78.
5. Wang, Q., & Conway, M. A. (2004). The stories we keep: Autobiographical memory in American and Chinese middle-aged adults. *Journal of Personality*, 72, 911-938.
6. Levy, B. R. (2009). Stereotype embodiment: A psychosocial approach to aging. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 18, 332–336.
7. Ehni, H-J, & Wahl, H-W. (2020). Six propositions against ageism in the COVID-19 pandemic. *Journal of Aging & Social Policy*, 32, 515-525. DOI: 10.1080/08959420.2020.1770032.

**TOPIC FOUR: COGNITIVE STYLES OF THE ELDERLY (WEEK 4 AND WEEK 5)**

An overview of changes in older adults' basic cognitive abilities (processing speed and memory) will be first presented followed by discussions addressing important questions such as: What are the major factors that contribute to these age-related changes? Are these changes merely quantitative changes or do they indicate that fundamental changes have occurred in our thinking beyond the "endpoint" of cognitive development?

How do older adults fare in handling everyday tasks such as managing their own finance and getting their house in order given all of the changes in their basic cognitive abilities? What factors can influence older adults' everyday competence? What do we know about cognitive training in improving everyday competence?

How does the brain cope with biological aging when cognitive tasks are performed? How plastic is an aging brain? What do we know about the Alzheimer's disease?

**Readings:**

1. Salthouse, T.A. (2019). Trajectories of normal cognitive aging. *Psychology and Aging, 34*, 17-24.
2. Shimamura, A. P., Berry, J. M., Mangels, J. A., Rusting, C. L., & Jurica, P. J. (1995). Memory and cognitive abilities in university professors: Evidence for successful aging. *Psychological Science, 6*, 271-277.
3. Reuter-Lorenz, P. A., & Park, D.C. (2014). How does it STAC up? Revisiting the scaffolding theory of aging and cognition. *Neuropsychology Review, 24*, 355-370.
4. Erickson KI, Voss, MW, et al. (2011). Exercise training increases size of hippocampus and improves memory. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, 108*, 3017-22.
5. Marx, J. (2005). Preventing Alzheimer's: A lifelong commitment? *Science, 309*, 864-866.
6. Selkoe, D. J. (2012). Preventing Alzheimer's disease. *Science, 337*, 1488-1492.
7. Smith, G. E. (2016). Healthy cognitive aging and dementia prevention. *American Psychologist, 71*, 268-275.
8. Irwin, M. R. & Vitiello, M. V. (2019). Implications of sleep disturbance and inflammation for Alzheimer's disease dementia. *Lancet Neurology, 18*, 296-304.
9. Bah, T. M., Goodman, J., & Iliff, J. J. (2019). Sleep as a therapeutic target in the aging brain. *Neurotherapeutics, 16*, 554-568.

---



---

**TOPIC FIVE: CREATIVITY OF THE ELDERLY (WEEK 6)**

How do the quantity and quality of creative works in areas such as sciences, literature, arts, and music change across the life span? What are the factors that influence older adults' creativity? How important are creative endeavors to older adults' well-being? How can we nurture creativity among the elderly?

**Readings:**

1. Simonton, D. K. (2000). Creativity: Cognitive, personal, developmental, and social aspects. *American Psychologist, 55*, 151-158.
  2. Palmiero, M., Nori, R., Piccardi, L. (2017). Verbal and visual divergent thinking in aging. *Experimental Brain Research, 235*, 1021-1029.
  3. Fusi, G., Colombo, B., Zanetti, M., Crepaldi, M., Rozzini, L., & Rusconi, M. L. (2021). The effect of psychological symptoms on divergent thinking in healthy older adults. *Creativity Research Journal, 33*, 302-310.
  4. Carpenter, S. M., Chae, R. L., & Yoon, C. (2020). Creativity and aging: Positive consequences of distraction. *Psychology and Aging, 35*, 654-662. <https://doi.org/10.1037/pag0000470>
  5. Flood, M., & Phillips, K. D. (2009). Creativity in older adults: A plethora of possibilities. *Issues in Mental Health Nursing, 28*, 389-411. DOI: 10.1080/10400419.2021.1892413.
- 
-



---



---

**TOPIC SIX: DEVELOPMENT OF WISDOM (WEEK 6)**

What is wisdom? How is wisdom viewed in the Eastern and Western traditions?

How is wisdom studied using scientific methods? Are we really older and wiser?

What factors can affect the presence of wisdom? How can wisdom be acquired and expressed?

**Readings:**

1. Baltes, P. B., Kunzmann, U. (2003). Wisdom. *The Psychologist*, 16, 131-133.
  2. Baltes, P. B., & Smith, J. (2008). The fascination of wisdom: Its nature, ontogeny, and function. *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, 3, 56-64.
  3. Kunzmann, U., & Baltes, P. B. (2003). Wisdom-related knowledge: Affective, motivational, and interpersonal correlates. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 29, 1104-1118.
  4. Wink, P., & Staudinger, U. M. (2016). Wisdom and psychosocial functioning in later life. *Journal of Personality*, 84, 306-318.
  5. Ardelt, M., Gerlach, K. R., & Vaillant, G. E. (2018). Early and midlife predictors of wisdom and subjective well-being in old age. *Journals of Gerontology: Social Sciences*, 73, 1514-1525.
  6. Grossman, I., Na, J., Varnum, M. E., Park, D. C., Kitayama, S., & Nisbett, R. E. (2010). Reasoning about social conflicts improves into old age. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 107, 7246–7250.
  7. Grossmann, I., Karasawa, M., Izumi, S., Na, J., Varnum, M.E.W., Kitayama, S., & Nisbett, R.E. (2012). Aging and wisdom: culture matters. *Psychological Science*, 23, 1059-1066.
  8. Kross, E., & Grossmann, I. (2012). Boosting wisdom: Distance from the self enhances wise reasoning, attitudes, and behavior. *Journal of Experimental Psychology: General*, 141, 43-48.
  9. Gordon, J.K., & Jordan, L. M. (2017) Older is wiser? It depends who you ask... and how you ask. *Aging, Neuropsychology, and Cognition*, 24, 94-114.
  10. Sternberg, R. J. (2004). What is wisdom and how can we develop it? *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 591, 164-174.
- 
- 

**Final Exam: Tuesday, June 21, 2022**

(More information on final exam will be given during the last synchronous class)

---



---

The schedule is tentative and subjective to change.

**WEEKLY SCHEDULE \***

	<u>Date</u>	<u>Topic</u>	<u>Assignments</u>
Week 1	5/10	<b>SYNCHRONOUS CLASS:</b> Syllabus & Research Methods Go over the project instructions <b>DISCUSSION:</b> Designs used to study age effects	Topic 1 – Readings #1, #2, and #3 Due Date: Monday, 5/16
	5/12	<b>ASYNCHRONOUS LECTURE</b> – Topic 1	
Week 2	5/17	<b>SYNCHRONOUS CLASS:</b> Key points of Topic 1 <b>DISCUSSIONS:</b> Liberal education, Perceptions of aging Historical & Cultural Views on Aging	Topic 2 – Readings #1, #3, #4, and #5 Post articles for project Due Date: Monday, 5/23
	5/19	<b>QUIZ ON TOPIC 1</b> <b>ASYNCHRONOUS LECTURE</b> – Topic 2	
Week 3	5/24	<b>SYNCHRONOUS CLASS:</b> Key points of Topic 2 <b>DISCUSSION:</b> Building age-friendly environment	Topic 3 – Readings #2, #4-#6 Due Date: Tuesday at noon, 5/31
	5/26	<b>QUIZ ON TOPIC 2</b> <b>ASYNCHRONOUS LECTURE</b> – Topic 3	
Week 4	5/31	<b>SYNCHRONOUS CLASS:</b> Key points of Topic 3 <b>DISCUSSIONS:</b> Self, personality, and aging Reminiscence and identity	Topic 4 – Readings 1-#4, one of #5-#9 1 <sup>st</sup> Journal Entry Due Date: Monday, 6/6
	6/2	<b>QUIZ ON TOPIC 3</b> <b>ASYNCHRONOUS LECTURE</b> – Topic 4	
Week 5	6/7	<b>SYNCHRONOUS CLASS:</b> Key points of Topic 4 <b>DISCUSSION:</b> AD risks and preventions. Speed peer presentations	Topic 5 – Readings #2, #3, #5 Topic 6 – Reading #1 and #2 Due date: Sunday, 6/13
	6/9	<b>ASYNCHRONOUS LECTURE</b> Topic 5 and Topic 6	
Week 6	6/14	<b>SYNCHRONOUS CLASS:</b> Key points of Topics 5 and 6 <b>DISCUSSIONS:</b> Creativity and successful aging	Research article summaries 2 <sup>nd</sup> Journal Entry Due Date: Monday, 6/20
	6/16	Finish up project and prepare for final exam	
Week 7	<b>Final exam: Tuesday, June 21, 2021</b>		