

Blackboard Website and technical requirements

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

Please check the current [technical requirements](#) to use Blackboard and [preferred browser information](#).

For this synchronous 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 a synchronous online class.
- 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, 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.

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 research findings in aging research and apply them in real life to enhance the quality of older adults' lives.

Course organization:

The course will contain the following components: Lectures, homework assignments, group discussions, a group project, quizzes, and a final exam.

BB: 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 and one for each of the six topics covered in this class. Each topic folder will contain:

- ✱ **A To-do-list:** A checklist of things that you will engage in the topic and a timeline for accomplishing these things.
 - ✱ **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 during class. This is a key document because it is not only used for notes-taking but also serves as a study guide.
 - ✱ **Readings and Assignments Folder:** We do not use a standard text book. All of the readings for the 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.
 - ✱ **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 the group project, group placement, and anything related to the project will be posted here.
 - **Quizzes and Final Exam:** You can access the quizzes and final exam from here.
 - **Groups:** Groups that each has 5-6 students will be formed during the first week of classes. You will stay with the same group members for online group discussions, some of the breakout group discussions during class, and the group project.

Due dates: Due dates for the same type of work will be made as consistent as possible throughout the semester.

- All of the homework assignments are due on Saturdays before midnight (with as few exceptions as possible). The assignments will be set up a week ahead so you can submit your homework before the deadline. All homework should be submitted using the Assignment function on BB. Email attachments will not be accepted.
- Discussions: The first posts will be due on Saturdays. If you need to respond to your group members' initial posting, it will be due on the following Tuesday.
- Quizzes will be given either on Tuesdays or Thursdays. It will be released at 6pm and remains accessible for the next 30 hours. The quizzes will be timed. In other words, once you have opened a quiz, you will have a limited amount to complete it.

Course Outcome Measures:

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

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.

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 reading 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.

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 four weeks) or without an excused reason. Grace: You can miss one assignment without penalty.

GROUP DISCUSSIONS: Small group discussions via BB outside of class will be carried out throughout the semester. These discussions will provide opportunities for you to exchange ideas with your peers and make connections between what you have learned in class and what you see in the real world. Specific instructions will be posted on BB prior to each group discussion. Grace: You are allowed to miss one group discussion without penalty.

IN-CLASS BREAKOUT GROUP DISCUSSIONS: We will conduct small group discussions during synchronous lectures using the BB Collaborate breakout group function. Grace: You can miss one breakout group discussion 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 group discussions in the last three topics. More information will be given prior to the final exam week.

PAPER/PROJECT: This pandemic has affected all aspects of our lives across of all ages. It has also made some problems in our society much more visible, especially how we perceive and treat the elderly adults in our society. In this project, you will work with your group members, review the literature on the scientific studies of psychological impacts of ageism or age stereotypes on both young and older adults. Based on the research findings, you and your partners will design a program in which young adults are making an active effort to help minimize the negative influences of the pandemic on older adults and to improve the quality of older adults' lives. Specific instructions for this project will be posted on Blackboard. The final paper is due on **April 20, 2021**.

GRADING DISTRIBUTION AND SCALE:

	Points	Percentage
Quizzes	120	24%
Assignments & Discussions	175	26%
In-class Breakout Group Discussions	25	5%
Paper/Project	70	14%
Final Exam	110	22%
Total	500	100%

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

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) 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:

Although I will not take attendance, you are expected to attend each synchronous lecture. During this pandemic, synchronous lectures might be a form of teaching that best resembles to in-person classes. For this class, attendance is especially important because the readings are more difficult to understand compared to a standard textbook and you are more likely to get your confusions cleared up if you attend the lectures. I will make every effort to use the class time to help you better understand the materials and address your questions.

I hope you will also make every effort to keep up with everything, and perhaps more importantly, put real thoughts into your work instead of just going through the motions. To learn something new about the aging process this semester is perhaps one of the many ways that we can fight back this virus – We can't let the virus rob your chance of learning.

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. Additionally, if you have noticed a group member being absent frequently during group activities, please let me know so I can reach out to the student.

Class Courtesy:

The stress we are experiencing in our lives may affect the clarity of our thinking and communication. However, a respectful, professional, and friendly atmosphere both in the synchronous classroom and on the online Group Discussions Board 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.

This pandemic has impacted our lives in so many different ways. Many of us are experiencing the levels of stress and anxiety that are hard for us to handle alone. We should be here for each other and support each other. Please feel free to talk to me about difficulties that you are encountering. If I can't help out, I will try to look for the right resources for you.

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.

CR/NC and Withdraws:

The CR/NC date is January 29, 2021.

The late withdrawal date is extended to April 9, 2021.

Office Hours:

BB Collaborate Ultra will be used for office hours. If you cannot "stop by" virtually during my regular office hours on Tuesdays and Thursdays between 1 and 2pm, email me and I will set up an alternative time to talk to you. 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 students in an earlier or previous section of the 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.

COURSE SCHEDULE* & READING ASSIGNMENTS

TOPIC ONE: AN OVERVIEW (JAN. 19, 21, 26, 28, FEB. 2, 4)

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. Excerpts from *The Oxford Book of Aging (1994)* – Edited by T. R. Cole & M. G. Winkler.
3. Brooke, J., & Jackson, D. (2020). Older people and Covid-19: Isolation, risk and ageism. *Journal of Clinical Nursing*, 29, 2044-2046. doi:10.1111/jocn.15274
4. McKee, P., & Kauppinen, H (1987). *The Art of Aging: A Celebration of Old Age in Western Art*. New York, Human Sciences Press. (This book is not on Course Reserves)

TOPIC TWO: A NATURAL HISTORY OF AGING (FEB. 9, 11, 16, 18, 23, 25)

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 (MAR. 2, 4, 9, 11, 16, 18)

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. Jimenez-Sotomayor, M. R., Comez-Moreno, C., & Soto-Perez-de-Celis, E. (2020). Coronavirus, ageism, and twitter: An evaluation of Tweets about older adults and COVID-19. *Journal of the American Geriatrics Society*. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jgs.16508>

TOPIC FOUR: COGNITIVE STYLES OF THE ELDERLY (MAR. 23, 25, 30, APR. 6, 8)

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 (APR. 13, 15)

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. Flood, M., & Phillips, K. D. (2007). Creativity in older adults: A plethora of possibilities. *Issues in Mental Health Nursing, 28*, 389-411.
4. Lindauer, M. S. (2003). Late life creativity. In *Aging, Creativity, and Art: A Positive Perspective on Late-Life Development* (pp. 3-22). The Plenum Series in Adult Development and Aging. Kluwer Academic/Plenum Publishers, NY.
5. Johansson, B. B. (2002). Music, age, performance, and excellence: A neuroscientific approach. *Psychogerontology, 18*, 46-58.

TOPIC SIX: DEVELOPMENT OF WISDOM (APR. 20, 22)

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. Ardel, 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, April 27, 2021, 10-11:50am

(more information on final exam will be given before the final exams week)

The schedule is tentative and subjective to change.

WEEKLY SCHEDULE *

	<u>Date</u>	<u>Topic</u>	<u>Major Tasks</u>
Week 1	1/19, 1/21	Syllabus Topic 1- Lecture 1: Research Methods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Topic 1 – Reading #1 • Discussion: Research Methods
Week 2	1/26, 1/28	Topic 1 – Lecture 2 Liberal Education, Critical Thinking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion: Reading #1 – Liberal Education • Topic 1 – Readings #2
Week 3	2/2, 2/4	Topic 1 – Lecture 3: Historical & Cultural Views on Aging Psychological studies of aging	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Topic 1 – Reading #3 • Topic 2 – Readings #1 & #2
Week 4	2/9, 2/11	Topic 2 – Lecture 1 Biological aging	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Topic 1 Quiz • Topic 2 – Reading #3 & #4
Week 5	2/16, 2/18	Topic 2 – Lecture 1: Theories of Aging	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Topic 2 – Reading #5
Week 6	2/23, 2/25	Topic 2 – Lecture 3 Evolutionary Theories of Aging	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion: Age-friendly environment • Topic 2 Quiz • Topic 3 – Readings #1
Week 7	3/2, 3/4	Topic 3 – Lecture 1 Self, identity, personality, and aging	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Topic 3 – Readings #2 and #3 • Discussion: 5 “Self”, Personality
Week 8	3/9, 3/11	Topic 3 – Lecture 2 Autobiographical memory and Reminiscence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Topic 3 – Readings #4 & #5 • Activity: Personality & Aging • Post project articles
Week 9	3/16, 3/18	Topic 3 – Lecture 3 Age Stereotypes & Ageism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Topic 3 – Readings #6 & #7 • Activity: The Moth Radio Story • Discussion: Brain-storm ideas for project
Week 10	3/23, 3/25	Topic 4 – Lecture 1 Basic cognitive aging: speed and memories	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Topic 3 Quiz • Topic 4 – Readings #1 and #2
Week 11	3/30 4/1 – no class	Topic 4 – Lecture 1 Basic cognitive aging: speed and memories	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Topic 4 – Reading #3 & #4
Week 12	4/6 4/8	Topic 4 – Lecture 2: Everyday Competence Topic 4 – Lecture 3: Brain and AD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Topic 4 – One of readings #5-#9 • Discussion/presentation: AD prevention
Week 13	4/13, 4/15	Topic 5 – Creativity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Topic 5 – Readings #1-#5
Week 14	4/20, 4/24	Topic 6 -Wisdom	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Topic 6 – Readings #1 and #2, and one of #3-#11 • Flipgrid on contributions for project
Week 15	Tuesday, April 27, 2021, 10-11:50am		