1. Course Description:

This course will examine psychosocial development and change across the adult lifespan. The focus will be on how various psychological factors influence development and change, as well as the impact of social factors on development and change in family and work roles from adulthood through old age. Special attention will be placed on similarities and differences in adult development and change related to an individual's position in society, including diverse dimensions such as ability, age, class, color, culture, ethnicity, family structure, gender (including gender identity and gender expression), marital status, national origin, race, religion, sex and sexual orientation.

2. Course Content:

This course will address the influence of social and psychological factors on adult development and change. The psychological issues that will be covered include: 1) cognitive development (e.g., memory, problem solving, wisdom); 2) psychological well-being (e.g., life satisfaction, happiness, self-esteem, stress, and coping); and 3) adjusting to death, dying, and bereavement. The social factors that will be covered include: 1) demography of aging (e.g., mortality, morbidity, and general health status); 2) family relationships and social support (e.g., intergenerational relationships, grandparenthood, caregiving, and fictive kin); 3) marital status and family structure (e.g., courtship, marriage, cohabitation, divorce, separation, widowhood, re-marriage, and single-parent families); 4) work status, such as employment, unemployment, retirement, and the interrelationship between work and family roles; and 5) other social issues, such as migration among the elderly, religion and aging, and violence as well as other traumas.

3. Course Objectives:

Upon completion of the course, students will be able to:
1. Describe and critique major theories of adult development (e.g., life-span, life course).
2. Describe and analyze research on major aspects of psychological functioning across the adult life span and the impact on aging individuals and their families (e.g., normal cognitive development, dementing illnesses such as Alzheimer's Disease, self-esteem, subjective well-being, and stress and coping).

3. Describe the current trends in marital status and family composition (e.g., marriage, divorce, separation, cohabitation, remarriage, reconciliation, widowhood, and single-parent families) and national demographic trends of the aging population, as well as analyze the implications for social work practice, evidence based interventions, and social welfare policies.

4. Describe and analyze research on the role of informal social support networks in caring for aging individuals, including current research on issues such as intergenerational relationships, grandparenthood, and successes and failures of caregiving to frail elders.

5. Identify the major ways in which an individual's position in society and the key diversity dimensions affect adult development and change.

4. Course Design:

Class sessions will include lectures, small group and class discussions, student presentations, audiovisuals, field trips, and guest speakers. These activities will be integrated at critical points in the semester to facilitate understanding of course content. Students are expected to attend all classes, complete assigned readings for each week, participate actively in class discussion, and complete all course requirements on time.

5. Relationship of the Course to Four Curricular Themes:

- Multiculturalism and Diversity will be addressed throughout the course through the analysis of differences and similarities across groups on issues such as intergenerational relationships, caregiving, marital status, coping, and psychological well-being.

- Social Change and Social Justice will be addressed by investigating topics, such as the impact of income inequality and ageism on retirement and psychological well-being.

- Promotion, Prevention, Treatment, and Rehabilitation will be addressed through discussion of how social workers can help bolster informal social support networks to assist individuals and families and enhance psychological well-being across the adult life span.

- Behavioral and Social Science Research will be addressed by the inclusion of theoretical frameworks for the understanding of adult development and
change. The findings of research on both psychological and structural factors that influence individual functioning will be emphasized.

6. Relationship of the Course to Social Work Ethics and Values:

Values and ethics will be addressed throughout this course. In particular, this will include ethical conduct in research on psychological issues and social factors related to adulthood and aging, as well as an examination of the inequalities linked to social positions in society. Also included will be content on variations in values related to family and work roles among different subgroups in society.


This course integrates PODS content and skills with a special emphasis on the identification of theories, practice and/or policies that promote social justice, illuminate injustices and are consistent with scientific and professional knowledge. Through the use of a variety of instructional methods, this course will support students developing a vision of social justice, learn to recognize and reduce mechanisms that support oppression and injustice, work toward social justice processes, apply intersectionality and intercultural frameworks and strengthen critical consciousness, self knowledge and self awareness to facilitate PODS learning.

8. Accommodations / Special Needs:

If you have a disability or impairment that requires an accommodation, please contact the instructor within two weeks after the class starts to discuss what modifications are necessary.

9. Assignments:

A. Mid-term Exam (25%). There will be an in-class midterm examination covering the content through Week 6. This will be a combination of multiple choice, True/False and short essay exam (supplemental readings are not included in the multiple-choice type questions). The examination is scheduled for **February 23**.

B. Evidence-Based Programs for Positive Aging (30%). You should work with another student as a team on this project (see a separate handout for instruction). The project involves a class presentation and round table discussion (15%) which is scheduled for either **April 6 or 13**, and a final report (15%) due on **April 23**.

C. Final Exam (25%). An in-class final exam covering the content from Week 9 (March 9) to Week 12 (March 30) is scheduled for **April 20**. This will be a combination of multiple choice, True/False and short essay exam (supplemental readings are not included in the multiple-choice type questions).
D. Article Review (5%). Each student is asked to review an article listed under Supplemental Reading, and prepare a summary and comment about it (see a separate handout for instruction).

E. “My Older Person” (15%). Each student is asked to create a fictitious older person and do research about this person throughout the semester (see a separate handout for instruction). You will be asked to share your findings in class. Please submit a profile of this person which consists of all of your research findings, and your reflection on this project to the instructor on April 6.

Attendance and Participation. Your attendance, advance preparation and active participation are expected. If you are unable to attend a particular class for some reason, please take responsibility to update yourself by (a) doing the assigned reading, (b) studying the lecture notes on Ctools and (c) asking your partner or other students to fill you in. Your attendance and participation will be critical if the combined score from all your assignments falls between two grades.

10. Grading Procedure:

Each assignment is given a letter grade. Grades will be determined based on the following criteria: (1) grades of A are reserved for student work that shows exceptional individual performance—good mastery of content, application of critical thinking, and clear and concise expression in writing/presentation. “A” and “A-” distinguish the degree of superiority. “A+” is rarely given, if ever, and it signifies work that is beyond the expertise students are expected to master. (2) A grade of “B+” denotes performance just above the mastery level; (3) a grade of “B” is given to students who meet the basic requirement of the assignment; (4) a grade of “B-” is used for student work that is less than adequate, reflecting only moderate grasp of the material. (5) Variations of the C grade are given to work that reflects a minimum grasp of the material and poor organization. Final grade will be determined by adding the grades and scores from all assignments. The comparability of letter grades and scores is shown below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>100% - 96%</td>
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<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>95% - 91%</td>
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<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>90% - 86%</td>
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<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>85% - 83%</td>
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<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>82% - 80%</td>
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<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>79% - 76%</td>
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<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>75% - 73%</td>
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<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>72% - 70%</td>
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11. Honor Code and Writing Guide:

Academic integrity should not be taken lightly. In particular, be aware of plagiarism which can result in severe penalties. If you have any questions or comments regarding the class or assignments, please feel free to contact the instructor.

12. Reading: All required readings are electronically accessible via Ctools.

*Additional reading, in addition to those listed in the syllabus, may be assigned. They will be announced and posted on CTTools prior to the corresponding class session.
Course Outline

Week 1. Jan 12  Introduction to Course

- Life-span and life course perspectives
- Population aging

Supplemental Reading


Week 2. Jan 19  Physical Aging I

- Biological theories of aging
- Changes in organ systems
- Future of aging

Required Reading

1) NIA, Aging Under the Microscope: A Biological Quest
   http://www.nia.nih.gov/HealthInformation/Publications/AgingUndertheMicroscope/default.htm


Supplemental Reading

1. Saxon, S., Etten, M., & Perkins, E. (2010). Physical changes in aging: A guide for helping professionals (5th ed.). Ch. 4 (Musculoskeletal system), 8 (Cardiovascular system), 9 (Respiratory system), 11 (Urinary system), and 13 (Endocrine system). Springer: NY.


**WEEK 3. JAN. 26**

*Physical Aging II*

- *Health belief and behavior*
- *Health access*
- *Health inequality*

**Required Reading**


**Supplemental Reading**


**WEEK 4. FEB 2**

*Cognitive Aging I*

- *Stereotype threats*
- *Intelligence*
- *Wisdom*
- *Creativity*

**Required Reading**


**Supplemental Reading**


**WEEK 4. FEB 9**

**Cognitive Aging II**

- The nervous systems
- Information processing
- Memory and learning
- Cognitive training

**Required Reading**


**Supplemental Reading**


Commercialized computer programs
WEEK 6. FEB. 16  Psychological Aging

- Personality
- Coping and adaptation
- Resilience
- Subjective well-being

Required Reading


Supplemental Reading


WEEK 7. FEB. 23  MID-TERM EXAM

WEEK 8, MARCH 2 -- SPRING BREAK (NO CLASS)

WEEK 12. MARCH 9  Spiritual Aging I & End-of-life Issues

- Spirituality in social work practice
- Physician assisted suicide

Required Reading


**Supplemental Reading**


**WEEK 11. MARCH 16  Spiritual Aging II—Visit Arbor Hospice**

- **Hospice care**

**Required Reading**


**WEEK 9. MARCH 23  Social Aging I**

- **Social relationships and health**

**Required Reading**


**Supplemental Reading**


**WEEK 10. MARCH 30**  
**Social Aging II**

- Social theories of aging
- Work and retirement
- Volunteering

**Required Reading**


**Supplemental Reading**


3. Harvard School of Public Health and MetLife Foundation (n.d.). Chapters 5 to 7: An alternative vision of the future (pp. 25-8); Building infrastructure (pp. 29-32); Framing a new vision of aging (pp. 33-6). In Reinventing aging: Baby Boomers and civic engagement.

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**WEEK 13. APRIL 6**  
**Class Presentation I**  
-- Evidence-based approach to promote positive aging

**WEEK 14, APRIL 13**  
**Class Presentation II**  
—Evidence-based approach to promote positive aging

**WEEK 15, APRIL 20**  
**Final Exam**

April 23  
**Final report of evidenced-based programs due**