Course title: 

Adulthood and Aging (3 credits)

Semester: Winter 2014
Instructor: Viktor Burlaka, MA, MSW, Ed.S., Ph.D. Candidate
Course Number: SW616, section 001
Email: vburlaka@umich.edu
Regular meeting times: Tuesdays from 2:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. in SSWB Room B770.
First class: Tuesday, 01/14/2014.
Last class: 04/22/2014.
No class: 03/04/2014 (spring break)

Note: This syllabus is subject to change. Any changes will be announced in class and via CTools.

Materials
The following materials will support your learning in this course:

4. Other materials will be made available, as needed, via CTools. These may include additional readings and handouts from recent social science journals & pertinent social science. Reading these materials is just as important as the required readings from the assigned text.
5. There may be speakers invited to present information on the related discussion topic for that course session. Please be aware that speakers are voluntarily offering their time to share with us. Your respect and appreciation of this through active listening & appropriate questions will be most appreciated.
6. There will be supplemental videos shown during class.

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.
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.

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.

Course Design:

Class sessions will include lectures, small group and class discussions, student presentations, audiovisuals, 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.

Relationship to Curricular Themes (Approved by Faculty - 11/8/2006)

- 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.

Relationship of the Course to Social Work Ethics and Values 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. The course will also include content on variations in values related to family and work roles among different subgroups in society.

Intensive Focus Statement on Privilege, Oppression, Diversity, and Social Justice (PODS). 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.

ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

1. **Weekly thought/questions and discussion leaders (20%)**

   There will be a group leader for each discussion session (students . . . that's you). Please prepare for all discussion sessions and develop one cross-cutting discussion question that draws on the readings. If called upon, you will use it to lead off the conversation. Please submit your discussion question on the evening before the day that the discussion will be held (by 10 pm on Monday). To avoid overlaps, make sure you read questions submitted by other students before you submit your questions to the Ctools/Forums. Next, give feedback to two other posts. You will earn points based on the depth of your understanding of the readings and the quality of the questions generated. You will earn up to 15% of your grade by regularly submitting thoughtful questions. Another 5% will be given for leading class discussions using the questions.

2. **Social history interview (15%)**

   Through this exercise, you will learn to identify aspects of human behavior that are important in shaping an individual’s life situation and issues. You will recognize complexity and necessity of assessment in the social work practice and will become more effective in interviewing techniques.

   The interview procedure includes choosing any adult person and introducing him/her according to the guidelines (to be found under Resources at Ctools). Let the interviewee know that you will not use her real name and that all information will be kept confidential. To receive credit, you will need to write a paper that will describe interviewing techniques you used. Therefore, include information about a book on interviewing techniques in the “Research Applications” section of your paper. Add bibliography for any other references you make in the end of the paper (use APA-style).

3. **Research Brief (40%)**

   Students will write a research brief on a key issue related to individual or group human behavior, human development, families and small groups in adulthood emphasizing similarities and differences and the effects of oppression and privilege. Write me a note with the theme and explain the rationale for this
theme. I will help you refine your topic so that you can be more efficient. The papers need to be in the APA format. Follow this link to read more about formatting requirements http://guides.lib.umich.edu/content.php?pid=80367&sid=596113. You can also install the reference software, to automate this work (e.g., www.zotero.org). Here are essential steps:

1. Research the topic, read and cite at least 15 peer reviewed articles on the topic (go to www.lib.umich.edu then search “google” then select “UM link to scholar.google.com” then log in with your UM information). Alternatively, follow this UM link http://www.lib.umich.edu/taubman-health-sciences-library/how-find-peer-reviewed-articles. If you need support, talk to me.

2. Write a research brief (following the guidelines provided) that should be between 2000-3000 words (references not included in word count) aimed at policy makers that contain the following:
   1. **Scope of the Problem:** Define the problem area. Include current prevalence figures, other epidemiological data that helps convey the significance of the issue.
   2. **Who are those affected by this problem?** Explain what is known about the adulthood/aging issue you chose.
   3. **What does science have to say?** Select several high quality studies (those quoted most) to highlight. Summarize their key findings, basic methods, and limitations.
   4. **Implications for Social Work:** What are the implications of this research for social workers who work with public policy, for practitioners, or for the public?
   5. **Questions to answer:** What additional research is needed to better inform social work practice to solve this issue?
   6. **References**

4. **Presentation of Research Briefs (10%)**

Each student will have the opportunity to give a 3-5 minute verbal presentation of their Research Brief using powerpoint and/or any other visual aids they choose. The presentation should convey the key elements of the Research Brief described above. Students will have 2 minutes to make their main points, 1 minute to summarize their recommendations, and 1-2 minutes for questions.

5. **Quizzes (15%)**

There will be four quizzes during this term. However, I will only use scores from your top three quizzes. Each included quiz will contribute up to 5% of your grade.

**SCHEDULE**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Session</th>
<th>Content</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Session 1: 1/14</td>
<td>Introduction to class organization and requirements, getting to know each other</td>
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<tr>
<td>Session 2: 1/21</td>
<td>Themes and issues in adult development and aging. Systemic and ecological qualities of families, family relationships and social support, marital status and family composition. Measurement of family systems.</td>
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<td>Readings can be found at Ctools/SW616/Resources, sorted by sessions)</td>
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<td>Session 4: 2/4</td>
<td>Health and prevention. Substance use. Alcohol use: quantity matters. Understanding development of alcohol use through lenses of family, individual adjustment and environmental influences. Guest speaker: Jorge Delva, Ph.D., Professor and SSW Associate Dean for Research “Challenges of conducting drug research with youth and families in Latin America: An insider's view.”</td>
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Reading. You are expected to read all materials assigned for the week during which the class meets before the class meets.

Note on attendance and participation. We will begin the class promptly at “Michigan time”: 2:10 p.m. It is important that you attend each class session. The class sessions involve skill development experiences that go beyond course readings. Missing more than two classes per term will lower your grade since your participation as a co-learner is essential to meet the learning goals for this class. If you are not able to attend a particular session, please notify the instructor prior to the class session and make arrangements with other students to address the material that you missed.

Classroom behavior. It will also be important to follow a few general guidelines to ensure that our discussion sections run smoothly and are enjoyable for everyone. 1) Please always bring appropriate course materials to section, including readings to be discussed for that week as well as something to take notes. 2) Put away and silence all unnecessary electronic devices. If you would like to use a laptop to take notes, that is fine as long as it does not disrupt from your participation or that of other students in section. Similarly, you may bring cell phones to class but they should be turned off or silenced. If you need to take an emergency phone call, please step outside of the classroom to do so.

Ground rules for discussion. In order to have productive, educational discussion:

1) Allow others to ask questions, express opinions, and support their statements with evidence.
2) Ask all questions. I encourage you to ask all questions even if they seem basic, obvious, or otherwise unnecessary to ask. However, basic questions often lead to great discussions.
3) Do not disrupt your classmates while they are speaking. This includes interrupting others to make a statement about the topic of discussion, engaging in side conversations, or any other behavior that hinders your classmates’ ability to contribute ideas to the discussion.
4) Respect others’ rights to disagree with you. This includes the right to come to a different conclusion based on the available evidence, offer alternative hypotheses or explanations, and to challenge your own opinions by asking for evidence supporting them.
5) Engage the argument, not the person. When disagreements arise, it is important to keep the
discussion focused on the material under discussion. Disagreements should not turn into personal attacks.

6) No slurs. There will be zero tolerance for slurs based on gender, ethnicity, national origin, sexual orientation, age, or any other group membership. Students who use slurs will be dismissed from the class and will lose all participation points.

Office Hours. Please contact me to request a scheduled appointment at least two days in advance for non-urgent matters. I will try to meet with you as soon as I can for urgent matters.

E-mail Policy. Email is the best way to reach me. Always include the course and section number, followed by a brief description of the topic of the e-mail in the subject line (e.g. SW 616: Question about paper). I will do my best to answer your e-mails about course-related issues by the end of the following business day. Business days are defined as 9 a.m. – 5 p.m., Monday through Friday. As such, if you e-mail me on Tuesday before 5pm, I will do my best to respond by Wednesday at 5pm. Likewise, emails sent on Friday before 5pm will receive a response by Monday at 5pm.

Students in Need of Accommodations. If you have a documented disability or condition that may interfere with your participation in this course, please schedule a private appointment with me as soon as possible to discuss accommodations for your specific needs. This information will be kept strictly confidential. For more information and resources, please contact the Services for Students with Disabilities office at G664 Haven Hall, (734) 763-3000. Also, if religious observances conflict with section attendance or due dates for assignments, please notify me so we can discuss appropriate arrangements.

Academic Integrity. The University does not tolerate academic dishonesty. You must submit your own original work and cite sources whenever necessary. If you are caught cheating or plagiarizing, you will be reported to the Office of the Assistant Dean for Undergraduate Education and Executive Director of the Newnan LSA Academic Advising Center, which handles cases of academic dishonesty. Many of these issues can be complicated so if you have questions about what constitutes plagiarism, please ask!

Helpful Campus Resources.

Newnan LSA Academic Advising Center: 1255 Angell Hall, 734-764-0332, www.lsa.umich.edu/advising
Sweetland Writing Center: 1310 North Quad, 734-764-0429, www.lsa.umich.edu/sweetland
The Spectrum Center (organization for the LGBT community): 3200 Michigan Union, 734-763-4186, http://spectrumcenter.umich.edu
English Language Institute (resources for non-native English speakers): http://sitemaker.umich.edu/eli.resources/home
U-M have too many acronyms for you? http://uuis.umich.edu/cic/acronyms/index.cfm