



Course title:	Adulthood & Aging
Course #/term:	SW 690, Winter, 2021
Time and place:	Monday, 2-5pm, Zoom
Credit hours:	3
Prerequisites:	N/A
Instructor:	Xiaoling Xiang, PhD, MSW, MPHIL
Pronouns:	She, her, hers
Contact info:	Email: xiangxi@umich.edu You may expect a response within 48 hours
Office:	3735 SSWB
Office hours:	By appointment

1. Course Statement

a. Course description

This course focuses on bio-psycho-social development and changes in mid- and late-adulthood. It will cover six major areas.

- (a) Demographic trends globally and in the United States
- (b) Major theoretical perspectives including the life course and life-span perspectives
- (c) Biological and cognitive changes in the second half of life
- (d) Common chronic conditions and their treatment in older adults
- (e) Psychological and social development in mid- and late- adulthood
- (f) Definitions and determinants of positive and healthy aging

Special attention will be paid to diversity and social justice issues, including similarities and differences in the experience of aging related to an individual's position in society (e.g., class, race/ethnicity, immigration status, religion, sex, sexual orientation and

gender identity), and institutional and social factors that marginalize some segments of the older population.

b. Course content

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 or spirituality, sex, and sexual orientation.

c. Course objectives and competencies

Upon completion of the course, students will be able to:

- Assess impacts of demographic trends in the US in the coming decades. (EPAS 4)
- Apply theoretical concepts to understand adulthood development. (EPAS 7)
- Describe biological changes with aging and their health and social implications. (EPAS 6, 7)
- Differentiate normal cognitive change and cognitive impairment. (EPAS 6, 7)
- Analyze psychosocial theories of stress, coping and social relations in later life. (EPAS 4, 7, 8)
- Evaluate concepts of positive and healthy aging (EPAS 4, 6, 7, 8)
- Identify the major ways in which an individual's position in society and the key diversity dimensions affect development and change in mid- and later adulthood. (EPAS 6, 7, 8)
- Analyze the impact of the environment on the health of older adults (EPAS 3)
- Evaluate older adult's physical environment and the impact of social isolation and socio- economic status through the lens of Universal Design. (EPAS 3)

d. Course design

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

e. 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.

f. Relationship 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.

g. Intensive focus on 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.

2. Class Requirements

a. Text and class materials

- Weekly readings will be posted in Canvas and may change within one week prior to class
- Students are expected to read ALL posted articles which may or may not be discussed in class but are identified by the instructor to be a useful resource for future practice
- Additional readings may be assigned. If so, these will be verbalized in class and subsequently posted in Canvas for the appropriate week at least one week ahead of time
- Pre-recorded content modules may be assigned for viewing prior to class to prepare students for in-class work.

b. Class schedule

Date/Time	Agenda & Reading	Guest speaker & Assignments
Week 1 Jan 25	Demographics of aging & Minority aging <u>Required reading:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2019 Profile of Older Americans • Perspectives on ageing, later life and ethnicity: ageing research in ethnic minority contexts 	
Week 2 Feb 1	Theoretical perspectives. Life course perspective and theories of aging <u>Required reading:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Human development in Time and Place (In addition, choose one of the two below): • Cultural differences in aging experiences of ethnic and sexual minority older adults • Aging and cumulative inequality: how does inequality get under the skin 	
Week 3 Feb 8	Biology of aging. Biology of aging, including changes in organ systems, and sensory systems, with a focus on how these biological changes affect health and functioning of older adults. <u>Required reading:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Psychology of aging chapter 3, The aging body and age-related health conditions 	Guest speaker

Week 4 Feb 15	<p>Life course analysis group project Interviewee: Betsy Hanna @ 734-945-1719</p> <p><u>Required reading:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Timeline interview: A tool for conducting life story research 	<p>1. Life chart (in-class) 2. Personal reflection paper (Due 2/13)</p>
Week 5 Feb 22	<p>Chronic disease & management. What are chronic diseases? Identify numbers, outcomes, considerations for care. Also discuss health disparities in chronic disease and management.</p> <p><u>Required reading:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-management education: history, definition, outcomes, and mechanisms • Racial/ethnic differences in multimorbidity development and chronic disease accumulation for middle-aged adults 	<p>Guest speaker</p> <p>3:30-4:30pm</p> <p>4:30-4:30 midterm feedback</p>
Week 6 March 1	<p>Functional independence & the disablement process. Theories related to functional independence in older adults and the disablement process. Discuss the implications for supporting older adults with functional limitations and disabilities.</p> <p><u>Required reading:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Youtube lecture: Disability studies across the disciplines: Theory and Praxis • The disablement process • The “Good Times” Cohort in later-life: Black-White differences in pathways to functional limitations 	
Week 7 March 8	<p>Psychological functioning across the adult life span and its impact on aging individuals and families. Theories: SOC - Selection, optimization, compensation, socio-emotional selectivity theory. Stress and coping, the role of religion and spirituality in coping during later adulthood.</p> <p><u>Required reading:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Selection optimization and compensation as developmental mechanisms of adaptive resource allocation: review and preview 	
Week 8 March 15	<p>Ageing in Place. What does it mean to older people to age in place? What is the impact in communities, on families, on resources? What resources are needed to age in place?</p>	<p>Guest speaker</p>

	<p>Students will look at Universal design and how it impacts aging in place. What does aging in place look like for ethnic minorities? What does aging in place look like outside of the US?</p> <p><u>Required reading:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The meaning of “Aging in Place” to older people • How design of places promotes or inhibits mobility of older adults: Realist synthesis of 20 years of research 	
<p>Week 9 March 22</p>	<p>Formal and informal support networks. What is a formal support network? What is an informal network? What are organizations doing to “create” artificial networks of support (PACE, Senior Centers, etc.)? Look at loneliness and its impact on aging.</p> <p><u>Required reading:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social isolation and loneliness in older adults: Chapter 2 and 3 	<p>Guest speaker</p> <p>Covid-19 paper (due 3/27)</p>
<p>Week 10 March 29</p>	<p>Family Relations and aging. Marriage, divorce, living together, single, widowed, children, no children, LGBTQ+, sexuality. How does relationship impact positive aging?</p> <p><u>Required reading:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Psychology of aging chapter 10: Relationships, families, and aging: Changes in roles with aging • Who says I do: The changing context of marriage and health and quality of life for LGBT older adults 	<p>Guest speaker</p>
<p>Week 11 April 5</p>	<p>Cognitive aging and cognitive impairment. Dimensions of cognitive abilities, “normal” cognitive aging. Also explore how dementia may occur in older adults.</p> <p><u>Required reading:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Psychology of aging chapter 7: Cognition and aging • 2019 AD facts and figures 	<p>Guest speaker</p>
<p>Week 12 April 12</p>	<p>How to preserve cognitive functioning. Theories and programs related to promoting cognitive function in later life. Also discuss resilience.</p> <p><u>Required reading:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cognitive reserve: concept, determinants, and promotion • Resilience in older adults 	<p>Guest speaker</p>

<p>Week 13 April 19</p>	<p>Caregiving. How do progressive diseases affect relationships within families? How is the health of individuals and families interconnected?</p> <p><u>Required reading:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The impact of disease on family members: a critical aspect of medical care 	<p>Guest speaker</p> <p>Space paper (due 4/24)</p>
-----------------------------	--	---

c. Assignments

1. Life Course analysis group project (20 pts). Students will divide into groups of 4. Each group will prepare 5 to 10 interview questions. The class will conduct an interview of an older adult during class time using the interview questions prepared by each group. After the interview, each group will chart the life course events and interlocking trajectories of the interviewee. Write in major events and transitions such as family events and transitions, educational events, occupational events, health events, etc. Discuss how this person's experiences are influenced by their environment, historical context, socio-economic status, race/ethnicity, education, etc. Students will share their life chart and discussion with the rest of the class. After class, each student is expected to complete a 2-page personal reflection paper based on the group project. (EPAS 3, 6, 7)
2. Mid-term paper (35 pts): Use research and analytical skills to write a short paper focused on COVID-19 and older adults. How does the COVID-19 pandemic affect older adults? What groups of older adults are disproportionately affected? What might be the long-term consequences of the pandemic? You may choose a specific topic area to focus on (e.g., social connections, caregiving, health and health care access, mental health, cognitive outcomes...) or provide an overview of the impacts. Your analysis must integrate PODS concept. This paper requires you to examine your topic using the literature. Your paper should be no more than 6 pages single-spaced, including a bibliography. (EPAS 4).
3. Term paper (35 pts): Use universal design theory to examine a space through the perspective of an older adult. Write a reflection and identify what you might do to improve the space of older adults using the principles of universal design. (EPAS 3, 4, 6, 7, 8)
4. Attendance and participation (10 pts).

d. Attendance and class participation

Students are expected to arrive on time and stay throughout all class sessions. Attendance will be taken. Students are responsible for securing lecture notes and handouts when circumstances require them to be absent. Many opportunities will be given for students to participate, including short, in-class exercises and break-out group discussion sessions. Good attendance and active participation will be rewarded when calculating the final grade. More than two unexcused absences will result in the lowering of your grade.

For reference, the [Policy on Class Attendance](#) can be found in the MSW Student Guide.

e. Grading

The criteria for each grade are as follows:

Grade	Description
A+: ≥99	The grade of A+ will rarely be used and, in general, students should not expect to receive this grade on an assignment. This grade signifies work that goes beyond the content of the course and the expertise students are expected to master. An A+ is rare to obtain but not impossible.
A: 95-98.9 A-: 90-94.9	The grade of A is used for assignments that demonstrate <u>excellence</u> . These grades are reserved for student work which not only demonstrates excellent mastery of content, but which also shows that the student has undertaken a complex task, has applied critical thinking skills to the assignment, and/or has demonstrated creativity in his or her approach to the assignment. The difference between these two grades is determined by the degree to which these skills have been demonstrated by the student.
B+: 88-89.9	A grade of B+ is given to work determined to be very good. This grade denotes that a student has demonstrated a more-than-competent understanding of the material.
B: 83-87.9	A "B" grade is given to student work meeting the basic requirements of the assignment. It denotes that the student has done adequate work and meets basic course expectations.
B-: 80-82.9	The grade of "B-" denotes that a student's performance was less than adequate on an assignment, reflecting only a moderate grasp of expectations and/or content.
C+: 78-79.9 C: 73-77.9 C-: 70-72.9	A grade of C reflects a minimal grasp of the assignment, poor organization of ideas and/or several significant areas requiring improvement.
D+ to F (below 70)	Grades between D+ and F reflect a failure to meet the minimum standards, reflecting serious deficiencies in all aspects of performance on the assignment.

Notes on Grading:

1. Since virtually all of you were “A” students as undergraduates there will be a natural and necessary redistribution at the graduate level.
2. All written assignments must be submitted via Canvas-Assignment (attached as a MS word document). The submission closes at 11pm on the due date. With legitimate reasons, late submission may be accepted but points may be deducted. In general, rewriting of a graded assignment is not allowed but you are welcome to discuss the assignment with the instructor before it’s due.
3. In general, challenges to grades are accepted. However, challenges must be in writing (not verbal); must be specific and must be based on substantive arguments not on nebulous references to “fairness.” The instructor reserves the right to re-read, and re-grade, the work in its entirety in the case of a challenge. The grade may be adjusted up or down.

For reference, the MSW Student Guide policies on Grades in Academic Courses and in Field Instruction as well as Student Grievance procedures and the policy for grading in special circumstances can be found at these links.

Additional School and University policies, information and resources are available here: <https://ssw.umich.edu/standard-policies-information-resources>. They include:

- *Safety and emergency preparedness*
- *Mental health and well-being*
- *Teaching evaluations*
- *Proper use of names and pronouns*
- *Accommodations for students with disabilities*
- *Religious/spiritual observances*
- *Military deployment*
- *Writing skills and expectations*
- *Academic integrity and plagiarism*