

## Psychology 3000A: Lifespan Development of Women

Fall, 2015

**Instructor:** Dr. Jennifer Mather

**Office Hours:** MWF 1200-1300

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**Class Times:** MWF 1100-1150

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The purpose of this course is to introduce you to changes that occur in women over the years of their lives. This course builds on the understanding of the developmental processes in the early years gained in Psychology 2110 but extends it across the lifespan and narrows it to the female sex. Women today have complex, rich and busy lives, yet no two take the same developmental pathway through their life. Our society is fast-paced and fast-changing, so the social roles and expectations are changing almost under our feet. In addition, many of the theorists in this area developed models that fit males, so a skeptical approach to the psychological literature is appropriate.

### Course goals:

The *American Psychological Association* has developed five goals for teaching of undergraduates in Psychology, and the course should therefore try to fit these goals.

- 1) The first is *knowledge*: to understand the basic concepts in the development and psychology of women.
- 2) The second is *Critical Thinking*, the ability to evaluate, reason systematically and argue well in support of deserving ideas (also see the U. of L. Calendar).
- 3) The third is to acquire *literacy* and *communication* skills.

*Literacy* is the ability to read and interpret texts from diverse media, discourses and genres, and to express oneself in writing. *Oral expression* is the ability to listen and understand oral messages, and to express oneself effectively in a wide range of

interpersonal contexts (U.of L. Calendar).

4) To prepare the characteristics that will lead to professional development.

See the Conference Board of Canada's *Employability Skills*, including those seen above, but especially the ability to work with others.

5) To take ethical and social responsibility in a diverse world.

How do we do that? One way would be to bring current issues into the lectures/ discussions during the semester and look at them through this lens.

The grade will be a composite of marks in five areas. First, there will be a short summary and evaluation of one of the principles/processes of development. Second, there will be a short essay assessment of the issues explored by one of the visiting presenters. Third, members of each group will be evaluated for two oral presentations. Fourth, there will be two reaction papers to any two oral presentations. Fifth, the final assignment is a 15 plus page, opinion-based scholarly essay. Values of these assignments will be discussed and agreed upon in the first class meeting and then sent by email and placed on moodle.

### Course Format in Detail

- A) Lectures: The format of this section will be straightforward, with interactive lectures by Dr. Mather. The first lecture topics are fixed, but the class will be asked for potential sources of lecture/discussion for later in the semester. We could look at important current issues concerning women (course goal #5), but these should not overlap the oral presentations.
- B) Dr. Mather will be presenting Principles of Lifespan Development (see page 6) for several lectures in September. You will be asked to choose one of these principles, discuss it and give evidence from at least one scholarly source as to how it applies to the course material (course goal #2). This will be written in APA format with 3-4 pages of text, but will not need a title page or abstract, and is due September 28<sup>th</sup>.

### C) Presentations

Even though the topic looks relatively narrow, the coverage of women's passage through the life course will reveal many issues that deserve coverage in more depth. Both the choice of these issues and their presentation will be the responsibility of members of the class, with Dr. Mather's assistance. On September 14<sup>th</sup> the class will be put into groups of five and will generate a list of topics. The class as a whole will brainstorm issues in women's lifespan development that would be good material for presentation. On September 16<sup>th</sup>, the class will meet to plan the presentation sequence and groups will request topics. Each group should expect to meet with Dr. Mather at

least once about each presentation. Between October 2nd and November 25th each group will present twice (15 minutes each) (course goals #3 & #4).

Presentation topics are not completely unrestricted. The choice of topics should fit the course areas, but there will be a tendency to choose familiar issues from early in the lifespan and it will have to be resisted. Any format which gets its message across to the class will be appropriate, though we don't need more formal lectures.

Group projects are often viewed skeptically by students because effort input may be uneven. To allow for this, after the first presentation group the members will be asked to give productive evaluation (not graded or negative) to all members about their contribution. Then, at the end of the semester, every group member will evaluate the relative contribution of each, including him/herself, from a low of 80% to a high of 120%, averaging 100%. These will be averaged across all group members, and the presentation grade will be adjusted for each class member. This can make a big difference if your group got 40/50 and you were evaluated at 120% by all, you could end up with 48. Remember, too, that potential employers want to know that you are comfortable and competent working in groups.

To practice *Critical Thinking* (course goal #2) you will evaluate TWO presentations, one from each repetition, by any group except your own. Evaluate the IDEAS presented, or the ideas behind the presentation, or the approach/perspective/point of view that the presenters expressed, NOT the presentation style or format of the presentation. Refer to at least two sources of scholarly information. 3-4 pages of text with APA format, title page and references will be sufficient. They are due October 14<sup>th</sup> and November 27<sup>th</sup>.

#### D) Case Assessment:

During the semester, five women will visit the class to talk about themselves; what they emphasize in their life, what background led them to their present situation, where they see themselves going. Each woman represents some theme about women's lives and so each has interesting ideas, goals and values. They will have one class to visit and talk, with time for questions. Choose one of the women and write a paper about the situation, life path and influences that she represents. This is a scholarly paper and should have a minimum of 8 academic references (12 is a better number) from journals, books and book chapters (web-based journals are still journals). It is to be written in APA format with Title Page, Abstract and References - keep it to around 12 pages total (course goal #3). It can be written any time in the semester (if one presenter inspires you) but all are due by November 13th.

#### E) Opinion-Based Essay

Both to give you a chance to demonstrate your learning and to give you an opportunity to investigate a topic in depth, a 15 page paper will be the final assignment of the semester. You may choose any topic we covered (or one we didn't have time to, if

connected to the course topic); if in doubt, check with Dr. Mather. An outline is due November 30<sup>th</sup> and it will be returned with comments December 2<sup>nd</sup>. You should not choose a topic that your group presented. The paper should be a minimum of 15 text pages, typed, and should have a minimum of ten scholarly references. Web citations should only be one or two (this does not include journal articles found via the Web). While APA Format should be followed, this is not to be a paper solely of facts. By this time you should feel strongly about something you learned about in class. Tackle a social issue, recommend a practical solution, take on a theory or give evidence to support an opinion (all course goals). Make your approach, opinion or perspective clear in the paper. This is due in the last day of class, December 11<sup>th</sup>, by 4:00 p.m.

### **Grading Scheme:**

Principles paper -

Visitor paper –

Presentation 1 –

Presentation 2 –

Presentation feedback papers (2) –

Final paper and outline –

Schedule		All assignments are due by 4:00 pm
September	9	Intro: Assignment values chosen
	11	Intro: course organization
	14	Group allocate, Topics
	16	Group, Choose Topics
	18	Lecture (principles)
	21	Lecture (principles)
	23	Lecture (principles)
	25	Lecture (principles)
	28	Principles paper due
	30	Organization for oral presentations
October	2	Oral presentations first round (2)
	5	Oral presentations first round (2)
	7	Oral presentations first round (2)
	9	Oral presentations first round (2)
	14	Oral presentations first round (2)
	16	Lecture/discussion
	19	Lecture/discussion
	21	Lecture/discussion
	23	Visitor 1
	26	Lecture/discussion
	28	Visitor 2
	30	Lecture/discussion
November	2	Lecture/discussion
	4	Lecture/discussion
	6	Lecture/discussion
	9	Visitor 4
	13	Visitor 5
	16	Oral presentations second round (2)
	18	Oral presentations second round (2)
	20	Oral presentations second round (2)
	23	Oral presentations second round (2)
	25	Oral presentations second round (2)
	27	Final paper discussion, Presentation evaluation 2 due
	30	Lecture/discussion, Final paper outline due
December	2	Lecture/discussion
	4	Lecture/discussion
	7	Lecture/discussion
	9	Final paper preparation time
	11	Group evaluation, final paper due

## **Principles of Development across the Lifespan**

- 1) Gains and Losses
- 2) Nature and Nurture
- 3) Continuity and Discontinuity
- 4) Long Term Effects
- 5) Generational Effects
- 6) Averages and Variations
- 7) Social Roles and Expectations