

Psychology 3000A: Lifespan Development of Women

Fall, 2013

Instructor:	Dr. Jennifer Mather
Office Hours:	Monday and Wednesday, 1430-1530
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Class Times:	Monday and Wednesday, 1600-1715
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Moodle:	http://moodle.uleth.ca
Text:	Etaugh and Bridges: The Psychology of Women: A Lifespan Perspective (2 nd edition)

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 process 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:

1) To understand the basic concepts in the development and psychology of women.

You have to study and learn so that you can make up your own mind about history and everything else but you can't make up an empty mind. Stock your mind, stock your mind. It is your house of treasure and no one in the world can interfere with it . . . you might be poor, your shoes might be broken, but your mind is a palace (Frank McCourt, 1996, *Angela's Ashes*, p. 208).

2) To develop *Critical Thinking*.

Critical thinking, the ability to evaluate reasoning systematically and to argue well in support of deserving ideas (University of Lethbridge Calendar).

3) To acquire better *Literacy* and *Oral expression* skills.

Literacy, the ability to read and interpret texts from diverse media, discourses and genres, and to express oneself in writing. Oral expression, the ability to listen and understand oral messages, and to express oneself effectively in a wide range of interpersonal contexts (University of Lethbridge Calendar).

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 assessment of the issues explored by one of the female visiting presenters. Third, members of each group will be evaluated for two oral presentations. Fourth, there will be a reaction paper to any oral presentation. The final assignment, replacing an exam, 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 an interactive lecture by Dr. Mather.
- B) The textbook tends to emphasize the ‘women’ aspect of the course but links less well to the Developmental Psychology aspect. Thus Dr. Mather will be presenting Principles of Lifespan Development for several lectures in September. You will be asked to choose one of these principles, discuss it and give evidence from the text and at least one other scholarly source as to how it applies to the course material. 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 October 7th.

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 9th 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 (Hint: read the text and scan the topics). On September 11th 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 23 and November 18th each group will present twice (30 minutes each).

Presentations are not completely unrestricted. The choice of topics should fit the lecture areas covered, 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 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* you will evaluate ONE presentation 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 information, one of which may be the text. 3-4 pages of text with APA format, title page and references will be sufficient. It is due November 20th.

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 6 academic references (10 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. It can be written any time in the semester (if one presenter inspires you) but all are due by October 21st.

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 and substitute for a final exam. 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 27th and it will be returned with comments December 2nd. 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 references, at least three of which should be journal articles and two books or chapters. 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. Make your approach, opinion or perspective clear in the paper. This is due December 6th, the last day of classes.

Schedule		
September	4	Intro: Assignment values chosen
	9	Group topics chosen
	11	Group topics chosen
	16	Lecture (principles)
	18	Visitor 1
	23	Lecture (principles)
	25	Visitor 2
	30	Lecture (principles)
October	2	Visitor 3
	7	Group organization day, Principles paper due
	9	Visitor 4
	16	Visitor 5
	21	Group organization day, Visitor paper due
	23	Presentations (2)
	28	Presentations (2)
	30	Presentations (2)
November	4	Lecture
	6	Presentations (2)
	13	Presentations (2)
	18	Presentations (2)
	20	Lecture, Presentation feedback due
	25	Paper outline work day
	27	Lecture, Paper outline due
December	2	Lecture: summary
	4	Organization, group evaluations
	6	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