

**\* Preliminary Outline: Psychology 3120A – Adulthood and Aging**  
**Department of Psychology**  
**The University of Lethbridge**  
**Fall 2010**

**Location:**

T Th, 15:00-16:20, L1050

**Instructor:**

Dr. Margaret Forgie

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Office Hours: By individual appointment at a mutually convenient time.

**Course Description:**

The purpose of this course is to help you to come to an understanding of the normative pattern of human development throughout adulthood and during the aging process. Three general areas will be emphasized: a description of processes that apply to all humans or universals (e.g., changes to body function, changes to cognition); a description and investigation of the sources and types of individual differences among adult humans (e.g., sex differences; environmental stimulation); and, finally, the problems that arise from severe disturbances or deviations in the normative path of aging (e.g., mental illness, dementia, chronic physical illnesses). In order to understand the aging process, it is essential to address these developmental issues from a broad, interactionist perspective that emphasizes all aspects of a person's life. In taking this perspective, we will consider the biological, cognitive, social, and emotional processes that are characteristic of this phase of the lifespan, which necessarily includes discussion of the different contexts in which these processes occur (e.g., physical environment, financial stability, quality of care if necessary, opportunities for independence and health, lifestyle, family, and peers).

**Course Prerequisites:**

The prerequisites for this course are two, 2000-level courses (3.0 credit hours each) in Psychology or Neuroscience. The recommended prerequisites are Psychology 2030 and Psychology 2110. Regardless of specific background, all students are expected to have a solid foundation in the objective approach to understanding development.

**Required Texts:**

Cavanaugh, J.C. & Blanchard-Fields, F. (2006). *Adult Development and Aging, Fifth Edition*.  
Thomson Wadsworth: Belmont, CA

Northey, M. & Timney, B. (2007). *Making Sense in Psychology and the Life Sciences. A student's guide to research and writing*, Fourth Edition. Oxford University Press:  
Don Mills, ON.

**Course Requirements:**

(1) Exams. There will be three short exams, approximately every 4 to 5 weeks during the semester (see the attached schedule of deadlines), and these will account for a total of 45% of your final grade (15% each). Exams will consist of short-answers, definitions, and multiple-choice questions. The last exam will take place on the last day of classes. There is no final exam in this course.

(2) Presentation. Students will be responsible for giving a short, conference length presentation (= total of 15 minutes for presentation, including 3 minutes for question period, with length of time strictly enforced by the instructor). Students will present in groups of three. This presentation will be worth 20% of your final grade with 10% accorded to the group, and 10% to each individual's contribution. All students will be required to submit a one-paragraph statement of interest and then groups will be assigned based on matched interests.

(3) Bibliography Assignment. As a companion to your presentation material, each student will submit a written assignment that is adapted from several standard bibliography formats and will consist of writing a critical abstract of five primary research articles. This assignment is due on the day that you give your presentation, and will account for 15% of your final grade.

(4) Journal Assignment. There will be a written assignment consisting of an essay explaining a single, original research article concerning any topic in the area of adulthood and aging. Approaches from all levels of psychological analysis are encouraged (e.g., depending on your interests, you might choose to focus on community health issues for seniors, the molecular processes of brain aging or the effects of hormones on the social and physiological aspects of aging). You are free to choose any topic that you find interesting. The only caveat is that your target article **MUST** be a primary research paper that has published in a peer-reviewed/referred journal and it must have been published within the last 10 years. Your submission will be worth 20% of your final grade. Following initial grading, students will be given the option of submitting a revised version. A handout for the assignment and re-grading procedure will be discussed in the introductory classes.

**NB.**

Late submissions of the written assignments will result in a 25% penalty per day. In the case of the Journal Assignment, you will also forfeit your opportunity to submit a revised version. Failure to deliver your part of the in-class presentation will result in a grade of zero for both portions of the mark. Your group will be graded without your result. All assignments will be graded under the assumption that all students have read, and understood, the contents of the second required text by Northey and Timney (2007). In particular, all written assignments must be in your own words. Paraphrasing someone else's words, even if you reference it, is plagiarism. Plagiarism is a serious academic offense and any case of suspected plagiarism will be dealt with severely, including the imposition of the maximum penalties allowable for such an offense. For information on what constitutes plagiarism - see Northey and Timney (2007), Chapter 4. This information is also available from the library.

**Students with Special Needs:**

If you have a documented condition that prevents you from fully participating in this course, including evaluation procedures, it is your responsibility to contact me if special arrangements are necessary to accommodate your individual situation. Please note that you must contact Counselling Services to acquire an official letter concerning your situation. No accommodations will be given without official notification from that office.

**Grading:**

Letter grades will be assigned to final percentages according to the following scale:

A+ (90+)	B+ (77-79)	C+ (67-69)	D+ (56-59)
A (85-89)	B (73-76)	C (63-66)	D (50-55)
A- (80-84)	B- (70-72)	C- (60-62)	F (< 50)