

Psychology 3835: Lifespan Development of Women

Spring, 2010

Instructor:	Dr. Jennifer Mather
Office Hours:	Monday, Wednesday, Friday, 10:00-11:00 am
Office:	C888
Class Times:	Monday, Wednesday and Friday, 11:00-11:50 am, B730
Email:	mather@uleth.ca (checked week days, less on weekend)
WebCT:	https://courseware.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 3110 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, p. 90).

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, p. 90).

The grade will be a composite of marks in five areas. First, there will be five short Terms Tests, four per test from the list provided; for 20 marks. Second, there will be a short assessment of the life and values of one of the female visiting presenters for 10 marks. Third, members of each group will be evaluated for two presentations, one for 20 marks

the other for 25 – for a total of 45 marks. Fourth, there will be a reaction paper to any oral presentation worth 5 marks. The final assignment, replacing an exam, is a 12 plus page opinion-based essay, for 20 marks.

Course Format in Detail

A) Lectures: The format of this section will be straightforward, with an interactive lecture by Dr. Mather.

B) Short Terms Tests

On five days the lecture will be delayed by 15 minutes so that students can complete a short test of terms covered in the lecture or text. At the end of the outline are five sets of 12 terms each. Four will be chosen for each test; each is worth one mark. Coverage of the term will be marked in two parts, half for a DEFINITION of the term and half for an important LINKAGE such as a theoretical base, a practical application or a deeper meaning. Note there is no one right answer in this second part. These tests will be graded and returned.

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 January 8 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). Between January 8 and 11 each group will then discuss amongst itself and prepare requests for topics for their presentation. On January 11 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.

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, we're already getting those.

Group projects are often viewed skeptically by students because effort input may be uneven. To allow for this, after the first presentation group 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 and the presentation grade (50%) 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.

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 10 pages total. It can be written any time in the semester (if one presenter inspires you) but all are due by Feb 22 (this paper is worth 10 marks).

E) Opinion-Based Essay

Both to give you a chance to demonstrate your learning and to give you a chance to investigate a topic in depth, a twelve plus 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. You should not choose a topic that your group presented. The paper should be a minimum of ten text pages, typed, and should have a minimum of ten references, 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.

Absences from Terms Tests can be made up if a reason backed by paper evidence is brought to Dr. Mather. In general, disasters not of your making can result in an Alternate Test but your choice to be elsewhere will not (some choices such as a sports road trip or an appointment with a specialist in Calgary are forced – common sense is used). If you have any problem or difficulty that will prevent you from doing well in this class format, please come and see Dr. Mather so we can work out alternate arrangements.

Assignment and Visitor Schedule

January

Wednesday	6	Intro/course outline
Friday	8	Group topics brainstorm, groups assigned
Monday	11	Group topics chosen
Wednesday	13	Lecture
Friday	15	Speaker 1
Monday	18	Lecture
Wednesday	20	Lecture

Friday	22	Speaker 2
Monday	25	Terms test 1 and lecture
Wednesday	27	Lecture
Friday	29	Speaker 3

February

Monday	1	Lecture
Wednesday	3	Lecture
Friday	5	Speaker 4
Monday	8	Terms Test 2 and lecture
Wednesday	10	Lecture
Friday	12	Speaker 5
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Monday	22	Lecture, Speaker paper due
Wednesday	24	Presentations 1
Friday	26	Lecture

March

Monday	1	Terms test 3 and lecture
Wednesday	3	Presentations 2
Friday	5	Lecture
Monday	8	Lecture
Wednesday	10	Presentations 3
Friday	12	Lecture
Monday	15	Lecture
Wednesday	17	Presentations 4
Friday	19	Lecture and Terms Test 4
Monday	22	Lecture
Wednesday	24	Presentations 5
Friday	26	Lecture
Monday	29	Lecture
Wednesday	31	Presentations 6

April

Wednesday	7	Presentations 7
Friday	9	Lecture, Oral presentations evaluation due
Monday	12	Lecture
Wednesday	14	Presentations 8
Friday	16	Terms Test 5 and Presenter evaluation
Tuesday	20	Final paper due by 4:00 pm

Terms for Terms Test

Terms Test 1 (Chapters 1-4)

Gender	Tomboy
Patriarchy	Gender constancy
Cohort	Turner syndrome
Stereotype	Gender role crossover
Ageism	Role models
Menarche	Self-esteem

Terms Test 2 (Chapters 5 and 8)

Relational aggression	Self-efficacy
Conversation	Lesbianism
Mental rotation	Mate qualities
Math achievement	Empty nest
Widowhood	Kinkeepers
'Good mother' stereotype	Divorce

Terms Test 3 (Chapters 6 and 7)

Vaginal orgasm	Menstrual joy
Female orgasmic disorder	Premenstrual syndrome
Bisexuality	Virginity pledge
Hook-up	Female genital mutilation
Menopause	Teen pregnancies
Age related double standard	Post partum depression

Terms Test 4 (Chapters 9-11)

Occupational segregation	Parental leave
Mentor	Stay at home mothers
Retirement	Compression of morbidity
Pay equity	Single-sex schools
Housework	Work-family balance
Day care	Fear of success

Terms Test 5 (Chapters 12-14)

Osteoporosis	Caregiver burden
Diet	Grey Panthers
Heart disease	Sexual harassment
Mammograms	Elder abuse
Depression	Alzheimer's
Anorexia	Evolutionary theory of rape