

**FCS 448/548—THE AGING FAMILY
ON-LINE COURSE
SUMMER, 2005**

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Course Description

Research and theory related to the physical, mental, social and emotional development of older adults. Attitudes, knowledge, and skills related to working with older adults in the family system, including normative and non-normative transitions. This course will be taught using WebCT for class delivery. WebCT enables all of us to interact with each other and to look at materials that have been loaded. You are able to go the class Web page, logon and participate in a Chat room at designated times, use the Discussion Board, access class-specific E-mail, and instructions for using specialized features.

Course Objectives

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

1. Analyze the strengths and weaknesses of different research methods used to study aging.
2. Compare and contrast theories of aging.
3. Evaluate the special problems that face older members of minority groups.
4. Describe physical, cognitive, and psychosocial changes that occur during the later years, and the effects of these changes on individuals and their families.
5. Discuss the right to die, care of the dying, and helping older individuals and their families cope with death.
6. Describe the challenges and rewards of family relationships for later life individuals.
7. Use technological advances such as the internet and chat rooms to understand the dynamics of older adults and their families.

Required Texts

Bee, H.L. & Bjorklund, B.R. (2004). *The Journey of Adulthood* (5th ed.) New Jersey: Prentice Hall.

Connidis, I.A. (2001). *Family Ties and Aging*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Course Requirements

1. Students must post, for all in the class to see and read, a brief introduction. This should include some information about yourself (ie. What year you are, what your major is etc.), reasons for taking the course, and what you hope to learn about. **(10 points)**
2. Activities-Students will be required to participate in and post reactions to various activities assigned. The full list of activities/guidelines and corresponding due dates are listed at the end of the syllabus. **(10 activities @ 20 points each =200 total points for undergraduate) (10 @30 points for graduates=300 total points for Graduate Students)**
3. Interview-students must conduct a personal interview with a person aged 65 or older. The questions for the interview will be posted at a later date. After conducting the interview, students must have a group discussion and must explain what they learned about their person, what they enjoyed about the assignment, and how to better improve the assignment. **(80 points undergraduates) (40 points Graduate Students)**
4. Questions-each undergraduate must ask questions to graduate students regarding their research paper/handout (see below). Graduate students will be posting times that they are available to answer questions and you are responsible for joining the chat room during one of those specified times. The questions should be thoughtful and not merely yes/no format. **(10 points undergraduates only)**
5. Exams-There will be a total of 4 exams. All exams will be multiple choice and true and false. Students are expected to complete the exams without the use of books/notes. **(4 exams @ 100 points each =400 total points)**
5. Case Conceptualizations-each graduate student will be given a case along with questions to answer. You must submit your answers as an attachment to me and then post your case and answers for all students to read. **(100 points Graduate Students Only)**
5. Research Paper-Read at least 7 current journal articles (2000+) on a specific topic related to aging families, then prepare a 7 page typed paper summarizing and integrating your research. A reference page should also be included. Use APA style in preparing your paper. The guidelines for APA can be accessed through their website www.americanpsychologicalassociation.org Papers should be turned in to instructor via an e-mail attachment. In addition, you will be required to post a handout with information regarding your topic for the entire class to read. Graduate students must then pick a time that they will be available in a chat room to answer questions regarding their paper.**(150 points Graduate Students Only)**

Class Attendance and Participation

This class is completely on-line and assignments are due at a specific time and date. NO LATE POSTINGS OF ASSIGNMENTS WILL BE ACCEPTED. It is crucial that you keep up with the readings and the postings.

Group discussion will take place through a discussion forum offered online. New Mexico State University is committed to open, frank, and insightful dialogue in all of its courses. Diversity had many manifestations including diversity of thought, opinion, and values. It is imperative that all learners be respectful of that diversity and to refrain from inappropriate commentary. Should such inappropriate comments occur, I will intervene and ask that you meet with me before you continue to post comments. Conduct within this course should be guided by common sense and basic etiquette. The following are good guidelines to adhere to:

- ❖ Never post, transmit, promote, or distribute content that is known to be illegal.
- ❖ Avoid overtly harassing, threatening, or embarrassing fellow learners. If you disagree with someone, respond to the subject, not the person.
- ❖ Refrain from transmitting or distributing content that is harmful, abusive, racially or ethnically offensive, vulgar, sexually explicit, or otherwise. Class norms of conduct may vary, but there is no place where hate speech is tolerated.

Special Needs

Students with special needs that might influence their academic performance should notify the instructor by the second week of class so that reasonable accommodations can be made. Students requesting accommodation must have official paperwork from the Students with Disabilities Office.

Student Evaluation--Undergraduates

A=700-630 C=559-490 F=419-0
B=629-560 D=489-420

Student Evaluation—Graduate Students

A=1000-900 C=799-700 F=599-0
B=899-800 D=699-600

GUIDELINES FOR RESEARCH PAPER (GRADUATE STUDENTS ONLY)

1. Choose a topic related to aging (Alzheimer's disease, sexuality in the later years, elderly and alcohol use, etc.)
2. Read at least 7 current (2000+) journal articles dealing with this topic. Be sure to use journal articles and not popular press publications such as Newsweek, Modern Maturity, etc.
3. After reading the material, summarize and integrate the information into a 7-page (typed, double-spaced, 12-point font) paper. Your paper may be longer than 7 pages, but should not be shorter than 7 pages.
4. Try to make your paper as organized and interesting as possible. Be sure to have an introduction and a conclusion. Sub-headings are also useful. Rather than talk about one journal article at a time, integrate the findings from all seven into meaningful categories.
5. The paper should be written in third-person voice, and follow APA guidelines.
6. Be sure to write in complete sentences and complete paragraphs. Also, be sure to use proper spelling, grammar, and punctuation.
7. On the date that your paper is due, you will email it to the instructor as an attachment.
8. You should also prepare a handout to post online for other students in the class to read regarding your topic. You will need to also let the class know when you will be available on-line in the chat room so that they may post a question to you regarding your paper.

9. You will be evaluated as follows:

Organization--introduction, conclusion, headings	20 points
Sentence structure, spelling, grammar	30 points
References--number, type, current	20 points
Knowledge of topic--depth, insight	40 points
Integration of information	30 points
Follows APA style--text, references	40 points
Handout posted online	20 points

ACTIVITIES

<p>1. Briefly interview two people who are between the ages of 17 and 40. This interview will consist of only one question in which you will give the interviewees approximately two minutes to respond. The question is as follows: “What sorts of words come to mind when you think about elderly persons?” The respondents should give you quite a list by the end of the two minutes. Your responsibility is to look for themes in the responses given to you by each person. You are then to post some of the words that each person gave you along with the themes that you noticed as well as your reaction to this assignment. At the conclusion, be sure to include some of your thoughts regarding aging.</p>	<p>Date Due</p> <p>May 25th</p>
<p>2. You will need to find a friend to help you complete this activity and you will also need a few things to help you carry out this activity. The items that you will need are an old pair of sunglasses, Vaseline, phonebook, cotton balls, chopped onions, chopped apples, a blind fold, and Kool aid (without sugar). For part one of this activity, you will need to coat the lenses of the old pair of sunglasses with some Vaseline. You will then ask your volunteer to put the sunglasses on and look up the number to your local Walmart pharmacy. As they are completing the task, what are you noticing? How difficult or easy is the task for them to complete? For the second part of this activity, you will need to blindfold your volunteer and have them place some cotton in their nose. Then, uncover the chopped onions and see if they can identify the smell. Next, while they are still blindfolded, place the chopped apples in front of them and ask them to identify that smell. Lastly, have some Kool aid prepared (without sugar) and let your volunteer take a drink. At the end of this activity thank your volunteer for having helped you understand the challenges that some older persons face with vision, smell, and taste. In your posting you will need to include the observations you made of your volunteer as they completed each task. In addition, what do you think can be done to help older persons whose sense of vision, taste, and smell may be declining?</p>	<p>May 26th</p>
<p>3. Your book discusses changes that occur with memory and how memory works. Go to www.exploratorium.edu/memory/ click on “Don’t forget...playing games with memory”. Identify what this exercise was like for you as well as strategies that you would recommend to persons aged 65 and older to improve memory.</p>	<p>June 1st</p>
<p>4. Surf the channels on your television and look for persons you think are aged 65 or older. What are some television shows that have older persons? How is the person(s) portrayed (ie. strong or</p>	<p>June 2nd</p>

weak)? What do you believe are some reasons that we do not see many older persons on television? What are some gender differences in how older persons are portrayed? How are their relationships with others portrayed?	
5. You have been working with Marvin who is 67 years old and has decided to retire. How would you help Marvin adjust to retirement? What recommendations would you make to him? How do you think his identity may change as a result of his retirement?	June 8th
6. There is debate regarding the consistency of personality as persons age. Go to www.quincyweb.net/quincy/psychology.html then click on personality tests. From there, click on The Big Five Personality Test. In your posting, report your results and whether or not you agree. Then briefly discuss your opinion regarding The Big Five.	June 9th
7. For each of the following, give at least one example of a loss associated with widowhood: self-identity, loneliness, changes in family roles, changes in relationship between the widowed parent and his/her adult children, changes in relationship between widowed person and his/her extended family, other changes.	June 15th
8. Your book discusses the concept of “the social clock”. What are some goals that you have completed “on time”? What are goals that you have been working toward “off time”? Are there different social clocks based on social class, ethnic group or gender (give examples)? Why do we sometimes feel compelled to be “on time” according to the social clock? What are some psychological and social costs incurred when we are “off time”?	June 16th
9. Answer the following scenarios: Following a heart attach, your 75-year-old father is in a coma. The attending physician does not expect him to recover, what would you do? Would your decision be different if your father were 50? Let’s suppose the situation is different. Instead of heart problems, your 75-year-old father is suffering from inoperable bone cancer. He is alert and aware of his pain. He tells you that he wishes to die. Does he have the right to choose to die(why or why not)? Who should decide if and when death is preferable to life—the patient, the patient’s family, or the attending physician?	June 17th
10. For this last activity, you are to critique the class. What did you enjoy the most/least. Which of the activities was your favorite and why? What other activities should be incorporated in this class?	June 23rd

COURSE OUTLINE

Date	Readings	What's Due?
May 24	Chapter 2 (Bee book) Theories of Adult Development	Introduction posted by 7:00pm
May 25	Chapter 3 (Bee book) Physical Changes Chapter 1 (Connidis book) Older Persons in a Family Context	Activity 1 posted by 7:00pm
May 26	Chapter 4 (Bee book) Health and Health Habits	Activity 2 posted by 7:00pm
May 31	EXAM 1 over chapters 2, 3, & 4 (Bee book) and Chapter 1 (Connidis book)	EXAM 1 must be done by 5:00pm on May 31st
June 1	Chapter 5 (Bee book) Changes in Cognitive Abilities	Activity 3 posted by 7:00pm
June 2	Chapter 6 (Bee Book) Social Roles Chapter 8 (Connidis book) Support Exchanges Between Older Parents and Their Children	Activity 4 posted by 7:00pm
June 3	Chapter 7 (Bee Book) Development of Relationships	
June 7	EXAM 2 over chapters 5,6, &7 (Bee Book) and Chapter 8 (Connidis book)	EXAM 2 must be done by 5:00pm on June 7rd
June 8	Chapter 8 (Bee Book) Work and Retirement	Activity 5 posted by 7:00pm
June 9	Chapter 9 (Bee Book) Personality Stability and Change	Activity 6 posted by 7:00pm
June 10	Chapter 10 (Bee Book) The Growth of Meaning Chapter 9 (Connidis book) Childless Older Persons	
June 14	EXAM 3 over chapters 8, 9, & 10 (Bee book) and Chapter 9 (Connidis book)	EXAM 3 must be done by 5:00pm on June 14th
June 15	Chapter 11 (Bee Book) Stress and Resistance Chapter 6 (Connidis Book) Transitions in Marital Status: Widowhood, Divorce, & Remarriage	Activity 7 posted by 7:00pm
June 16	Chapter 12 (Bee Book) Themes of Adult Development Chapter 4 (Connidis book) Intimate Partnerships	Activity 8 posted by 7:00pm Graduate Students Research Papers Due
June 17	Chapter 13 (Bee Book) Death and Dying	Activity 9 posted by 7:00pm
June 20	Chapter 14 (Bee Book) The Successful Journey	Interviews Due—Posted by 5:00pm

June 23	EXAM 4 over chapters 11, 12, 13, & 14 (Bee Book); chapters 4 & 6 (Connidis book)	Activity 10 posted by 7:00pm EXAM 4 MUST BE DONE BY 5:00PM ON JUNE 23ND.
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