

Moravian College
Psychology 371
Adulthood & Aging
Spring 2006

Instructor: Dr. Michelle Schmidt
PPHAC Room 230
610-861-1606
mschmidt@moravian.edu

Class Time: TR 12:50-2:00

Office Hours: M 2:00-3:00; TR 11:00-12:30

Course Goal

This course will provide a comprehensive account of adult development and aging. The foci will be theoretical, empirical, and topical, to reflect the emerging multidisciplinary nature of the field. Specific topics include transition from adolescence to adulthood, stage and non-stage theories of male and female adult development, physical changes, work, parenthood, family dynamics, psychological adjustment to getting older, retirement, health and aging, institutionalization, dying, and death.

Specific Course Objectives

1. To stimulate critical thinking about complex theoretical and methodological issues within the subdisciplinary context.
2. To promote the oral expression of critical thinking on issues of theoretical and methodological importance.
3. To engage students in the process of collaborative learning with their peers through discussion both inside and outside of class.
4. To instill an appreciation for and understanding of the methods and content of empirical inquiry in developmental psychology.
5. To impart more advanced skills in scientific writing, with specific emphasis on the canons of scientific writing unique to the subdiscipline.

Required Readings

Cox, H. (2004). Aging 05/06 (17th ed.) Connecticut: Dushkin/McGraw-Hill.

Lemme, B. H. (2006). Development in adulthood (4th ed.) Boston: Allyn & Bacon.

Handouts.

Class Structure

We will follow a standard structure throughout the semester. We will alternate lecture with discussion days. We will cover broad topics each week. For most weeks, on Tuesdays, the instructor will provide an overview of the week's topic through an interactive lecture based on readings in the Lemme text. On "conference days" (most often, Thursdays), student conference leaders will facilitate discussions about an *applied* sub-topic taken from the Annual Editions reader and selected handouts, which will relate to the larger topic of the week.

Components of the Course

1. Engagement in our Learning Community

Adulthood and Aging is an advanced course in psychology that requires active discussion and contribution from each member of the class. The course will be greatly enhanced if we can benefit from each participant's experiences, thoughts, and opinions. This is your class...make it interesting!

In preparation for our Conference sessions, each student, with the exception of the conference leaders, will be responsible for posting 3 questions on the Discussion Board in Blackboard. These questions should be those that you raise in reaction to the conference day readings. All questions should be posted by midnight on the night before our conference sessions. These questions will help the conference leaders to facilitate discussion during the class session. Not only will you assist your colleagues by posting questions for our conferences, they will assist you when it is your turn to lead the Conference. You may miss posting for 2 of our 9 discussion topics.

In order to post messages on Blackboard, you will need to register for the course on-line (password: adulthood).

Class participation/engagement is required in every class. Grades for engagement will depend on both the quantity and the quality of your contributions. If you are not in class, you cannot be engaged and your grade will be a zero. At the end of class on Thursdays, you will complete a self-evaluation of your nonverbal and verbal participation for the current week. Your self-evaluation and your discussion questions will determine your weekly participation grade. If at any time you would like to discuss your participation, please feel free to come and see me. Note: In addition to using Blackboard for threaded discussion, you will find other "buttons" that will be relevant to you, including Course Information (syllabus), Course Documents (e.g.,

lecture outlines, assignments), Staff Information (instructor contact information), Discussion Board (threaded discussion), Communication (e.g., classmates' contact information).

2. Conference Sessions

As stated above, we will devote some of class days to a conference-style discussion of readings that serve to bridge the gap between principles and theories and the real world. The goal of these conference sessions is for you to enrich your understanding and appreciation of developmental theory as it relates to applied issues. The assigned articles present “hot topics” in adulthood and aging related to the week’s topic. These readings are intended to stimulate critical thinking and to promote class discussion.

On Conference days, a team of 2 discussion leaders will lead the conference session. As a discussion leader, your job is to work with your partner to organize the conference session around issues such as (1) identification of the question of interest and the importance of that question to the subfield of adult development, (2) critique and evaluation of the methodology and empirical findings, (3) implications of the information presented in the article (both real world and applied implications), and (4) discussion of directions for future research that follow from the readings. **Each team should be prepared to facilitate 60 minutes of discussion—DO NOT GIVE A PRESENTATION.** Reading and research beyond the assigned readings is strongly encouraged. You should feel free to assign additional readings to the class. If you choose to do this, please be prepared to provide the instructor and the class with a copy of the reading at least 1 week before the conference date.

Discussion leaders should plan to create a discussion circle and pose questions to the group for open discussion. The goal is for all members of our learning community to actively discuss topics from the readings. Students will provide an evaluation of the conference leaders each week. Student feedback will be considered when assigning a grade to the weekly leaders.

3. Exams

There will be 2 in-class exams. Exams will be based on readings and any material covered in class (e.g., lecture materials, discussions, videos). Exams may include multiple choice items, terms, or essays.

4. Service Learning

As students, it is essential that your learning experiences extend beyond the walls of our college classrooms. The Lehigh Valley is home to many organizations whose goal it is to assist individuals with different needs. This semester you will have the opportunity to provide services to these local organizations and, in return, these organizations will provide you with a wealth of information about a subsample of the adult population in the Lehigh Valley.

Each student will be responsible for completing 20 hours of service at a local organization (approximately 2 hours per week during weeks 3 through 12 of the semester—you may not do all of your time in just a few visits). Based on students’ availabilities and interests, they will be placed at one of a number of locations. Some possible placements include homeless

shelters, elder care facilities, or facilities for adults with mental or physical impairments. A list of suggested sites is attached.

Once approved, students will arrange their 20 hours of service with their site contacts. Once a schedule is established, students will be required to turn in a copy of their anticipated schedules (no later than 1/26—failure to do so will result in a 10-point deduction on the final journal grade). After each week of visiting the site, each student will write a journal entry of his or her experiences (1 type written page per week, please—no more than 10 pages total!) Journal entries should be maintained as a computer document. **Where appropriate, entries should relate field experiences with concepts discussed in class.** A final journal entry must summarize the experience, recounting what you have learned about yourself, the population observed, and the aging process.

Suggestions for reflective journal:

- Describe the setting, the people, and positive/negative feelings you are having.
- What are some of the activities you have been doing with the person(s) with whom you have been working?
- Describe the reactions of the person(s) with whom you are working towards you, citing specific examples.
- Describe how your presence in the community is having an impact on the person(s) with whom you are working.
- What impact, if any, has your volunteer experience made on your life?
- Have your initial impressions been altered? How so? If not, describe observations that have confirmed your initial impressions.
- **When possible, relate what you experience at the site to specific material that we cover in class.**

A midterm review of evaluations will be completed over spring break. All students must turn in their journals mid-semester, March 2, for review. The due date for final journals is April 20. Students who fail to turn in their journals, on either the 3/2 or the 4/20 due dates, will receive a 10-point deduction on the final journal and will forfeit feedback. During the last week of classes, students will share their service learning experiences with one another in class. As the semester progresses, we will determine a schedule for who will share on April 25 and April 27.

5. **Sixty Year Plan**

Students will create a portfolio for adulthood. In the end, students will have a thoughtful “60 year plan.” There will be a question for each week of the semester. Students will write a 1-2 page response to that week’s question and keep it as part of a growing portfolio. Students will read the book *Quarterlife Crisis* and a reaction to that book also will be part of the portfolio as well. At the end of the semester, students will write a final entry in which they reflect on what they learned about adolescence, adulthood, and aging. Failure to turn in the portfolio for checks on February 14 or March 21 will result in a 10-point deduction (for each missed check) on the final paper.

Grades

| | |
|--|-----|
| Discussion Questions | 7% |
| Engagement in Course Material | 10% |
| Conference Session Leader | 8% |
| Exam 1 | 20% |
| Exam 2 | 20% |
| Service Learning (participation & journal) | 15% |
| Portfolio | 20% |
| --weekly question responses (10 pts each) | |
| --Quarterlife Crisis reflection paper (100 pts)* | |
| --final entry (20 pts) | |

*Although the discussion of Quarterlife Crisis will not be graded, failure to take part in the discussion will result in a 20 point deduction on the QC paper.

Note: You are required to participate in the All Campus Service Day on Tuesday, April 4. Some students will have committed to other projects through campus organizations. Other students may work as part of a group in PS371 to create a project for that day. Students who wish to do a special service project at their chosen SL site for an extended amount of time on April 4 may do so. A 1-page write up of what you did for the Service Day is due on Thursday, April 6. Failure to participate in the campus service day will result in a 3-point deduction on the final grade for this course.

Class Policies

Attendance Policy

As Moravian College's Attendance Policy in the Student Handbook states, "students are expected to attend classes regularly." If you have an unavoidable situation that prevents you from being in class, please advise the instructor before the class meeting. Excused absences will require appropriate documentation (e.g., doctor's note). Otherwise, your attendance will be expected. Excessive unexcused and excused absences will be handled on an individual basis, and may result in a 2-point deduction per absence on the final average. If you are absent, it is your responsibility to get missed material from a classmate.

Academic Integrity

The Policy on Academic Honesty (Student Handbook, 2003-2004) states, "Moravian College expects its students to perform their academic work honestly and fairly." Therefore, students are expected to be honest in all matters pertaining to this class, without exception.

Put simply: **If you are caught cheating, you will receive a failing grade. All situations of academic dishonesty will be reported to the Academic Dean's Office.**

All work submitted for evaluation in this course must be original work. It may not be “borrowed” from another student, a printed source, or online source without proper credit as outlined by the APA Manual (5th ed.) (available in the Reference section of Reeves Library). Please note that no part of your assignments may be shared with other students in this class or with students in future classes, and you may not refer to papers from previous classes. All papers submitted for this class must be original work completed to meet the requirements of this class.

Students may not plagiarize. The Moravian College Student Handbook states, “[w]hen students use the specific thoughts, ideas, writings, or expressions of another person, they must accompany each instance of use with some form of attribution to the source.” Failure to do so is plagiarism, a major form of dishonesty. Specific procedures for attribution for this course are outlined in the APA Publication Manual (5th Ed.) (three copies available in the reference section of the library). If you are not sure what constitutes plagiarism, please set up an appointment with the instructor. Otherwise, adherence to the guidelines set forth by APA will be expected. Students must turn in copies of all sources used for papers and are expected to “keep all notes, drafts, and materials used in preparing assignments until a final course grade is given.” A student judged to have violated the policy on academic honesty will receive a grade of zero for the relevant assignment or a failing grade for the course, at the discretion of the instructor. Any such violation will be reported in writing to the office of the Academic Dean.

You are responsible for reading the Student Handbook and adhering to all outlined policies.

Late Papers

A 10-point deduction will be applied for each partial or full day a paper is late—no exceptions...not even “my printer wouldn’t work,” “my computer broke,” or “the computer didn’t save it.” Back up all your files...save to the server...save to disk...SAVE EARLY AND SAVE OFTEN. If there is a printer problem and you are minutes from the start of class, email me the finished document as an attachment (before class) and then get me a hard copy ASAP after class. If I cannot open the attachment, late deductions will apply. This policy applies to all papers for this course.

Make-up Exams

The standard policy for this course is no make up exams. In the event of extraordinary emergencies (with documentation), a student will take a make up exam that is a different version than what the class takes and it will be taken at the earliest possible time, to be determined by the instructor.

Learning Services Office

The Learning Services Office “provides assistance to students who are experiencing academic difficulties” (Student Handbook, 2003-2004). If you feel you need special services through this office, you may call 610-861-1510 or visit their offices at 1307 Main Street.

A final note...

The bar will be set high in this course, and I hope that the assignments and discussions will challenge you to think in critical and creative ways. The course will be conducted in a lecture-conference format. I will lecture when I think it is the best way to present material or it is the best way to answer questions that you raise. I encourage you to ask questions and comment at any time. My plan is that the conference-style discussions will provide an opportunity for you to share your knowledge, thoughts, and ideas with me and with your peers. I expect you to engage actively with the material in the course and to be an integral part of our collaborative learning environment by participating in learning both within and outside the walls of the classroom. I take seriously my role as a resource and guide. As such, I encourage you to bring questions, issues, and ideas to me at any time.

SCHEDULE OF TOPICS AND READINGS

| DATE | TOPIC | READING |
|---|---|-------------------------|
| Week 1: Settling in | | |
| 1/17 | Introduction to Course | |
| 1/19 | Introduction to Adolescence, Adulthood, & Aging | Ch 1 |
| Week 2: Why are we the way we are? | | |
| 1/24 | Theories of Psychosocial Development | Ch 2 |
| 1/26 | <u>Conference Session I: Perceptions of Aging</u> Service learning plan due | AE 12, 13, 14 |
| Week 3: Is there a distinct period between adolescence and adulthood? (and) Who am I? | | |
| 1/31 | Emerging Adulthood | handouts |
| 2/2 | <u>Conference Session II: The Self</u> (self-concept, self-esteem, and identity) | Ch 3 (75-95), handout |
| Week 4: What is the role of friendship in adulthood and how do we select our eventual mates? | | |
| 2/7 | Friendship & Mate Selection | Ch 6 |
| 2/9 | <u>Conference Session III: Emotions, Relating, & Mating</u> | handouts |
| Week 5: How does marriage affect our adult lives? | | |
| 2/14 | Family Ties: Marriage | Ch 7 (242-265) |
| 2/16 | <u>Conference Session IV: ...and Divorce</u> | AE 19, handout |
| Week 6: Why do people have children? | | |
| 2/21 | Parenthood | Ch 7 (265-283) |
| 2/23 | <u>Conference Session V: Intergenerational Care</u> | Ch 7 (283-290), handout |
| Week 7: Why do we have to have an exam? | | |
| 2/28 | EXAM 1 (material from weeks 1 through 6) | |
| 3/2 | <u>Conference Session VI: How We Age</u> Mid-semester Journals Due | AE 10, 11 |

SPRING BREAK

Week 8: Why do we work? (and) What does it mean to retire?

3/14 Work Ch 8 (300-333)
3/16 Retirement Ch 8 (333-352)

Week 9: Why do we keep working after retirement?

3/21 Conference VII: Retired...but still working? AE 24, 25,
26
3/23 Schmidt @ Conference

Week 10: What are the emotional highs and lows of aging?

3/28 From happiness to depression Ch 11 (419-447)
3/30 Conference Session VIII: Alzheimer's disease Ch 11 (447-459);
AE 20, 21

Week 11: Serve!

4/4 No classes—All campus service day
4/6 Discussion of service day (1-page write up due) & *Quarterlife Crisis* (book
reaction paper due)

Week 12: What are our attitudes toward death? (and) How do we grieve?

4/11 Death and the dying person Ch 12 (460-474)
4/13 Grief and bereavement Ch 12 (474-489)
Service Learning Journals Due

Week 13: Again, why do we have to have exams???

4/18 Conference Session IX: Dealing with life before death AE 27, 29, 30
4/20 Exam 2 (material from weeks 7 through 13)

Week 14: Reflections on service learning projects

4/25 Service Learning I
4/27 Service Learning II

Final portfolios due (Friday, 4/28 by 2 p.m.)

Portfolio Questions

You should react to each question below with consideration of relevant course material.

Week 2:

Why do *you* think we are the way we are? Reflect on which theory or which aspect of a theory provides appealing explanation for our development.

Week 3:

Do you consider yourself an adolescent or an adult? Do you find the theory of emerging adulthood a useful one? Describe yourself as an adolescent, emerging adult, or adult. What makes you put yourself in that category?

Week 4:

Who are your friends now? Why are they your friends? Who do you imagine will be your friends in 10 years...20 years? Why? Who will become your mate for life? What kind of person are you looking for (or have you found)? Why?

Portfolio check. Turn in portfolio on February 14. Failure to do so will result in a 10-point deduction on the final portfolio.

Week 5:

Will you marry? Why? When do you envision marrying? How does marriage fit into your bigger life plans? What will you do to help ensure success in your marriage? What are your thoughts on divorce?

Week 6:

Do you want to have children? Why or why not? What challenges of parenthood do you worry about? How can you work to overcome the potential challenges of new parenthood? What strengths do you think you bring to the parenthood table?

Week 7:

No question.

Week 8:

What are your work plans? Why have you been drawn into your particular area of passion? Will you be the primary breadwinner in your family? What will the challenges be with your work? Or, if you do not anticipate working at any point, what will be the challenges during that time?

Portfolio check. Turn in portfolio on March 21. Failure to do so will result in a 10-point deduction on the final portfolio.

Week 9:

What are your feelings about retirement? For example, are you the type who thinks you'll work for many years or the type who will retire at the first possible moment? Why? Where do you think your feelings about retirement come from—your parents? grandparents? What do you see as the pros and cons of retirement?

Week 10:

Consider your emotional health in early, middle, and late adulthood. What do you think will contribute to your emotional resiliency (or risk) as you ride life's roller coaster?

Week 11:

Is service an important part of your life? Will it be in the future? Why or why not? Who are you most interested in helping?

Week 12:

What do you hope you will have accomplished in your life? If you had to write your own obituary, what kinds of things would you want it to say?

Final question:

Reflect on our discussions of early, middle, and late adulthood. What are your feelings and thoughts about aging in various stages of adulthood? What do you think about aging now that you did not think about before this course?