San José State University
Department of Psychology
PSYC/GERO 114, Psychology of Aging
Spring 2023

Instructor:	Erin Woodhead, Ph.D.
Office Location:	DMH 316
Telephone:	408-924-5654
Email:	Erin.Woodhead@sjsu.edu
Office Hours:	Wednesdays 10am-12pm in person in DMH 316. Also available for zoom meetings as needed.
Class Days/Time:	N/A (Asynchronous online class)
Classroom:	N/A
Prerequisites:	PSYC 001

Course Description

From Catalog: Psychological development of middle-aged and older adults emphasizing normative (typical) development in the context of cognitive, socioemotional, biological, and cultural processes. Course content also includes age-related health problems and their prevention.

Course Format

This is an online course that is asynchronous, meaning that we have no live online meetings and you can work through the material at your own pace. Students need to have a reliable internet connection and a computer to access the course material.

Canvas

This course will occur entirely online through the Canvas website for this course (https://sjsu.instructure.com). All of the assignments required to complete the class will be available through Canvas and turned in through Canvas. Please take time to familiarize yourself with the various features of Canvas, and ask early if you have questions.

Learning Outcomes

Course Learning Outcomes (CLOs)

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

CLO1: Explain and identify changes in the structure of our population with regards to the changing demographic of older adults in the U.S. and internationally.

CLO2: Explain and identify the biological/physical processes that occur during the aging process.

CLO3: Be able to identify and discuss typical research designs used in the study of aging.

CLO4: Identify lifespan changes in cognitive functioning, physical and mental health, personality, and social relationships, including which components of these domains do not change substantially with age.

CLO5: Identify components of and explain theoretical models (psychological and biological) relevant to aging (socioemotional selectivity theory, continuity theory, random error theories, etc.).

CLO6: Report on the aging process through the perspective of an older adult through completion of interviews and experiential exercises; integrate these experiences with theoretical models presented in class.

CLO7: Discuss different viewpoints on the aging process gleaned from online interactions with your peers.

CLO8: Identify relevant legislation that pertains to older adults, including issues of nursing home care, Medicare, employment of older adults, and end-of-life care.

Program Learning Outcomes (PLO)

Upon successful completion of the psychology major requirements…

PLO1 – Knowledge Base of Psychology – Students will be able to identify, describe, and communicate the major concepts, theoretical perspectives, empirical findings, and historical trends in psychology.

PLO2 – Research Methods in Psychology – Students will be able to design, implement, and communicate basic research methods in psychology, including research design, data analysis, and interpretations.

PLO3 – Critical Thinking Skills in Psychology – Students will be able to use critical and creative thinking, skeptical inquiry, and a scientific approach to address issues related to behavior and mental processes.

PLO4 – Application of Psychology – Students will be able to apply psychological principles to individual, interpersonal, group, and societal issues.

PLO5 – Values in Psychology – Students will value empirical evidence, tolerate ambiguity, act ethically, and recognize their role and responsibility as a member of society.

Required Texts/Readings

Textbook

Yochim, B. P., & Woodhead, E. L. (Eds.) (2018). *Psychology of Aging: A Biopsychosocial Perspective*. New York, NY: Springer. ISBN: 9780826137289

This book is available at the bookstore and through other outlets.

Class Structure & "Classroom" Protocol

All course activities will occur online. There are no required in-person meetings for this class. **There is one required in-person or zoom meeting with the instructor for each student during the semester.** Each week will correspond to a module in Canvas. The modules will include everything that you need to complete each week in the class. Each module will include the weekly assignments, links to outside materials (videos, articles) that are relevant to the class, as well as a short lecture that I've pre-recorded for you to view that week. **Note that this is not a lecture-based course.** "Class time" will be used for completing the relevant assignments each week. Therefore, students are responsible for reading the textbook as the primary way of obtaining the content for the course.

This course is self-paced and will require you to time manage and self-motivate appropriately. I strongly recommend that you schedule time each week to complete the above activities. The worst thing you could do is to wait to complete the entire set of activities right before something is due.

Honor Code

(Reference: Academic Integrity Policy at: http://www.sjsu.edu/studentconduct/Policies/)

In order to ensure fairness and have a single standard of representing knowledge acquired, all students participating in online SJSU courses must agree to abide by the following code of conduct.

1. My work will be my own in this online course, except where the assignment is to work in groups or teams.

2. I will not give any answers for individually graded assignments to anyone else, or share assignments on the internet via course tutoring websites.

3. I will not engage in any other activities that will misrepresent my own work or improve my results falsely. I will not engage in any activities that will misrepresent others' work.

4. I will not download, save, or otherwise retain materials from the course for anything but personal use.

Class Environment

In an effort to create an environment conducive to sharing one's thoughts, I require the following etiquette when engaging in online discussions:

- Be polite and respectful to the other people in the class

- Do not use profanity in posts

Respect for the rights and opinions of others is required. The free and open exchange of ideas is the cornerstone of higher education, but we must always remain respectful of others, even if we disagree strongly with them. Disagreement is acceptable, but discourteousness is not. Behavior that creates a threatening or harassing environment will not be tolerated. Severe and pervasive disruptions of course activities are a violation of the Student Code of Conduct will be reported to the Office of Student Conduct and Ethical Development.

http://www.sjsu.edu/studentconduct/docs/Student%20Conduct%20Code%202013.pdf

Recording of Class Lectures

Common courtesy and professional behavior dictates that you notify someone when you are recording him/her. You may not make audio or video recordings of this class. The materials in this class can be used for your private, study purposes only. Course material developed by the instructor is the intellectual property of the instructor. You may not publicly share or upload instructor-generated material for this course such as lectures, exam questions, classroom activities, or discussion material. You can also not share other students' discussion material outside of the Canvas environment.

Grading Information

Instead of a traditional grading rubric, this class uses a grading contract. Please review the below information about grading contracts and how our specific course grading will work.

How is a grading contract different from a traditional grading scheme? With a grading contract, students complete a set of core activities and achievements to earn a "baseline" grade in the class, and can raise their grade further by completing other achievements. Grades can also be lowered beyond the baseline grade if students fail to complete the core achievements. In a grading contract, a single low score will not irreversibly lower your course grade. Also, because grading contracts do not rely on mathematical averaging, students who earn low-but-passing scores on assignments and exams in the beginning of the course will find it easier to raise their course grade with strong performance in the middle and end portions of the course.

Why use grading contracts? Grading contracts are intended to be more equitable to students by: a) giving students more control over what assignments they choose to put the strongest effort into; b) reducing pressure around assignment deadlines; c) allowing performance in the middle and end of semester to "redeem" low-but-passing scores from

earlier in the semester; and, (d) providing pathways for students to earn high course grades (including As) when they excel on other kinds of assignments besides exams.

Grading Contract Details

Core Class Achievements

You will earn a course grade of B- in this class if you pass* ALL of the following core class achievements.

- Complete all 3 course orientation activities
- 6 out of 8 reading questions
- 6 out of 8 class activities
- 6 out of 8 discussion posts and replies
- Midterm Project (score 70% or higher)
- Final Project (score 70% or higher)
- Schedule and attend one in-person or zoom meeting with the instructor prior to April 28 2023.

Grade Boosters

You will earn an additional half-letter grade (e.g., B- to B) for completing EACH of the achievements below. There are four boosters available. Please note that receiving an A+ grade will be left to the discretion of the instructor based on exceptional work. Therefore, you can complete up to four grade boosters.

- Receive an A (90% or higher) on the midterm project and/or final project (2 boosts available)
- Complete an additional paper with a passing score (2 boosts available total, see Canvas for paper details)

Grade Sinkers

You will lose half a letter grade for each instance where your course performance does not meet expected minimum standards. These are:

- Score < 70% on either the midterm project or final project (including a 0 for failing to take an exam; each project < 70% lowers course grade by half a letter)
- Completing fewer than 6 out of 8 reading questions (one half grade decrease, regardless of how many fewer than 10 completed, e.g., 1 vs. 5)
- Completing fewer than 6 out of 8 class activities (one half grade decrease, regardless of how many fewer than 10 completed, e.g., 1 vs. 5)
- Completing fewer than 6 out of 8 discussion posts and replies (one half grade decrease, regardless of how many fewer than 10 completed, e.g., 1 vs. 5)
- Not attending an in-person or zoom meeting with the instructor prior to April 28 2023

*A note on what's considered "passing" in this class

- For the midterm and final project, a passing score is 70% or higher.
- For ungraded (complete/incomplete) assignments, you must follow instructions specified in the assignment to pass. Each assignment's description lays out what is required to pass.

- Assignments must be completed on time to be considered passing, unless a student arranges an extension previously approved by the instructor.
- For all assignments and papers, a passing paper has very few words copied directly from the original material. This means that you use your own words to describe concepts and that you don't plagiarize entire sentences from the original work. One full sentence copied and pasted from the original work is enough to qualify for plagiarism. See Canvas for more grading information on the papers (linked in each assignment's description)

Course Assignments

Success in this course is based on the expectation that students will spend, for each unit of credit, a minimum of 45 hours over the length of the course (normally three hours per unit per week) for instruction, preparation/studying, or course related activities, including but not limited to internships, labs, and clinical practica. Other course structures will have equivalent workload expectations as described in the syllabus.

As an example, the expectation of work for a 3-credit course is 150-minutes of direct faculty instruction and six hours of out-of-class student work each week.

For all the assignments below, please note that my policy is to not accept late work for any reason unless we have discussed it beforehand. All assignments are graded as COMPLETE or INCOMPLETE.

	How Many?	**Relevant CLOs**
Course Orientation Activities	3	Preparation for an online course
Midterm and Final Project	2	CLOs 1-5, and 8
Class Activities	6	CLO 6
Discussion Board Posts and Replies	6	CLO 7
Reading Questions	6	CLOs 1-5, and 8
Final Papers (Boosters, Optional)	2	CLOs 2 and 4

1) **Course Orientation Activities** (syllabus discussion post, online course readiness quiz, first class activity)

There will be three short activities during the first week to get you oriented to the course and make sure that you are prepared for the expectations of an online course. First you will make a discussion board post that will involve asking a question about the syllabus, or something about the course that you are unclear about. This will help you learn to use

the discussion boards if you aren't familiar with them, and will make sure you are clear about the requirements of the course. I will respond to your questions, and you should also feel free to respond to other students' questions if you know the answer. Next you will complete an online course readiness quiz which will help you learn more about your readiness for an online course. Finally, you will complete your first class activity that involves making a schedule of when you will do course assignments during a typical week.

2) **Midterm and Final Projects (Passing = 70% or higher)**

Instead of exams, this course will require a midterm and final project. This will be the same project, with different parts of the project due at mid-semester and at the end of the semester. Overview of the project:

Healthy Aging Project: One of the themes of our course is that people can adopt behaviors now that have a positive influence on their aging process. For this project, you will choose three behaviors that you can engage in now to improve your aging experience and track your engagement in those activities during the semester.

Midterm Project: For the midterm project, you will write a paper that summarizes the 3 behaviors you are choosing, how they are relevant to aging, as summarized in our textbook and the broader research literature, and you will devise a system for tracking your engagement in these behaviors.

Final Project: For the final project, you will provide the tracking data you collected for your three behaviors and write a report on how successful you were in engaging in your healthy aging behaviors during the semester. Part of this will be a reflection paper on how you can improve your aging process through material you learned in class. You should include a basic graph of your tracking data for the purposes of the final project.

The rubrics for these projects are linked on Canvas (click on the specific assignment to find a google doc link with specific instructions and the rubrics).

Final Examination or Evaluation

The final examination will be the final project, which is not cumulative. The final project will count the same as the midterm project.

3) **Class Activities**

On some weeks there will be an activity that goes along with the material we've been learning. The class activities may take some time to prepare (e.g., watching a video and writing a response), so please allow enough time. Any specific instructions about the activity will be included on the activity. You will complete the activity independently, and upload it by Sunday at 11:59pm. You must follow all the instructions to receive a complete grade.

4) Discussion Board Posts

On some weeks you will be required to make a discussion board post and reply to another student's post. Discussion prompts will vary and will involve reflection on the material we've read. Replies and posts are due by Sundays at 11:59pm. The post and reply will be graded as complete if they are at least 150 words each and if they add substantially to the discussion (need to display some depth of thought).

4) Reading Questions

To facilitate critical thinking about the content of our textbook, on some weeks you will complete and upload a set of reading questions. For the reading questions, **I will give you five questions and you are to respond to four of the questions of your choice.** Reading questions will be graded as complete if you accurately express your understanding of a theory or concept in your own words, and attempt to connect it to other concepts learned in class. Reading questions are to be completed independently.

5) Booster Papers

You can complete additional papers to qualify for the grade boosters described above. **Please note that you need to complete at least one booster paper if you want to get an A- in the class. Getting As on the midterm project and final project will only get you to a B+ grade.** The additional paper topics are listed below.

Older Adult Interview Paper: Interview an older adult age 65 or older about a topic covered in our course. Check with Dr. Woodhead about appropriate topics. You should ask 7-8 questions, and you should write the paper in narrative form (don't type out or list the questions and answers as a Q&A. Instead, organize them and write in complete sentences). Incorporate one relevant peer-reviewed article and reference to our textbook about why this topic is important to aging. Summarize concepts from the articles in your own words without copying sentences from the original articles or our book.

Popular Aging Book Paper: Choose a popular press book about aging and summarize it. Contact Dr. Woodhead if you would like ideas, and to check that the book is appropriate for this paper. Incorporate reference to our textbook regarding why this is an important topic for aging. Make sure to include the book on your reference list too. Summarize concepts from the book and textbook in your own words without copying sentences from the sources.

University Policies

Per University Policy S16-9 *(http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S16-9.pdf)*, relevant university policy concerning all courses, such as student responsibilities, academic integrity, accommodations, dropping and adding, consent for recording of class, etc. and available student services (e.g. learning assistance, counseling, and other resources) are

listed on [Syllabus Information web page](http://www.sjsu.edu/gup/syllabusinfo) (http://www.sjsu.edu/gup/syllabusinfo), which is hosted by the Office of Undergraduate Education. Make sure to visit this page to review and be aware of these university policies and resources.

Psyc/Gero 114 / Psychology of Aging, Spring 2023, Course Schedule

Note: Schedule is subject to change with fair notice – if changed, I will announce it in class and via email.

Weekly Due Dates:
1) **All assignments are due by Sundays at 11:59pm**, except as noted on the syllabus

Week	Date	Topic	Readings	Assignments
1, 2	1/25/23 – 2/5/23	Introduction; Syllabus Review; Course Orientation	None	3 Course Orientation Activities on Canvas
3	2/6/23 – 2/12/23	Introduction to the Psychology of Aging	Ch. 1	Discussion Board Post 1, Reading Questions 1
4	2/13/23 – 2/19/23	Biological Theories of Aging	Ch. 2	Class Activity 1
5	2/20/23 – 2/26/23	The Aging Body and Age-Related Health Conditions; Prevention	Ch. 3	Discussion Board Post 2, Reading Questions 2
6	2/27/23 – 3/5/23	Cognition and Aging	Ch. 7	Class Activity 2
7	3/6/23 – 3/12/23	Neurocognitive Disorders in Late Life	Ch. 9	Discussion Board Post 3, Reading Questions 3
8	3/13/23 – 3/19/23	Personality and Emotional Development	Ch. 5	Class Activity 3
9	3/20/23 – 3/24/21	**WORK ON MIDTERM PROJECT: Due 3/28 at 11:59pm**		
10	3/25/23 – 4/2/23	**SPRING BREAK**		
11	4/3/23 – 4/9/23	Mental Health and Aging	Ch. 6	Discussion Board Post 4, Reading Questions 4
12	4/10/23 – 4/16/23	Relationships, Families, and Aging: Changes in Roles with Aging	Ch. 10	Class Activity 4
13	4/17/23 – 4/23/23	Death and the Dying Process, Bereavement, and Widowhood	Ch. 12	Discussion Board Post 5, Reading Questions 5
14	4/24/23 – 4/30/23	Cultural Differences in Aging Experiences of Ethnic and Sexual Minority Older Adults	Ch. 13	**Last week to have a meeting with Dr. Woodhead (by 4/28);** Class Activity

				5
15	5/1/23 – 5/7/23	Work and Retirement	Ch. 11	Discussion Board Post 6, Reading Questions 6
16	5/8/23 – 5/15/23	Aging and Ethics/Legal Issues	Ch. 14	Class Activity 6
Final Project Paper: Due on Canvas by Friday May 19th at 11:59pm; All Booster Paper Assignments due by 5/19				