

Department of Human Development
Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University

HD 5114: Adult Development & Aging II: Interpersonal Issues (CRN 97405)

Fall, 2012

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⇒ ANY STUDENT WITH SPECIAL NEEDS OR CIRCUMSTANCES (RELIGIOUS, CONFLICTS, DISABILITIES, ETC.) SHOULD FEEL FREE TO MEET WITH ME TO ARRANGE APPROPRIATE ACCOMMODATIONS.

⇒ PLEASE FAMILIARIZE YOURSELF WITH THE HOKIES' EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS INFORMATION, ITEM 1 UNDER COURSE DOCUMENTS ON BLACKBOARD.

Course Description

This is part of a two-semester sequence designed to introduce graduate students interested in gerontology to individual and interpersonal aspects of development in adulthood and old age. The first semester provides an overview of selected biological, psychological, and sociological aspects of development; the second focuses on family and other interpersonal relationships.

Educational Objectives

Having successfully completed this course, the student will be able to:

- (a) understand how humans age normally with regard to their interpersonal relations and social roles; and
- (b) comprehend and apply the empirical literature dealing with intimate relationships, alternative life styles, and critical life events of aging.

Virginia Tech Principles of Community

All seminar participants are expected to adopt and practice the Virginia Tech Principles of Community:

- We affirm the inherent dignity and value of every person and strive to maintain a climate for work and learning based on mutual respect and understanding.
- We affirm the right of each person to express thoughts and opinions freely. We encourage open expression within a climate of civility, sensitivity, and mutual respect.
- We affirm the value of human diversity because it enriches our lives and the University. We acknowledge and respect our differences while affirming our common humanity.
- We reject all forms of prejudice and discrimination, including those based on age, color, disability, gender, national origin, political affiliation, race, religion, sexual orientation, and veteran status. We take individual and collective responsibility for helping to eliminate bias and discrimination and for increasing our own understanding of these issues through education, training, and interaction with others.
- We pledge our collective commitment to these principles in the spirit of the Virginia Tech motto of *Ut Prosim* (That I May Serve).

HONOR CODE STANDARDS APPLY TO ALL ASSIGNMENTS

The honor code will be strictly enforced in this course. All assignments submitted shall be considered graded work. All aspects of the course are covered by the honor system. Any suspected violations of the honor code will be reported promptly to the Honor System. Honesty in academic work will develop into professional integrity. The faculty and students of Virginia Tech will not tolerate any form of academic dishonesty. For further information, go to <http://ghs.grads.vt.edu/>.

Required Texts and Articles

1. An adult development and aging textbook (if you have not taken HD 5104, SOC 5714, or equivalent, or an undergraduate course in gerontology). [You are expected to understand principles of life span development and of adult development and aging in terms of biological changes/health issues, psychological development (cognition, personality, mental health), adult transitions, person-environment interactions, work and retirement, etc. We will be applying these principles to discussion of family gerontology issues.] Read this book before the second class.
2. American Psychological Association. (2010). *Publication manual* (6th ed.). Washington, DC: Author. (Read the APA Manual, especially chapters 4 and 3. APA style must be followed strictly in all written work. * I am referring not only to proper citation and bibliographic style for references, but also to matters of expression of ideas, grammar, avoiding biased language, etc. in the body of the document. I've found it helpful to make tabs for key information (headings, references, tables, mechanics, etc. and I urge you to develop the habit of referring to the manual often. I will stop reading any document at the point I notice an error, and your grade will be based only on the part I have read.) *If you are in a discipline that uses a different style manual, let's talk.
3. Blieszner, R., & Bedford, V. H. (Eds.). (2012). *Handbook of families and aging* (2nd ed.). Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger.
4. Supplementary bibliography and articles available on Scholar, and articles you identify.

Schedule, Topics, Discussion Leaders, and Reading Assignments

Special events that can enhance your educational experience are indicated by * below. HD/ADA majors and candidates for the Graduate Certificate in Gerontology are expected to attend all Gerontology Forum presentations and the Certificate Recognition Ceremony in April.

Date	Leader	Topics, Reading Assignments
8/27	RB	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction of the course and class members • Overview of family gerontology • Discussion of critical thinking skills
8/29	RB	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recent Trends in Family Gerontology Research: Silverstein & Giarrusso; Allen-Blieszner-Roberto; Blieszner • Selection of discussion leader dates/topics
9/3	RB	Ch. 1, The Family Context of Aging
9/5	Rebecca	Ch. 2, Demographic Trends; Older Americans 2012 (RB out of town)
9/10	Glenn	Ch. 3, Theoretical Directions; Roberto-Blieszner-Allen
9/12	Rebecca	Ch. 4, Research Methods; Charania & Ickes
9/17		Rosh Hashanah
9/17	Neda	Ch. 5, Romantic Partnerships
9/19	Raven	Ch. 6, Siblings
9/24	RB	Ch. 7, Parents and Children
9/24		*AARP Program on Security, 5:30-7:30, Fralin Auditorium; register at http://aarp.cvent.com/YEASBlacksburgVA
9/26		Yom Kippur
9/26	Michelle	Ch. 8, Grandparents and Grandchildren
10/1	Jennifer	Ch. 9, Stepfamilies
10/3	Raven	Ch. 10, Discretionary Kin; Thomese Et Al.
10/8	--	Student Presentations – Preview of Project Topics
10/10	RB	Friendship: Blieszner & Roberto, Blieszner; Lang & Carstensen
10/15	RB	Ch. 11, Intersectionality
10/17	Ivette	Ch. 12, Ethnic and Cultural Diversity
10/22	--	MIDTERM EXAM – posted at 2:30, due by 6:30, work time restricted to 2 hr

10/24	Rebecca	Ch. 13, Rural Families
10/26		Eid al-Adha
10/29	Neda	Ch. 14, Immigrant Families
10/31-11/3		*NCFR 74 th Annual Conference, Phoenix, "Families and Health"
10/31	Ivette	Ch. 15, Policy Issues
11/5	Glenn & Raven	Ch. 16, Legal Issues
11/7	Michelle	Ch. 17, Elder Abuse; Teaster-Roberto-Dugar
11/12	Glenn	Ch. 18, Family Gerontechnology
11/13		Diwali
11/14-18		*GSA 65 th Annual Scientific Mtg, San Diego, "Charting New Frontiers in Aging"
11/14	Ivette	Ch. 19, Retirement (RB out of town)
11/19-23		Happy Thanksgiving Break
11/26	John	Ch. 20, Divorce, Widowhood
11/28	RB	Ch. 21, Caregiving; Caregiving in America
12/3	John	Ch. 22, Grief and Bereavement
12/5	Jennifer	Ch. 23, Future Research Directions (RB out of town)
12/10	--	Student Presentations
12/12	--	Student Presentations: John
12/17	--	FINAL EXAM – posted at 10:00, due by 2:00, work time restricted to 2 hr

Requirements

Students enrolled for a letter grade or Pass/Fail will complete all requirements. Audit students will complete all assigned readings and participate in class discussions.

Discussion Leader

1. Prepare to guide the discussion of each of your assigned chapters/articles in two class sessions. Highlight the main issues with respect to theory, research methods, findings, and future research questions for your topics. Develop discussion questions and in-class exercises rather than preparing lectures.
2. In leading the class discussion, begin with some background information on the authors (education, current position, areas of research/publication) to provide a context for understanding their work.
3. Evaluation criteria: extent to which the discussion preparation is thoughtful and complete, ability to keep the conversation flowing with comments and questions.

Discussion Participant

1. Read all assigned readings carefully and thoughtfully. Take detailed notes and bring them to class with you. Identify questions and discussion points.
2. Listen attentively to the discussion leader's overview. Contribute actively to the discussion by adding your own insights, raising questions, comparing the material to other readings with which you are familiar, and applying the material to your own research interests.
3. Evaluation criteria: extent to which the class preparation is thoughtful and complete, quality of contributions to the discussion.

Exams

1. Midterm and final exams are designed to test your knowledge of the course material and your

ability to integrate across readings/topics and apply the information to professional situations. They also provide practice in completing preliminary examinations.

2. Take-home, open-book essay exams will cover the material included in each half of the course. If you have completed the class participation requirements conscientiously, you should need only light review of your summaries and class notes for these exams, not major studying. Exam questions will be sent via email, and the answers will be written on the computer and submitted by email attachment within the time frame specified.
3. Evaluation criteria: accuracy of describing and explaining key concepts from the course readings, ability to apply concepts to novel relationship issues, extent of integrating relevant gerontology principles, degree of synthesis across readings. *APA Manual* requirements must be followed!

Short Paper with Presentation (due Dec. 10 or 12)

1. Identify five current empirical, theoretical, and/or review articles (including at least 3 articles reporting investigations) that link family gerontology to your particular research interest (or, work on a topic about which you are curious). See bibliographies on Scholar site; I can help you identify articles if you wish.
2. Synthesize these resources into a cohesive essay showing how taking the family context into account could advance theory and research in your area. Write a 5-page essay in APA style, and add a page for the references. Include an introduction and overall summary.
3. Prepare a 12 min. conference-type presentation of your paper. If you choose to use PowerPoint or handouts to illustrate your ideas, prepare no more than 4 slides + title slide.
4. Evaluation criteria: Coherent synthesis of source material, convincing integration with your area of interest or a research question, statement of implications for research or practice in your area of interest, correct use of APA style and guidelines for expressing ideas and reducing bias in language, and effective oral communication techniques.

Final Grades

Your final grade will be determined according to the weights you identify for each assignment (discussion leader, discussion participant, midterm exam, final exam, short paper), with a minimum of 10% in each category. Percentage distributions are due at the second class meeting.