Adult Development and Aging

Instructor
Dr. Susan Bluck
Associate Professor, Psychology
McCarty C, Room 506

Course meets
Mondays, Period 4 - 6
10:40 to ~ 1:40

Room: Weimer 1092

Office Hours
I am very happy to meet with you.
Feel free to see me by appointment
bluck@ufl.edu

Readings
Sarton, M. (1973). As we are now.
New York: Norton.
Coursepack and PDF’s.

Description and Objectives of the Course
This graduate-level course is required and provides a foundation in adult development and aging for all students obtaining a PhD in Developmental Psychology. It is an elective for students doing the Graduate Certificate in Gerontology. The objective is to guide students to an understanding of how growth, stability and decline affect individuals as they travel through the second half of life. This is achieved through critical reading of classic and recent scholarly articles in various domains of development (e.g., cognitive, social, emotional). Literary reading and film materials are used to foster an experiential sense of what it means to age, and individual opportunities for interacting with older adults through volunteer work in a residential facility are provided.

Required Reading
"I am not mad, only old." – As we are now (Sarton, 1973).

Reading for the course includes Sarton’s Where we are now, available online (e.g., half.com) and a course-pack of scholarly articles available from Target Copy. PDF’s of additional articles are also required and will be available through the course site. The class combines classic articles on aging with current theory and empirical work. Academic articles were, in many cases, selected because they are the ‘author’s favorite.’

Course Requirements
1. Class participation
Regular punctual attendance and lively, informed participation are required. Any absences must be excused, preferably before the scheduled class. Documentation for illness or other emergencies may be required. One or more unexcused absences will result in a grade of 0 for attendance and participation. Sound crazy and dictatorial??? I think so too, but people tell me it’s necessary. Hopefully not for us! Total possible points for participation = 30.
II. Reading.

This class introduces you to the literature on adult development and aging and provides experiences that help you digest what you read. Taking the class relies on you reading the articles/book. If you don’t do the reading before class, you are basically wasting your own valuable time as well as putting yourself in the embarrassing situation of having to pretend to actively discuss something that you know nothing about! Much easier to put the time aside to read and enjoy both the articles/book and the discussion of them in class. I have purposely assigned a reasonable amount of reading as I know that students often feel overburdened if there is too much reading for each week.

III. Weekly Synthesis Papers.

Beginning Week 2: January 23, a three-paged paper is due at the beginning of class most weeks that we meet (unless an alternate assignment is listed on the syllabus). All papers must be typed (double-spaced, with header and page numbering, and 1 inch margins) and written according to the publication guidelines of the American Psychological Association (see Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association). Synthesis papers are not required during the weeks of Service Learning. Draw from your reactions to the readings and formulate a single, complete thought, with a beginning, middle, and end. It should be insightful and articulate, demonstrating that you have read and thought about the readings, but should also go beyond the readings. That is, provide some synthesis of them. This may take the form of a methodological critique, a theoretical statement, a suggestion for resolving an ongoing debate, or an integration or comparison between two or more articles. Do not simply summarize each of the articles. Papers will be graded on a scale of 1 to 5, where a 1 means you missed the point and a 5 means your paper was paradigm-shifting. Most of the time, expect a 3. There will be 9 of these but each student will do only 6: you do not need to do a synthesis paper on the days that you are leading the class discussion. Maximum = 30 points.

Late papers will not be accepted. If you skip a paper, you get a 0. If you are sick or will be absent, you may have someone else turn in your paper for you, or, in an emergency, you may e-mail it to me before class. Otherwise, please do not e-mail me your papers. Papers will be handed back the following week.

IV. Seminar Leader. Sign up for dates.

Each student will probably co-lead the seminar with another student two or three times during the term (this may change depending on number of people signed up for the course). Sign up for the four weeks that most interest you (see sign up sheet at end of syllabus). The presentation will involve leading the seminar for a particular week. You will want to prepare Powerpoint slides for doing this. The seminar leader(s) will give a brief summary of each of the required readings, e.g., what are the major theoretical issues, methodological concerns, points of controversy, unresolved issues, a discussion of empirical studies in the area, key findings, challenges for future research, etc. The leader(s) will raise questions to structure and facilitate the class discussion. Seminar leader(s) must utilize the class readings but should feel free to also review any other articles of interest to prepare for the discussion. Further, creativity is encouraged; the seminar leader should employ whatever learning exercises or activities that he/she deems useful for enhancing comprehension and application of the material (e.g., audio-visual aids, poetry, literature, film examples, thought experiments, group exercises or ‘games,’ etc.) In preparation for this presentation (i.e., at the beginning of class), the seminar leader will hand out an outline to the class that structures the seminar. One aspect of this outline should be at least three interactive discussion questions. Questions should focus on analysis, synthesis, comparison/contrast, evaluation, or application of the main issues in the assigned readings.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Seminar outline</th>
<th>3 points</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Summary/critique of the articles</td>
<td>10 points</td>
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<tr>
<td>Creativity/external sources/discussion</td>
<td>7 points</td>
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<td><strong>20 points</strong></td>
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V. Service Learning & Reflection Journal. April 5

One of the requirements of the course is a service learning component that will be completed at Gainesville Health Care Center, located on campus at 1311 SW 16th St. (across from Shands and VA) Ph: 376-8824. Our contact person there is the Director of Activities, Samantha. We will attend an orientation visit to the Center on February 27. At that time you will sign up to volunteer once per week (Monday through Sunday) for four weeks for 1.5 hours per week. Visits can include helping with activities, participating in coffee chats, or individual friendly room visits.

Students should choose the part of the Care Center that they would most like to work in. One floor is for residents with dementia. One is long-term care. One is respite and rehab care. As your volunteer experience unfolds you may also choose to largely help with group activities, or spend more time in individual room visits with particular residents. Please wear close-toed shoes for all visits.

Here’s what you will need to hand in after the service learning unit is complete.

Service Learning Schedule: To document your participation, please use the Service Learning Schedule at the end of the syllabus. Record the date and time of your volunteer work each week, and have Samantha or one of her assistants sign your sheet when you compete each weekly session (14 points).

Reflection Journal: After each weekly session, write in your “reflection journal.” Reflections should be typed and double-spaced, at least three pages per week (36 points).

The reflection journal entries should begin with a detailed description of the service learning experience during the past week. This is followed by an analysis of the experience, particularly with regard to materials covered in class. For each weekly reflection journal entry, use the following subheadings: (a) date and description of volunteer activity for this session (i.e., who, what, where, why), (b) analysis of the experience in terms of personal reactions and insights concerning the environment, residents, activities, (c) connection of this experience to course materials. This should particularly refer to the reading assigned for the week that you are completing the journal, but can also make reference to other research, course information, or professional development issues. Note: When individual persons (residents, staff) are mentioned please keep them anonymous.

Classes during Service Learning weeks: We will meet for one hour classes during the weeks of service learning. Please come to class having read that week’s article and ready to discuss how it relates to your service learning experience (as per part C of the Reflection Journal).

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<th>Points</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Schedule handed in and all signed</td>
<td>14</td>
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<tr>
<td>Session #1 entry (a.b.c)</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Session #2 entry (a.b.c)</td>
<td>9</td>
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<tr>
<td>Session #3 entry (a.b.c)</td>
<td>9</td>
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<tr>
<td>Session #4 entry (a.b.c)</td>
<td>9</td>
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<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>50</strong></td>
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VII. Aging Film & ‘Companion’ Article. April 16

Some controversy exists concerning how older adults are portrayed in the popular media, including film. In the last several decades, films have been made that allow more central and dynamic roles for older adults. They are no longer portrayed only as ‘someone’s grandmother in a rocking chair.’

Time for popcorn! Choose one of the films from the following list and view it …on your own or with a classmate. Beside each film in the list below are some of the themes that are represented therein. Your assignment is to view one film and to identity and read a scientifically solid, empirical ‘companion’ article
from the aging literature that explores the film’s theme empirically. Review the empirical article through integrating information from the article with three relevant images-insights about aging from the film. Your write-up should be 7 pages. All papers must be typed (double-spaced, with header and page numbering, and 1 inch margins) and written according to the publication guidelines of the American Psychological Association (see Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association). Hand in the companion article with your project.

Introduction to the paper  
Description of image-insight from the film (x 3)  
Relation to scholarly article (x 3)  
--------------------------------------------------------------------------------  
30 points

I have chosen diverse films so you can follow your own research interest in doing this assignment.

Aging Films: Choose one!
Away from her (living with dementia)
Calendar Girls (women’s changing bodies; friendship in later life; norms about aging and attractiveness)
Grumpy Old Men (men’s personality; leisure pursuits; sexuality)
The Notebook (dementia; romantic relations)
Fried Green Tomatoes (intergenerational women’s relations; life stories)
Cocoon (longevity; physical aging; the quest for youth)
On Golden Pond (death preparation; marital relations; family relations)
Company of Strangers (wellbeing, women’s social ties)
Iris (Alzheimer’s, marriage in late life, caregiving)
The Straight Story (independence, men’s personality)
I’m not Rappaport (men’s relationships, politics, life stories)
Secondhand Lions (men’s relationships, family, children)

Grading
Assignments can not be handed in late under any circumstances. Late material will be assigned a 0.
Assignments are always due at the beginning of the class period on the date assigned. Your grade in the class will be based on the sum of points across assignments, as follows:

Weekly synthesis papers (7 x 5) 30 points
Seminar leader (2 x 30) 60 points
Service learning and reflection journal 50 points
Aging film & companion article 30 points
Participation (and attendance) 30 points

Total 200 points

Grades will be assigned using roughly the following scheme, though curving of grades is also possible depending on grade distribution. As this is a grad class I would expect everyone to work hard and obtain at least a B. Of course, other grades will be assigned if necessary.

A = 90%+  
A- = 87% – 89%  
B+ = 84%-86%  
B = 80.00%-83%

University Policies
Academic dishonesty (plagiarism, cheating, etc.) will not be tolerated and will be handled according to UF policy. Students with disabilities or conditions requiring accommodation should contact the Office for Students with Disabilities, 392-1261, ext. 143. Students requesting classroom accommodation must first register with the Dean of Students Office. That office will provide documentation to the Instructor concerning accommodation of student needs.
The Course: Week by Week

**Week 1: January 9**
Overview: Adult Development…and this course.
No readings or assignments.
(No class January 16, Martin Luther King Day).

**Week 2: January 23. Middle age: Life begins at forty**
Thought for the day.
Class discussion with seminar leader(s).

**Readings – Weekly synthesis paper due**


**Week 3: January 30. Lifespan theory**
Thought for the day.
Class discussion with seminar leader(s).

**Readings – Weekly synthesis paper due**


Week 4: February 6. Setting goals, taking control

Thought for the day.
Class discussion with seminar leader(s).

Readings - Weekly Synthesis paper due


Week 5: February 13. Social Relations

Thought for the day.
Class discussion with seminar leader(s).

Readings - Weekly Synthesis Paper Due


Week 6: February 20. Well-Being & Life Satisfaction

Thought for the day.
Class discussion with seminar leader(s).
In-Class Exercise: The ten things that are important to me.

Readings - Weekly Synthesis paper due


**Week 7: February 27. Person-environment Fit**

Class discussion of Sarton with seminar leader(s).  
Service Learning Orientation: Walk from classroom to Care Center.  
Complete Service Learning session #1 this week.

**Readings – Weekly synthesis paper due**


**Week 8: Spring Break: March 3 – 11.**

**Week 9: March 12. Pathways through later life**

Class meets 11:45 – 12:45 pm.  
Service Learning session #2.

**Readings**


**Week 10: March 19. Age Norms and constraints**

Class meets 11:45 – 12:45 pm.  
Complete Service Learning session #3 this week.

**Readings**


**Week 11: March 26. Looking back at life**

Class meets 11:45 – 12:45 pm.  
Complete Service Learning session #4 this week.  
Readings

**Week 12: April 2. Meaning in Later Life**
Class meets 11:45 – 12:45 pm.

Readings

**Week 13: April 9. Self and Personality**
Thought for the day.
Note. Service Learning Reflection Journal due today.
Class discussion with seminar leader(s).

Readings - Weekly Synthesis Paper Due


**Week 14: April 16: Cognitive Ability**
Thought for the day. Class discussion with seminar leader(s).
Note. Film & Companion Article project due today

Readings - Weekly Synthesis Paper Due


Week 15: April 23. Positive Development

Thought for the day.
Class discussion with seminar leader(s).

Readings - Weekly Synthesis Paper Due


Some Websites of Interest
American Association of Retired Persons http://www.aarp.org/
National Area Agencies on Aging http://www.n4a.org/aboutaaas.cfm
American Society on Aging http://www.asaging.org/index.cfm
National Institute on Aging http://www.nia.nih.gov/
Gerontological Society of America www.geron.org

Additional References


### Service Learning Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Session</th>
<th>My date/time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Staff initials</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>February 27 during class</td>
<td>Orientation</td>
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I. Feb 27 – March 2

II. March 12 - 18

III. March 19 - 25

IV. March 26 – April 1

Hand in this schedule with your Reflection Journal.
Here are some questions to think about while watching this film. Please think about these issues so that you can comment after the film.

1. To what extent do people’s self-definitions change over time?

2. To what extent do you see lifelong themes in people’s interests?

3. What kinds of goals and aspirations do people have at midlife?

4. How do people relate to who they were as a child, as they age?

5. What patterns are evident in social relations over time? Were any important social relationships missing from the film?

6. Did you see normative patterns of development across the different individuals?

7. What might you have focused on in terms of life domains that the film-maker did not? Did they miss any important domains?

8. Why do you think most people find being in the film such a challenge emotionally?

9. Think about yourself and how you have changed and remained the same since you were 7, 14, 21, 28, 36, 42.....
Seminar Leader - Sign up sheet.

Name: _________________________

Please rank order (1 is most wanted) your first four topic preferences for leading the seminar. You will be assigned multiple topics, dependent on number of students in the class.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>My rank</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Middle Age</td>
<td>Jan 23</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Lifespan Theory</td>
<td>Jan 30</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Setting goals, taking control</td>
<td>Feb  6</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Social Relations</td>
<td>Feb 13</td>
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<td>Positive Development</td>
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