Nothing important happens during “adult” development, right? Wrong! Some of the most important developmental challenges of life happen during that time, and we are permanently changed by them!

I hope this course will help you become a creative and critical thinker about psychology and the psychological concepts we often take for granted. This course is a survey of basic theories and research findings concerning psychological aspects of the midlife period of development, ages 20-59. What are the unique developmental events of the middle portion of adulthood? Theories and research are analyzed within the framework of developmental psychology. An interdisciplinary approach is used to interpret the everyday behavior of adults age 20-59 (i.e., the ages of adulthood not “covered” by other developmental courses at TU....) In this course, behavior in midlife is considered linked to behavior in other portions of the lifespan, forming a meaningful continuum over time.

The course is intended for students with limited knowledge of adult development, possibly only information from Lifespan Human Development classes (prerequisite) and from watching adults. We will explore topics such as cognition and intelligence, sensory processes, personality, attitudes, roles, emotions, group behavior, other interpersonal behavior, coping strategies used during transitions, and ways individuals have for creating meaning in their lives. We are especially interested in choices about work and intimate relationships. We will explore major theories and the impact of cultural factors. Pathological responses to demands of adulthood will be examined.

My Teaching Philosophy

This course is an offering of lots of ideas and activities...a lot like life itself. I want to offer you the best...but it’s your choice in the end how much you take from this experience. I don’t want to--and can’t--force you to take what’s on the menu this semester. That is your choice! But I hope you come to this class “hungry” for ideas and experiences. I can assist you by offering the activities listed throughout this syllabus.

How can you best succeed in this course? Engage in active reading of the assigned material. The purpose of the lectures is to amplify, add to, and explain what you have read, not to waste your time by going over everything in the assigned material. Your understanding of the class will be better if you read the assigned material before class.

In this class you are always encouraged to go beyond a catalogue of behaviors to analyze WHY a behavior is occurring. What does a particular event mean, existentially, to the adult? Independent, creative thinking is welcome, especially since the study of midlife development is so new. Case histories brought into discussion by you or me will be used. Discussions and experiential work will be part of the course. We will attempt to use a problem-focused method of inquiry as much as possible. Therefore you will often be responsible for reading material that I will not repeat in a lecture, but that we will expand upon and use to try to understand some particular problem element in adult experience. I also will introduce material not in the textbook, but material related to the topic of discussion. I will sometimes ask you to build a case for or against some particular idea, to work with the material you have read or heard. PLEASE NOTE: This is not a PowerPoint course since I believe the material presented in this course is learned better by your using other methods and interacting with each other and me without the distraction of materials presented onscreen. You just can't make this class work by being absent and then scanning the PPs on Blackboard.
Goals

My most important goals for you are that you challenge yourself and your thinking!

Other goals include: to be familiar with characteristics of midlife adults of today; to be able to apply developmental theories to adulthood; to analyze behavior in this period from an interdisciplinary perspective; to think critically and creatively about the felt experiences of adults between the ages of 20 and 59; to decide what distinguishes the "adult" life period.

Prerequisite

You may remain in this course only if you have passed Human Development (PSYC 203 or its equivalent) with at least a grade of "C" (2.00 GPA) in that course. If this is not the case, it is your responsibility to drop the course immediately. Please present a transcript (either official or unofficial) to me by the second course meeting so that I can verify that you have successfully completed the course prerequisites. An unofficial transcript may be printed by going to online services on the Towson University website. The trail is as follows: Self Service > Student Center > Transcript: View Unofficial Transcript (This is found in the dropdown bar next to current class schedule). From there you should be able to print a copy of your unofficial transcript.

Requirements: NOTE---Extra paper or ?? is required for graduate (567) credit. See me.

These will be explained more fully in sections below and/or in class.

- 5 quizzes, fill-in-the-blanks-with-short-answers format, open book and notes, 45 minutes long; include article from New York Times (free to students)
- a 10 page paper (10 pages of text);
- weekly journal entries;
- interviews (word processed transcript of your dialogue with interviewee)
- class participation, especially in discussion groups.

All the products for which you want a grade (except the Final) must be turned in by LAST CLASS DAY.

Extra Credit

Here are three possibilities. (I am willing to consider more…any ideas?) Extra credit can TOTAL as much as 30 points for all activities.

1) Give an oral presentation, no more than 10 minutes long, analyzing how psychology of midlife is presented in a play, a novel or short story, a movie, a poem, or a song (no TV shows). The main purpose is to describe what our culture (based on the evidence in the film or other artistic work) believes about adulthood, whether that cultural belief agrees with what we learned in class, and how adult persons shown in the artistic work demonstrate what we learned in class. You may work with a partner (10 minutes each).

2) Have a panel discussion with you (and a friend?) representing different views about an midlife-related topic or issue, for example, “There should/should not be restrictions on the right to become a parent”. The panel has about twenty minutes. You can use real examples and/or bring in real people to help make the case. Points will be based on how well you meet the goals you have selected, and, to a lesser extent, how well you communicate. Use any materials or guests you wish.

3) You may elect to participate in research as often as you wish, for 3 points each time. Bring documentation of your participation if it is not done through the Psychology Research Pool.

More About Quizzes

There are 5 quizzes in short answer format. While emphasis is on material covered since the last quiz, the ideas are necessarily cumulative. The first part of a “quiz day” class may be used to introduced the next section of material, and will NOT be material on the quiz held that day! As part of each quiz you will attach an article about midlife clipped from the daily New York Times (provided free) and answer a question about it.

More About the Paper

It is ten pages (of text) in length.
Choose one of these 4 format options below. (ask me if the format option is not clear to you):

For example purposes, here is a sample topic explored in the 4 format types: “Psychological Aspects of Raising a Child”.

1) a review of scholarly books or journal articles, for example, summary of material on the topic of “Child Rearing and Parental Well-being”;

2) a research proposal, for example, “A Proposed Study of the Attitudes of Married Adults with Children Toward Unmarried Adults with Children”

3) an analysis of a current “issue” in the field, for example, “Pro and Con: Should the option to Work Part-time Outside the Home Always Be Available to Adults Raising Children, Without Career Penalty?”

4) a book review, of a NONFICTION book on adult life (the reviewed book is one of your references, and the other 9 references are noted briefly). E.g.: Transitions: Strategies for coping with the difficult, painful and confusing times in your life. (Yes, challenging life periods do include parenthood.)

Papers that violate the length requirement will receive a grade proportional to their length. Use pica or elite type or 12 point font. For example, if you write only six of ten pages, you earn a maximum of 60% of the paper points.

BE SURE that your topic does focus on psychology and the middle adult years! (For example, a paper on “Physical Changes After Retirement” relates to neither area.) Feel free to check your topic with me.

At least 10 references to scholarly books or journals, cited APA style***, are required. NO textbooks may be used (no exceptions; need a definition of a “textbook”? see me). Only ONE internet reference, cited APA style, may be included in the 10. Of course all 10 must be used and cited in the paper.

**SAMPLE APA STYLE FOR REFERENCES

In text of paper:

(Cozyb, 2001)

and if a direct quote is used (Cozyb, 2001, p. [page no. where quote found in original source])

Cite ALL authors on the paper in the citation in the paper text!

On Reference page:


NOTE: IF IT IS IN THE REFERENCE LIST IT MUST BE USED IN THE PAPER; IF IT IS CITED IN THE PAPER, IT MUST BE LISTED IN THE REFERENCE LIST.

Append the following backup material for each reference used: title page for a book; first page of an article (NOT the library abstract, although whole articles retrieved online are fine to use—xerox first page); entire text of an internet reference.

Extra points will be given if one page of your paper is written in first person, as if YOU are the person experiencing the phenomenon that is the topic of your paper. Extra points will be given for cross-cultural topics! Reference elements are worth 30% of points.

Each paper will be graded with the following elements in mind:

1) Appropriateness of topic: “F” if topic is totally inappropriate.

2) Length. Maximum paper grade is proportional to number pages of text (not title page, abstract, references).

3) Grammar, punctuation, spelling, and other “writing” elements: I will examine one page of your paper for these elements, noting errors. 10% of paper points will be lost for multiple errors here, since this is an advanced class and employers want good writers. This paper could be part of your portfolio!

4) Correct number and type of references (used in the paper itself and cited APA style), along with the appropriate Xeroxes (see above.) The purpose of asking for all these things is to promote “honest” papers which permit you the opportunity for serious thought. Students who purchase papers or copy most of a paper off the net cheat themselves and you. 30% of points for reference elements.

5) Content, of course!

It typically takes MORE than a week to grade these papers and return them to you.
More About the Interviews
As the interviewer, you may stick to the question (“C” grade), or may include a follow up on answers to the primary question (“A” or “B” grade). Follow ups produce better interviews and higher grades.

One strategy is to do the entire interview on the “free” day given for it (see below). Another strategy is to find your willing interviewee and ask them one question whenever you can.

Every interview should start with age and gender of the interviewee. You may add any other demographic questions you wish. NEVER RECORD THE INTERVIEWEE’S NAME since the interview should be confidential and anonymous! Record your questions and their answers verbatim.

More About Class Participation
I hope you actively participate in this course! I’ve found this is the best way to engage you in learning the materials, and I also enjoy your comments, questions and ideas. If the class is too quiet I may call on you to share your thoughts. This is not to “pick on” anyone but to make the class more lively. I also tell true (really!) stories that I hope you find as relevant as I do.

There will be considerable discussion of cases, problems, or other material, in the large group or in small groups. Hearing the ideas of others face to face is a useful challenge to our thoughts and interpersonal skills! It promotes complex thought.

I generally randomly assign you to groups so that fresh points of view can emerge. (If I see the same students ending up in the same group over and over, I may wonder whether they just like to hang out together, rather than think.) Discussion is not a chance to gossip, complain, or plan next semester’s schedule, so stay focused! Your grade will go down if you waste everyone’s time during discussions.

I know that sometimes you will find yourself in a group with others who do not have the same motivation or understanding that you do. While this is annoying, it is exactly like the situation in the “real world” after college! Part of the task of each group member is to help others, to stay on task, and to contribute as much as possible. Because discussion is important, comments will partly determine your participation grade.

More About the Journal Entries
Write about your thoughts or feelings related to the ideas or discussions in class or readings. Do not simply summarize what happened in class. 13 typed entries are required. The length of the entries will be based on the number of points this class awards for journals. Even if you miss class you can still reflect on and write about the topic that week. These entries must be word processed (I can think about your ideas rather than struggle to read them). I will “preview” your first entries to see that you have the right concept, if you wish. The journal entries, each dated, with the topic you are responding to IDENTIFIED, should be fastened securely together.

Journal entries in final form should be turned in by the last day of this course.

“Housekeeping” Details
You should attend every class. I understand that circumstances change in life and difficult things happen. If you are having a challenge to your attendance on a given day let me know. If circumstances make it necessary for you to miss more than 3 class during the semester you may have overextended yourself and you should consider dropping the class.

Attendance is necessary to do well in this course, but attendance is not required. Even excused absences may lower your grade by accident since you will miss important information. If you miss a quiz and wish to take it within the week be sure to have an excused absence. For an absence to be excused the reason for the absence must be documented in some way. Examples of excused absences include religious celebrations, illness, participation in University activities at the request of University authorities, unavoidable events such as court dates. University policy states that students who plan to be absent for religious observances must give faculty written notice in advance. You are responsible for completing or making up work missed due to any absences. (See University attendance policy statements.) Make-up quizzes may be essay format.

If you need accommodation due to a disability, please see me during my office hours. A written statement from Disability Support Services (410-704-2638) authorizing your accommodation will be required.
This course may be repeated only once without the prior permission of the Academic Standards Committee.

Late work will not be accepted, unless the reason for the delay is considered serious by the instructor. Late work, if accepted, may drop a grade due to its being late. **NOTE: DO NOT CONTACT PROFESSOR OR TEACHING ASSISTANTS WITH QUESTIONS ABOUT A PAPER ON THE DAY (OR NIGHT!) BEFORE IT IS DUE! I/WE WILL NOT RESPOND.** “Procrastination by you does not constitute an emergency for me.”

TU policy forbids and punishes plagiarism and cheating!

Be prepared to participate in the class and small group discussions. Be sure to stay “on target” during these discussions as I will monitor small group discussion. “Killing time” in discussion groups has a penalty: your grade may go down one letter grade. The reason for this is that time wasters prevent you from indulging in serious thought. If I need to ask you repeatedly to stop socializing during class, or if I need to ask you to stop talking so that class can start, your grade may drop and you may be asked to withdraw from this class.

Pagers and cell phones and other electronic devices sometimes disrupt classes. Turn them off during class. If you need to be “on call” during class due to your job or a family emergency, notify me before class. "Unauthorized" disruption by electronics may reduce your grade or lead to your being asked to withdraw from this class. Some of you like to take notes on computers. That’s great unless you are using the computer for other purposes because you are bored or ??? Remember, I do not take attendance. If you are in class and spending time on other computer tasks I will lower your grade since you are not participating.

**Grades**

We all need help sometimes. If you find yourself not understanding the assigned material or classwork drop by during my student hours. No appointment needed.

The class will come to a consensus on the number of points for various requirements. Grades will be based on this consensus. The consensus reflects your values as a class, i.e., what is important to you and what reflects “learning” and “achievement”, by your definitions?

Here are my limiting rules. We will develop a point system based on **500 points**. There are no points for attendance. Extra credit tasks above can be worth as much as 30 points total. Quizzes must total at least 250 points. The class will decide the value of the paper, the journals, and participation. Participation can be worth no more than 10 points.

**A “C” or above (73% of points) is needed for major credit.**
An “A” will be equal to 465 or more points earned.
“A-” equals 450-464 points.
“B+” equals 435-449 points.
“B” equals 415-434 points.
“B-” equals 400-414 points
“C+” equals 385-399 points
“C” equals 365-384 points

**CHANGE: NO “C-” EXISTS ANYMORE**

“D+” equals 335-364 points
“D” equals 300-334 points

**CHANGE: NO “D-” EXISTS ANYMORE**

**SCHEDULE OF READINGS, QUIZZES, ASSIGNMENTS**

NOTE: We will emphasize material about persons aged 20-59, even if the textbook includes the other age groups.

**** Class will be held EVERY class day unless noted below. Remember to type 13 journal responses to classes.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aug. 29-Sept.3</td>
<td>We create grade system. Read Ch.1, 2 for next classes.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sept. 5, 10, 12</td>
<td>Chs. 1 &amp; 2 Background on Developmental Theory, Research</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sept. 17</td>
<td>****Quiz 1 on Chapters 1,2, class. REMEMBER TO BRING A New York Times article, clipped from the actual paper, related to this course. Discuss graduate school and careers in psychology before quiz. Be ready with your questions.</td>
</tr>
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</table>
| Sept. 19      | NOTE! Interview Day #1 No class meeting. Interview a person age 45-59 about: 1) How much does the person think s/he has changed since the 20s? 2) What sorts of changes happened? 3) How much has the interviewee’s “Self” changed? 4) How much does s/he seek safety vs challenge in life? 5) What have been the biggest challenges of adult years? 6) How has thinking ability changed for this person? 7) Which relationships have been an important part of his/her life? 8) Does your respondent believe everyone should raise children?  

Interview should be a transcript of your questions and the respondent’s answers. Note age and gender. NO NAMES as the interview answers are to be confidential! Use follow-up questions or ask extra questions for “A” or “B” quality work.

***Bring word processed interview to next class Sept. 24th. |
| Sept. 24, 26 Oct. 1, 3 | Read Ch. 3. The Self, Ch.4. Cognitive processes I; Ch.5. Cognitive Processes II |
| Oct. 8          | Bring interview and continue to have it available for future classes.  

****Quiz 2 on Chs.3, 4, 5 & class. REMEMBER TO BRING A New York Times article, clipped from the actual paper, related to this course. |
| Oct. 10, 15, 17, 22, 24 | Read Ch. 6 Social Development; Ch. 7 Family. Dvd on Love; Dvd on caregiving |
| Oct. 24         | Mid-semester. Check your total points earned divided by total possible points to see your grade so far (.90=A, .80-.89=B, etc.). |
| Oct. 29         | ****Quiz 3 on Chs.6, 7 and class. REMEMBER TO BRING A New York Times article, clipped from the actual paper, related to this course. |
| Oct. 31, Nov. 5, 7, 12, 14 | Read Ch. 8 Retirement and Work (focus on work); Ch. 9 Physical Change Over Time (focus on changes 20-59); Ch. 10 Health, Longevity, Prevention |
| Nov. 19         | ****Quiz 4 on Ch. 8, 9, 10 and class. REMEMBER TO BRING A New York Times article, clipped from the actual paper, related to this course. |
| Nov. 19         | PAPER DUE |

**NOTE: DO NOT CONTACT PROFESSOR OR TEACHING ASSISTANTS WITH QUESTIONS ABOUT A PAPER ON THE DAY (OR NIGHT!) BEFORE IT IS DUE! I/WE WILL NOT RESPOND. “Procrastination by you does not constitute an emergency for me.”**
Nov. 21, 26, Dec. 3  
Read Ch. 11 Coping and Mental Health. (focus on stress)  Dvd on stress reduction.  Ch.12 Death and Dying (focus on bereavement)

Nov. 27-Dec. 1  
THANKSGIVING!

Dec. 5  
Interview Day #2  No class. Interview a woman (age 35-59) about her life stresses and relationships. 1) What are they? 2) Does she acknowledge or denial stressors in her life? 3) Is she satisfied or dissatisfied? 4) What occupation gives her life meaning? 5) What does she do to keep herself healthy and happy? Additional questions may be given in class. **YOU may ask additional questions for a better grade.** Ask follow-up questions to get “supporting evidence”. **Follow-ups or extra questions are needed for an “A” or “B” grade.****Bring word processed, to next class, for credit, and to Quiz 5 to use for quiz. Bring it to all future classes. Interview should be a transcript of your questions and the respondent’s answers. Note age. NO NAMES as the interview answers are to be confidential!

Dec. 10  
Last class. Analysis of Interview 2. Extra credit presentations/alternative discussions. **All extra credit work is due today. Journals due today.**

Thursday, Dec. 12, 12:30-2:30 **FINAL EXAM DAY.****Quiz 5 on Chs.11, 12, interview #2, any extra credit presentations/alternative discussions. Attach notes on presentations and attach interview #2 to quiz for full credit. REMEMBER TO BRING A New York Times article, clipped from the actual paper, related to this course.

**Return any books borrowed from instructor by this day. Failure to do so will mean a failing grade in this course!**