

Course Syllabus for PSCH 4305: Gerontology
Spring 2015

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Office: Uvalde Rm. A107
Student Availability Hours: MW 1:45-3:30 p.m. and TTH 12-3:30 p.m.
Appointments may also be made for other days and times.

Contacting the Professor

The most effective way to contact the instructor is by email at tculver@*sulross.edu*. On weekdays, reply will be swift, usually within the day. To protect student privacy, send from your Sul Ross or Blackboard-registered email account.

Email etiquette requires that you sign your name in *every* email you send and specify the particular course or issue to which you are referring. Please do not begin your email with “Hey.” Do not expect to get a response unless you extend this courtesy.

Contacting Technical Support

If you have a problem with technical issues such as downloading a file or taking an exam, contact an Office of Information Technology (OIT) staffer for assistance or call the OIT Helpdesk. The Helpdesk is available seven days of the week.

- From on-campus, call 8765.
- From off-campus, call (888) 691-5071.

Required Texts

Hooyman, N.R., & Kiyak, H.A. (2011). *Social Gerontology: A multidisciplinary perspective*, 9th ed. Boston, MA: Allyn and Bacon.

Albom, M. (1997). *Tuesdays with Morrie*. New York: Broadway Books.

Optional Texts

American Psychological Association (APA). *The Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (2009), 6th ed. Washington, DC: APA.

Eggenschwiler, J. (2001). *CQR pocket guide writing: Grammar, usage, and style*.

New York, NY: Wiley Publishing.

All Psychology students should own a copy of the APA manual. Papers MUST be in APA format. Good deals on textbooks are often found on the websites of Internet booksellers. Amazon.com and other major online vendors accept major credit cards, checks, and money orders.

Illegal copies of textbooks are not allowed at any time in class or the testing labs.

Meeting Time and Location

The course will online.

Learning Objectives

Program Student Learning Outcomes

The graduating student will demonstrate the capacity to:

1. Recognize the central concepts, theories, and empirical findings in the department's main areas of focus: abnormal psychology; social & personality psychology, and developmental psychology.
2. Recognize and apply basic psychological research methods, including: the experiment; the case study; the survey; and correlation.
3. Communicate effectively in written assignments and oral presentations.
4. Demonstrate insight into the behavior and psychological processes of oneself and others.

The objectives of this course are to:

- define social gerontology and discuss its origins and current areas of focus
- summarize the biological and physiological changes related to aging
- explain the cognitive changes that are linked with aging as well as the theories that explain such changes and adaptations
- demonstrate an understanding of the social context older adults experience, such as their living arrangements, employment, family supports and discrimination
- discuss the social policies and social problems affecting older adults in the U.S.

Assessment Mechanisms

I. Midterm Exam

There will be a midterm exam in the course. The exam will span material from the chapters indicated on the evaluation schedule, as well as any additional lecture or supplementary print material. Exams will be administered through Blackboard. No exam grades will be dropped, so all exams will count toward your course grade. A limited amount of time will be allowed for test completion. Penalties will be assessed for going overtime on Blackboard exams (the value of 1 item per minute or fraction of a minute). The midterm exam is mandatory and will be worth 100 points. To ensure there are NO blackboard/internet issues, students are encouraged to take the exams in the computer lab.

II. The Final Exam

The final exam will the last chapters in the course (please see calendar) and will consist of multiple choice items. The final exam will cover all material in the course. The final exam is mandatory, and it must take precedence over all other affairs. Clear the entire period from your schedule for the exam. Please do not schedule doctors' appointments or other appointments of any kind that afternoon that might conflict with your final exam. If any such appointment has already been made, you should cancel it now if you wish to remain in this course. The final exam will be worth 100 points. Students are encouraged to take the final at the computer lab at their location. No exam grades will be dropped, so all exams will count toward your course grade. A limited amount of time will be allowed for test completion. Penalties will be assessed for going overtime on Blackboard exams (the value of 1 item per minute or fraction of a minute).

III. Current Events: Comparing a News Article to a Research Article

Choose one aging topic that has "hit the recent news." Find one newspaper article about aging (or editorial cartoon or newsmagazine article or other paper copy). Newspaper articles can be found on the internet by clicking on "News" next to the search engine in yahoo and by typing in a topic to search for. After selecting a news article, students should select one article from the research literature that elaborates on this SAME topic. Information on how to locate a research article can be found in blackboard under "Finding Sources." Students will write up a double spaced, one-page paper to describe whether the newspaper article can be confirmed by your research article. Your paper must be typed and formatted in APA style (6th ed.). This will require a title page and a reference page. Papers will be uploaded in blackboard. There will be significant deductions for problems with APA style and grammatical issues. This paper will be worth 50 points.

IV. Service Learning

Students will begin evaluating the needs of the elderly in America. Students will read, chart, analyze, and graph information about the challenges and concerns of the aged in their community. This will include a discussion on the residents' limitations, visual impairments, hearing challenges and agility problems.

Students are encouraged to form groups based on their location and schedule. This information can be found in the discussion board introductions. Groups will be assigned by location. I will provide you with a list of your group members. Students may work alone; however, past experience suggests that groups experience more success.

Once you know who is in your group, you will discuss the times you would like to do your service learning together. Students will make contact with an agency that services aging adults (nursing home, in home care, retirement home, etc). They will then meet with directors of the agency and discuss the goals of the project and ask them to make suggestions on services that your group can provide. Then, they will plan intergenerational activities, which would include reading the newspaper to groups, writing letters for residents, playing games, directing craft activities, or simply carrying on a conversation with a resident. Students will also prepare small gifts and treats for the residents, which they will bring each. In the past, students have even prepared “dances” and “Goodbye” parties for the agencies. Students will meet with the agency on 5 different occasions. After discussing this project with the director, you will complete your “Activity Schedule.” This will be submitted through bboard and will tell me where you will be doing your service learning and the times/dates.

After the service learning is completed, students will make a powerpoint presentation discussing their project. Students are strongly encouraged to take pictures during each of their visits, which can later be included in powerpoints. Be sure and ask for permission before you begin photographing. Further details can be found on blackboard. This project will be worth 150 points.

I will be visiting you during your service learning. If you have prepared a very special day such as a party, please let me know so I can attend.

V. “Tuesdays with Morrie” Paper

Students will read the book “Tuesdays with Morrie.” Students will then write a 3 page paper discussing how the book relates to the main text in this course. This is NOT a summary paper. Remember that I know what happened in the book. Your paper must be in APA style and written grammatically correct. Points will be deducted for these errors. You will need a title page, reference page, and in text citations. You will have two sources listed on your reference page – your main text and your supplemental book.

h exam, students will turn in another study log. Students will write their grade on the exam in the space provided and write a paragraph about how their planned study method worked or did not work for them. They will then devise a new plan if the original plan did not work for them. This will be turned in after each exam.

Assessment

Grades for each assignment, and for the course itself, are calculated as follows:

Midterm Exam:	100 points
Final Exam:	100 points
Current Events:	50 points
Service Learning:	150 points
“Morrie” Paper	100 points

Total Points: 500

A: 90% or above

B: 80% - 89%

C: 70% - 79%

D: 60% - 69%

F: 0% - 59%

Calendar

The times and dates when assignments are due and when evaluations are given will not be altered to fit your schedule. You will be expected to alter your schedule to fit class responsibilities. There are no exceptions to this policy.

Date

Aug 22	Read Syllabus, Explore bboard, and DB 1 (introduction)
Sept 12	Activity Schedule Due (submit one per group)
Sept 19	Current Events Paper Due
Oct 17	Midterm Exam (1, 2, 5, 6, 7)
Nov 21	Service Learning Presentation Due
Nov 28	“Tuesdays with Morrie” Paper Due
Dec 5	Final Exam (8, 9, 11, 12, 13)

It will not be possible to cover in lecture all of the material from the assigned chapters. Therefore it is essential that students read all the material assigned. In the interest of a more thorough coverage of certain topics, the professor reserves the right to omit a chapter from coverage on any particular exam.

Late Work

There will be NO late work accepted. If you have an emergency and miss turning in an assignment, you must bring a valid excuse (some form of documentation) within **five** business days in order to turn in your work or make up an excuse. If you do not have documentation, you will not be allowed to make up the work you missed. If you turn in your excuse after the fifth working day after your absence, you will not be allowed to make up the work.

What to do in order to obtain an excused make-up for a missed exam/not turning in a paper/not presenting:

1. Make every effort to notify the instructor ahead of time. Send a message to tculver@sulross.edu as soon as possible, and absolutely no later than the day you first return to class.
2. In the message, fully explain the nature of the emergency and why it prevented you from taking the exam/turning in work/presenting
3. Provide a source or sources that will allow the professor to verify your story. This **MUST** be done within five days of your absence
4. Expect further questioning from the professor before an excuse is granted.

Final grades

All final course grades will be posted on the Web for Students. Do not *call me, email me, or speak to me* about grades during the final exams period. Finals time is hectic for all, so please respect the privacy of all your professors during that period. Access to assignment grades and other course content will also be available.

Grades in this course are based on performance alone. They will not be rounded upwards. It is important for every student to understand that evaluation is not based ultimately on how hard someone has studied to get the grade desired, or whether someone needs this course to graduate. Grades are not based on personal & family needs, or on personal conceptions about what seems to be fair. All grades, including your final course grade, will be based *solely* on your academic work in this course, according to the criteria described in this syllabus.

Academic Dishonesty and the Honor Code

Academic dishonesty and the penalties pertaining to it are described in the SRSU student handbook. In this course, all communication among students while taking exams is prohibited. Communicating material included on an exam with or in the presence of someone who has not yet taken that exam is also prohibited.

No student may print or copy any material from any exam. Failure to follow these instructions will, at a minimum, result in a zero for the exam.

Students may not share books, notes, or any other form of communication during exams. Do NOT sit next to another student who is taking the same test in the lab. If no other seats are available in the lab, just wait! Do not sit by another student taking the exam. Do NOT get together at home or any other place to take an exam! This is cheating and if I receive word of it, it will result in an automatic “F” in the course. You should be the only student looking at the questions during your exam.

Plagiarism involves taking the work of others and claiming it as your own. It will not be tolerated. If you are unsure what constitutes plagiarism, excellent guidelines can be found online at www.turnitin.com.

Using an illegal copy of a textbook constitutes academic dishonesty. If a student is found to be using an illegally copied text during an open-book exam, the penalty will be failure of the exam. In addition, the student will have the choice of immediately

surrendering the illegal copy to SRSU faculty/staff or receiving a failing grade for the course.

You and you alone are responsible for understanding and avoiding academic dishonesty in all your work. The penalty for serious academic dishonesty is severe: a student who turns in a plagiarized paper or cheats on an exam may receive an F for the entire course. A plagiarized paper will be given a failing grade on academic grounds alone, yet the student may face the additional disciplinary penalties for academic dishonesty.

As members of the academic community, no student should tolerate cheating. It is the responsibility of each and every student to report suspected cheating. The confidentiality and anonymity of students who report suspected cheating will be respected.

Intellectual Tolerance and Academic Freedom

Psychology is a field of inquiry that touches upon many controversial issues, including sexuality, evolution, gender, race, ethnicity, individual differences, parenting, divorce, crime and public policy, drug use, religion, and multicultural issues, among others. Professors and students often have strong opinions and make forceful arguments concerning these phenomena. It is often educationally productive to address and debate these matters in the context of classroom instruction and course assignments. Social taboos discouraging open discussion are inappropriate in this context and must be laid aside in the interest of intellectual inquiry.

Your grade will not be influenced in any way by expressing points of view that are in disagreement with the professor's. If time permits, students are encouraged to express their opinions and arguments whenever relevant to the subject material. The professor is free to do likewise.

Students who experience excessive anxiety or discomfort during the discussion of a sensitive topic (e.g., domestic abuse) should not hesitate to leave the classroom for a time if necessary and should never feel embarrassed for doing so. This can be an adaptive response to an emotionally difficult situation.

In contrast, other individuals are offended in principle by the mere exposure to concepts, opinions and arguments with which they disagree. The response of such persons is sometimes to try and close off discussion or to become hostile or vindictive toward others. Such persons are not encouraged to take psychology courses at Rio Grande College until they have resolved the personal issues preventing them from engaging in serious intellectual discourse.

Miscellaneous

All written assignments submitted electronically must be saved in one of the following formats: .doc, .docx, or .rtf. All major word processing programs allow at least one of these options. Written assignments submitted in other formats will not be considered submitted if another format is used; therefore, please contact the technical staff for assistance with this task if you need help.