Course Syllabus for PSCH 4305: Gerontology
Fall 2017

Professor: Dr. Tiffany Culver
Email: tculver@sulross.edu
Office: Uvalde Rm. A107
Student Availability Hours: MW 1:45-3:30 p.m. and TTH 12-3:00 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
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
takes 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. “Being Mortal” 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.

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Midterm Exam</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current Events</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service Learning</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Being Mortal” Paper</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Points</td>
<td>500</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Assignment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aug 28</td>
<td>Read Syllabus, Explore bboard, and DB 1 (introduction)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sept 12</td>
<td>Activity Schedule Due (submit one per group)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sept 19</td>
<td>Current Events Paper Due</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct 17</td>
<td>Midterm Exam (1, 2, 5, 6, 7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov 21</td>
<td>Service Learning Presentation Due</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nov 28</td>
<td>“Being Mortal” Paper Due</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dec 12</td>
<td>Final Exam (8, 9, 11, 12, 13)</td>
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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 makeup an excuse. If you do not have documentation, you will not be allowed to makeup 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 results 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.

ADA

Sul Ross State University is committed to equal access in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1973. It is the student’s responsibility to initiate a request for accessibility services. Students seeking accessibility services must contact Kathy Biddick in RGC Student Services. The mailing address is 2623 Garner Field Rd (Room C 102), Uvalde, TX 78801. Telephone: 830-279-3003. E-mail: kbiddick@sulross.edu.

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.