

Adult Development and Aging

Instructor

Dr. Susan Bluck
Psychology

Course Meets

Wednesdays, Period 6 - 8
12:50 to 3:50 in Psychology 151

Office Hours

Wednesday, 3:50 – 4:50
Or be in touch any time!
I am *very* happy to meet with you.
Feel free to set up an appointment

Readings

Sarton, M. *As we are now*.
New York: Norton.
Coursepack <https://target-copy.com/>
Article PDF's on course site.

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 *As we are now*, available online PDF's of required articles are available through the course site. Some are not available in pdf so a course-pack of required scholarly articles is also available from Target (or you can find these yourself). 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

I. Class participation.

Regular punctual attendance and lively, informed participation are required. 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??? I think so too, but people tell me it's necessary. Hopefully not for us! Total possible points for participation = 25.

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: August 30, 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, narrow margins, double-side print) and written according to the publication guidelines of the American Psychological Association (*Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*) or your home discipline's guidelines. 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 7, where a 1 means you missed the point and a 7 means your paper was very thorough, integrative, and insightful. Most of the time, expect a 4-7. There will be 8 of these but each student will do only 5: *you do not need to do a synthesis paper on the days that you are leading the class discussion.*

Late papers will not be accepted as the point is to be ready to discuss in class. If you skip a paper, you get a 0. If you are sick or have excused absence, you may turn in the paper through the site. Papers will be graded by the following week. Maximum = 35 points.

IV. Seminar Leader. Sign up for dates.

Each student will co-lead (with 1-2 other students) the seminar three times during the term (depends on number of people signed up for the course). You can rate the four topics that most interest you (see rating sheet at end of syllabus).

You will want to, together, prepare Powerpoint slides for this. The seminar leaders 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. Questions should focus on analysis, synthesis, comparison/contrast, evaluation, or application of the main issues in the assigned readings. Seminar leader(s) must utilize the class readings but should also review any other articles of interest to prepare for the discussion. 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 leaders will, working together, provide a one-page outline to the class that structures that day's seminar. Please email that one page to me on the Tuesday before class.

Leading seminar three times, so total possible points = 60:

Seminar outline	3 points
Summary/critique of the articles	10 points
Creativity/external sources/discussion	7 points

	20 points

V. Service Learning & Reflection Journal. November 8

One of the requirements of the course is a service learning component. We will attend an orientation visit at the Center before you begin. At that time you will sign up to volunteer regularly once per week, at your convenience (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. Different areas focus on residents with dementia, long-term care, 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. Note: *Please wear close-toed shoes for all visits and absolutely do not take any photos while in the care center.*

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

Service Learning Schedule: 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 Activities Director or one of the assistants sign your sheet when you complete 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 (e.g., Ms. A).

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).

Schedule handed in and all signed	14 points
Session #1 entry (a.b.c)	9 points
Session #2 entry (a.b.c)	9 points
Session #3 entry (a.b.c)	9 points
Session #4 entry (a.b.c)	9 points

50 points

VII. Aging Film & ‘Companion’ Article. November 15

Some controversy exists concerning how older adults are portrayed in the popular media, including film. In the last few 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 identify 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, narrow margins, double-sided) and written according to the publication guidelines of the American Psychological Association or your disciplinary guidelines. Hand in the companion article with your project. *You likely want to get started on this earlier in the semester.*

Introduction to the paper	6 points
Description of image-insight from the film (x 3)	9 points
Relation to scholarly article (x 3)	15 points

30 points

Aging Films: Choose one!

I have chosen diverse films so you can follow your own research interest in doing this assignment. Also chose some older ones that you are less likely to have seen already.

- Away from her (living with dementia)
- Calendar Girls (women’s changing bodies; friendship in later life; norms about aging and attractiveness)
- Driving Miss Daisy (friendship over time; race relations; southern living). Jessica Tandy stars at age 80.
- 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)
- Mr. Holmes (cognitive aging, intergenerational relations, life review)

Grading

Assignments can not be handed in late. Late material will be assigned a 0. Assignments are always before 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 (6 x 5)	30 points
Seminar leader (3 x 20)	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: August 23.

Overview: Adult Development...and this course.

Film: *49 Up* (2006) by Michael Apted. Structured discussion.

No readings or assignments.

Week 2: August 30. Middle age: Life begins at Forty

Thought for the day.

Class discussion with seminar leader(s).

Readings – Weekly synthesis paper due

Classic: Jung, C.G. (1933). *The stages of life. Modern man in search of a soul.* Orlando, FL: Harcourt Brace. (Course-pack).

Classic: Neugarten, B. L. (1996). The middle years. In D.A. Neugarten (Ed.), *The meanings of age: selected papers of Bernice L. Neugarten* (pp. 135-159). Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press. (Course-pack).

Grossman, M. R., & Gruenewald, T. L. (2020). Failure to meet generative self-expectations is linked to poorer cognitive–affective well-being. *The Journals of Gerontology: Series B*, 75(4), 792-801.

Week 3: September 6. Lifespan theory

Thought for the day.

Class discussion with seminar leader(s).

Readings – Weekly synthesis paper due

Classic: Baltes, P. B. (1997). On the incomplete architecture of human ontogeny: Selection, optimization, and compensation as foundations of developmental theory. *American Psychologist*, 52, 366-380.

Carstensen, L. L. (2021). Socioemotional selectivity theory: The role of perceived endings in human motivation. *The Gerontologist*, 61(8), 1188-1196.

Morten H. B., Söderqvist, T. (2014). Successful ageing: A historical overview and critical analysis of a successful concept. *Journal of Aging Studies*, 31, 139-149.

Week 4: September 13. Setting goals, taking control

Thought for the day.

Class discussion with seminar leader(s).

Readings - Weekly Synthesis paper due

Hamm, J. M., Heckhausen, J., Shane, J., Infurna, F. J., & Lachman, M. E. (2019). Engagement with six major life domains during the transition to retirement: Stability and change for better or worse. *Psychology and Aging, 34*(3), 441 - 456.

Hess, T. M., Freund, A. M., & Tobler, P. N. (2021). Effort mobilization and healthy aging. *The Journals of Gerontology: Series B, 76*(Supplement_2), S135-S144.

Lind, M., Bluck, S., McAdams, D.P. (2021). More vulnerable? the life story approach highlights older people's potential for strength during the pandemic. *Journals of Gerontology, B, 76*(2), 45-48.

Week 5: September 20. Social Relations

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

Readings - Weekly Synthesis Paper Due

Antonucci, T.C., Ajrouch, K.J., & Birditt, K.S. (2013). The convoy model: Explaining social relations from a multidisciplinary perspective. *The Gerontologist*, doi:10.1093/geront/gnt118

Fingerman, K. L., Huo, M., Charles, S. T., & Umberson, D. J. (2020). Variety is the spice of late life: Social integration and daily activity. *The Journals of Gerontology: Series B, 75*(2), 377-388.

Generous, M.A., and Keeley, M.P. (2020). Exploring the relation between end-of-life relational communication and personal growth after the death of a loved one. *Omega: Journal of Death and Dying, 1 - 19*.

Week 6: September 27. Self and Personality

Thought for the day.

Class discussion with seminar leader(s).

Readings - Weekly Synthesis Paper Due

Alea, N., Diehl, M., & Bluck, S. (2004). Personality and emotion in late life. *Encyclopedia of Applied Psychology, 1 - 10*. San Diego, CA: Elsevier.

Diehl, M., Wettstein, M., Spuling, S. M., & Wurm, S. (2021). Age-related change in self-perceptions of aging: Longitudinal trajectories and predictors of change. *Psychology and Aging, 36*(3), 344 - 359.

Westerhof, G., Alea, N., & Bluck, S. (2020). Narrative and identity: The importance of our personal past in later life. In A. Thomas & A. Gutches (Eds.), *Handbook of Cognitive Aging: A Life Course Perspective* (pp. 383-400). New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.

Week 7: October 4. Person-environment Fit

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

Readings – Weekly synthesis paper due

Literature: Sarton, M., (1973). *As we are now*. New York: Norton.

Literature: Delany, S.L., Delany, E., & Hearsh, A.H. (1993). *Having our say: the Delany sisters' first 100 years*, (pp. 245-261). New York: Dell Publishing. (Course-pack).

Week 8: October 11. Orientation

Service learning orientation at care center.
Complete Service Learning session #1 before next class. No readings for today.

Week 9: October 18. Remembering our past.

Class meets only 12:50 – 1:50 pm.
Reflection Journal in progress. Discussion of article in relation to service learning.
Complete Service Learning session #2 before next class.

Reading

Lind, M., Bluck, S. & Akerlund, H. (2020). Adults' memories of childhood: Beginning of the life story. In S. Gülgöz & Sahin-Acar, B. (Eds). *Autobiographical Memory Development: Theoretical and Methodological Approaches*. Routledge: London, UK.

Week 10: October 25. Insider's view: successful aging

Class meets only 12:50 – 1:50 pm.
Reflection Journal in progress. Discussion of article in relation to service learning.
Complete Service Learning session #3 before next class.

Reading

Morlett Paredes, A., Lee, E. E., Chik, L., Gupta, S., Palmer, B. W., Palinkas, L. A., ... & Jeste, D. V. (2021). Qualitative study of loneliness in a senior housing community: the importance of wisdom and other coping strategies. *Aging & mental health*, 25(3), 559-566.

Week 11: November 1. The end as part of the life story.

Class meets only 12:50 – 1:50 pm.
Complete Service Learning session #4 before next class.
Reflection Journal in progress. Discussion of article in relation to service learning.

Reading

Bluck, S., & Mroz, E. (2018). The end: death as part of the life story. *International Journal of Reminiscence and Life Review*, 5, 6-14.

Week 12: Nov 8. Coming of Age

No class today. Gerontological Society of America meetings.
Reflection Journal: Service Learning, due today.

Reading

Classic: de Beauvoir, S. (1972). *The coming of age*. New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons (pp. 361-367 & 373-381). (Course-pack).

Week 13: Nov 15. Meaning and Well-Being

Thought for the day. Class discussion with seminar leader(s) for first two hours of class.
Note. Film & Companion Article project due today. Class discussion of films in final hour.

Readings - Weekly Synthesis paper due

Moody, H. & Sasser, J.R. (2015). Controversy 1: Does old age have meaning? *Aging: Concepts and Controversies, 8th Edition*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. (Course-pack).

Lee, C., & Ryff, C. D. (2019). Pathways linking combinations of early-life adversities to adult mortality: Tales that vary by gender. *Social Science & Medicine, 240*, 1-9.

Neimeyer, R. (2019). Meaning reconstruction in bereavement: development of a research program. *Death Studies, 43*, 79-91.

Week 14: November 22. Thanksgiving Break: Enjoy!

Week 15: November 29. Positive Development

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

Readings - Weekly Synthesis Paper Due

Classic. Staudinger, U., & Kunzmann, U. (2005). Positive adult personality development: Adjustment and/or growth? *European Psychologist, 10*, 320-329.

Katzorreck, M., & Kunzmann, U. (2018). Greater empathic accuracy and emotional reactivity in old age: The sample case of death and dying. *Psychology and Aging, 33*(8), 1202 - 1214.

Weststrate, N. M., & Glück, J. (2017). Hard-earned wisdom: Exploratory processing of difficult life experience is positively associated with wisdom. *Developmental psychology, 53*(4), 800 - 814.

Some Websites of Interest

American Association of Retired Persons	http://www.aarp.org/
National Area Agencies on Aging	http://www.n4a.org/
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
National Council on Aging	http://www.ncoa.org/

Service Learning Schedule

Student Name _____

Session	My date/time	Activity	Staff initials
		Orientation at care center	n/a
I. Oct 11-17			
II. Oct 18-24			
III. Oct 25 – Nov 1			
IV. Nov 2 - 8			

Hand in this schedule, on paper or add a photo or scan of it to the file that you upload to site, for this assignment.

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.

Topic	Date	My rank
Middle Age	Aug 30	_____
Lifespan Theory	Sept 6	_____
Setting goals, taking control	Sept 13	_____
Social Relations	Sept 20	_____
Self and Personality	Sept 27	_____
Person-Environment Fit	October 4	_____
Meaning and Wellbeing	Nov 15	_____
Positive Development	Nov 29	_____

Week 1: Film - 49 Up

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 filmmaker 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.....

For more info on the 'UP' documentary series, see <https://archive.org/details/seven-up-documentaries/2012+-+56+Up+pt1.mkv>