MIDLIFE DEVELOPMENT
PSY 710 G, FALL 2007
1:30 – 4:15pm Wednesday Leazar 316

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COURSE DESCRIPTION: This graduate seminar will cover theory and empirical research relevant to well-being during the middle adult years. The beginning of the course will be devoted to discussing various definitions and theories of midlife development. Topics for subsequent weeks will focus on three general indicators of adult well-being: physical health, aspects of psychological well-being, and cognition. The remainder of the course will highlight possible correlates and antecedents of well-being during middle adulthood including: stress, personality, social roles, personal efficacy and control. Students are expected to critically read all of the assigned papers, lead and actively participate in discussions, and write a research proposal on a particular aspect of well-being in midlife.

REQUIRED READINGS:
Readings will be available via the course website on WebVista (http://vista.ncsu.edu).

EVALUATION:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Requirement</th>
<th>Weight</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reaction papers</td>
<td>Due each week</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Leading discussion</td>
<td>Date determined first day of class</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Research proposal paper</td>
<td>Due December 11 at noon</td>
<td>40% (includes presentation)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Discussion participation</td>
<td>Throughout semester</td>
<td>15%</td>
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Overall course grades will conform to the following as designated by the university: A+ (97-100%), A (93-96%), A- (90-92%), B+ (87-89%), B (83-86%), B- (80-82%), C+ (77-79%), C (73-76%), C- (70-72%), D+ (67-69%), D (63-66%), D- (60-62%), F (anything below 60%).

Reaction papers are brief (approximately 2 pages) weekly assignments that you will write in preparation for each weekly meeting, after you have read the chapters and articles for the upcoming week. These papers will help you integrate the current readings with previous readings, and will also allow you to point out issues which you would like to address in the discussion of the readings. Critical thinking is an important component of the reaction papers. No article or theory is perfect – it will be your job to point out areas which were not considered (which should be), issues with samples or methods, and any other aspect of the reading which you feel is important to critically evaluate. All reaction papers will be due at the beginning of the class meeting. Late papers will be accepted with a 10% per day deduction in points.

Leading a discussion entails briefly summarizing as well as integrating the articles and proposing at least four points of discussion. Bringing in concepts from other courses or developmental periods is perfectly appropriate, especially if they help draw distinctions between midlife and other periods of development. Each student will lead one class meeting. Selection of who leads a given discussion will be determined during the first class meeting.
The research proposal paper will be a 15-20 page paper on a component of well-being relevant to midlife. The major goal of the paper will be to integrate and synthesize your knowledge of the current state of the field based on the readings from this course, and then critically evaluate what important area(s) remains to be explored. To accomplish this, you will write a literature review which focuses on the relevant readings from this course (you may also bring in other sources) and sets the stage for your research proposal of a novel study idea. The remaining portion of the paper will be a description of your proposed study (sample, measures, procedure), with rationales for each decision included. Each student will give a brief (15-20 minute) presentation on his or her research proposal which will take place during the last two class meetings. A more detailed description of the requirements will be distributed later.

Discussion participation includes: (a) being in class every week; (b) being well-prepared by having carefully read all the assigned readings; and (c) contributing actively to critical discussions in class about the readings.

ATTENDANCE POLICY:

In the event of an excused absence that is accepted by the instructor (see REG02.20.3 for definitions of an excused absence), the student will have one week after returning to class to make up the missed work. Such make-up work shall be at a comparable level of difficulty with the original assignment.

INCOMPLETE GRADES:

An incomplete grade may be assigned at the discretion of the instructor as an interim grade for a course in which the student has: (1) completed a major portion of the course with a passing grade, (2) been unable to complete course requirements prior to the end of the term because of extenuating circumstances, and (3) obtained agreement from the instructor and arranged for resolution of the incomplete grade.

ACCOMMODATIONS:

Reasonable accommodations will be made for students with verifiable disabilities. Please register with Disability Services for Students at 1900 Student Health Center, Campus Box 7509, 515-7653. For more information on NC State’s policy on working with students with disabilities, please see the Academic Accommodations for Students with Disabilities Regulation (REG02.20.1).

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:

Students will adhere to the University’s Code of Student Conduct (http://www2.ncsu.edu/prr/student_services/student_conduct/POL445.00.1.htm). Consistent with the provisions of this Code, academic dishonesty is defined as cheating, plagiarism, and aiding and abetting others to cheat or plagiarize. It is understood that the student’s signature on any exam or assignment means that the student neither gave nor received unauthorized aid. Students who are accused of violations of the Code will be referred to the Coordinator, Office of Student Conduct.

COURSE EVALUATION:

Online course evaluations will be available for students to complete during the last two weeks of class (November 26-December 9). Students will receive an email message directing them to a website where they can login using their Unity ID and complete evaluations. All evaluations are confidential; instructors will never know how any one student responded to any question, and students will never know the ratings for any particular instructors.
Schedule of Readings/Topics

Note: Schedule subject to change/update

August 22, Course Overview and Introduction to the Study of Middle Adulthood


August 29, Demography and Life Span Theories of Middle Adulthood


September 5, Physical Health: Basic Concepts


September 12, Physical Health: SES and Culture (continued on next page)


*Note: This chapter provides an overview of the MIDUS study; it is recommended that you read this first.


**September 19, Physical Health: MIDUS Findings on Sex Differences**


**September 26, Emotional Well-Being**


**October 3, Psychological Well-Being (continued on next page)**


October 10, Cognition


October 17, Social Responsibility


October 24, Stress


October 31, Social Roles: Family


November 7, Social Roles: Work and Role Conflict


November 14, Personal Control and Personality


November 21: NO CLASS, THANKSGIVING BREAK

November 28, Presentations

December 5, Presentations and wrapping up

December 11, Research proposal paper due at noon