



PS 350 – ADULT DEVELOPMENT AND AGING

IES Abroad Milan

DESCRIPTION:

The course examines the interaction of biological, psychological, and social and cultural factors influencing adult and aging populations from a lifespan perspective. Students will deepen their understanding of key developmental challenges faced by adults and the elderly, with a particular focus on attachment theory across the lifespan. The course promotes critical thinking around topics such as gender identity, personality development, mental health, well-being, and mental disorders, while emphasizing cultural influences on adult development, aging, transgenerational relationships, and elder care—with specific comparisons between Italy and the U.S. A special focus is placed on social roles, relationships, and the complexities of aging in today's rapidly evolving world, along with the risk and resilience factors that influence the psychophysical health of older adults. Students will also examine therapeutic and rehabilitative practices in nursing homes, including the issue of elder abuse. Throughout the course, students will engage in hands-on learning through real-world case studies, class discussions, guest speakers, and course-related trips.

CREDITS: 3 credits

CONTACT HOURS: 45 hours

LANGUAGE OF INSTRUCTION: English

PREREQUISITES: One previous undergraduate course in psychology

ADDITIONAL COST: None

METHOD OF PRESENTATION:

- Lectures
- In-class role plays and simulations
- Group and individual work
- Class discussions and debate
- Guest speakers

REQUIRED WORK AND FORM OF ASSESSMENT:

- Class engagement – 10%
- Homework Assignments – 10%
- Midterm exam – 20%
- Group project – 30%
- Final exam – 30%

Class engagement

Students are assessed based on their level of engagement, proactive participation in class discussions, and contributions to in-class activities.

Homework assignments

Two brief (500-700 word) comparative analyses of course readings that critically analyze and connect the two readings. These analyses will be prepared in groups of no more than 4 students and presented in class (for 5-7 minutes). Groups will be asked to explore real-world applications and highlight thematic links in their presentations and to conclude their remarks by posing a provocative question that will open a brief class discussion.

Midterm exam

The written exam will consist of four open-ended essay questions, each worth 25 points. It will assess students' comprehension and ability to apply material covered in class up to that point.



Group project

Students will work in groups of four or five to investigate aging conditions in the United States. Each group will choose a specific U.S. state and conduct comparative research to analyze similarities and differences with Italy in the following areas:

- The size of the elderly population
- The intersection of aging with race, ethnicity, gender, and socio-economic class
- Socio-economic challenges faced by older adults
- Living and health conditions, household arrangements, and health status
- Access to healthcare, with a focus on nursing care and long-term residential facilities

The findings from each group will be presented in class through a PowerPoint presentation developed by the students. The presentation should be timed to last a duration of 15 minutes.

Final exam

This written exam will comprise 4 open-ended essay questions, each accounting for 25 points. It will cover the material presented and discussed in class during the period from the Midterm Exam to the end of the course.

LEARNING OUTCOMES:

By the end of the course students will be able to:

- Identify and apply relevant theories and key concepts of the biopsychosocial-cultural model and adult and elderly attachment characteristics.
- Describe the characteristics of key social roles and the dynamics of social, contextual, and individual relationships in adult populations.
- Outline and evaluate strategies for promoting socialization and well-being in elderly populations.
- Assess elderly vulnerabilities, age-related risks, resilience factors, and the approaches to treating neurocognitive, mood, and behavioral disorders, with a special focus on non-pharmacological approaches.

ATTENDANCE POLICY:

As a member of our class community, you are expected to be present and on time every day. Attending class has an impact on your learning and academic success. For the reason, the IES Abroad Milan attendance policy allows for the following number of absences, which are intended to be used for physical and mental health reasons:

- THREE (3) absences in each Italian language course,
- **TWO (2) absences in each Area Studies course,**
- ONE (1) absence in each seminar course or course meeting 1 day a week,
- ZERO (0) absences in each course of individual music instruction.

Every absence beyond this allowance will automatically result in a penalty of 2 percentage points off the final grade. **SEVEN (7) absences will result in a failing grade** in Italian language and Area Studies courses. **FOUR (4) absences** will result in a failing grade in seminar or 1-day-a-week courses. Failure to attend a scheduled exam, test, quiz, or presentation will automatically result in an F grade on that assessment.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY CODE: Students are expected to abide by the **IES Abroad Code of Academic Integrity**. All work submitted by a student for academic credit should constitute the student's own original work. Any work submitted for academic credit may be subject to review by a textual similarity detection service for the detection of plagiarism and AI usage.

COURSE CONTENT:

Session	Content	Assignments and Readings
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Week 1 Session 1	Introduction to the course and course objectives	
Week 1 Session 2	The Biopsychosocial cultural model in adult and elderly development - What is the Biopsychosocial cultural model? - Factors in Adult Development and Aging	- Borrell-Carrió, F., Suchman, A. L., & Epstein, R. M. (2004). The biopsychosocial model 25 years later: principles, practice, and scientific inquiry. <i>The Annals of Family Medicine</i>, 2(6), 576-582 (6 pages) - Tripathi, A., Das, A., & Kar, S. K. (2019). Biopsychosocial model in contemporary psychiatry: Current validity and future prospects. <i>Indian journal of psychological medicine</i>, 41(6), 582-585 (3 pages)
Week 2 Session 3	Introduction to lifespan psychology - Overview of Lifespan Psychology - Theories of Lifespan Development - Forms of Development Across the Lifespan	- Kornadt, A. E., Kessler, E. M., Wurm, S., Bowen, C. E., Gabrian, M., & Klusmann, V. (2020). Views on ageing: A lifespan perspective. <i>European Journal of Ageing</i>, 17, 387-401. (4 pages) - Whitbourne, S. K., & Whitbourne, S. B. (2020) Adult Development and Aging: Biopsychosocial Perspectives, EMEA Edition, 7th Edition. Wiley Publishers Chapt. 2, pp 33-56 (23 pages)
Week 2 Session 4	Attachment theory in the adult and aging populations (I) Overview of attachment theory	Fraley, R. C. (2019). Attachment in adulthood: Recent developments, emerging debates, and future directions. <i>Annual review of psychology</i>, 70, 401-422. (21 pages)
Week 3 Session 5	Attachment theory in the adult and aging populations (II) Adult attachment styles	Fraley, R. C., & Roisman, G. I. (2019). The development of adult attachment styles: four lessons. <i>Current opinion in psychology</i>, 25, 26-30. (4 pages)
Week 3 Session 6	Social roles and relationships (I) - Social Roles in Adulthood and across the lifespan - Theories of Social Roles and Aging	Whitbourne, S. K., & Whitbourne, S. B. (2020) Adult Development and Aging: Biopsychosocial Perspectives, EMEA Edition, 7th Edition. Wiley Publishers Chapt. 9 pp 246-273 (27 pages)
Week 4 Session 7	Social roles and relationships (II) - Relationship Dynamics and Aging - Social Roles and Well-Being in Older Adults	Whitbourne, S. K., & Whitbourne, S. B. (2020) Adult Development and Aging: Biopsychosocial Perspectives, EMEA Edition, 7th Edition. Wiley Publishers Chapt. 9 pp 246-273 (27 pages)

Week 4 Session 8	Mental health in the adult and the elderly • Mental Health Challenges in Adulthood • The role of personality and coping mechanisms • Mental Health in the Elderly	• Reynolds, C.F., Jeste D.V., Permindar S., et al (2022) Mental health care for older adults: recent advances and new directions in clinical practice and research <i>World Psychiatry</i> 21(3) pp 336-363 (27 pages)
Week 5 Session 9	Mental disorders in the adults and the aging populations • Risk factors • Depression and anxiety in later life • Mental health and the impact of physical decline	• Clark, L. A., Cuthbert, B., Lewis-Fernández, R., Narrow, W. E., & Reed, G. M. (2017). Three approaches to understanding and classifying mental disorder: ICD-11, DSM-5, and the National Institute of Mental Health's Research Domain Criteria (RDoC). <i>Psychological Science in the Public Interest</i>, 18(2), 72-145. (73 pages)
Week 5 Session 10	Personality Development • Theories of Personality Development in Adulthood • Changes in Personality • Cross-Cultural Considerations in Personality Development	• Costa Jr, P. T., McCrae, R. R., & Löckenhoff, C. E. (2019). Personality across the life span. <i>Annual review of psychology</i>, 70, 423-448. (25 pages) • Whitbourne, S. K., & Whitbourne, S. B. (2020) Adult Development and Aging: Biopsychosocial Perspectives, EMEA Edition, 7th Edition. Wiley Publishers Chapt. 8. pp 217-244 (27 pages)
Week 6 Session 11	Personality disorders • Definition and understanding of personality disorders • Classification and types of personality disorders	• Ekselius, L. (2018). Personality disorder: a disease in disguise. <i>Upsala journal of medical sciences</i>, 123(4), 194-204. (8 pages) • Grapsas, S., Brummelman, E., Back, M. D., & Denissen, J. J. (2020). The "why" and "how" of narcissism: A process model of narcissistic status pursuit. <i>Perspectives on Psychological Science</i>, 15(1), 150-172. (22 pages) • Penders, K. A., Peeters, I. G., Metsemakers, J. F., & Van Alphen, S. P. (2020). Personality disorders in older adults: A review of epidemiology, assessment, and treatment. <i>Current Psychiatry Reports</i>, 22, 1-14. (14 pages)
Week 6 Session 12	Course-related trip: visit to an adult outpatient center	
Week 7 Session 13	New approaches to transgenerational relationships • Transgenerational relationships and family dynamics • Attachment theory and its implications for transgenerational relationships	• Gavazzi, S. M., & Lim, J. Y. (2023). Family development theory. In <i>Families with Adolescents: Bridging the Gaps Between Theory, Research, and Practice</i>, pp. 25-34 (9 pages) • Van Assche, L., Van de Ven, L., Vandenbulcke, M., & Luyten, P. (2020). Ghosts from the past? The

	The role of cultural values and norms in shaping transgenerational interactions	association between childhood interpersonal trauma, attachment and anxiety and depression in late life. <i>Aging & Mental Health</i>, 24(6), 898-905. (7 pages)
Week 7 Session 14	Group Project Presentations	
Week 8 Session 15	The process of adjustment Risk and protection factors of adjustment disorder in the elderly	Zamora-Bengasa B., Sesmero-Alvarez S., Del Yerro-Alvarez M.J., Aguera-Ortiz L.F., Lopez-Alvarez J. (2023) "Elderly patients with adaptive disorder diagnosis in psychogeriatry interconsultation: clinical profile and therapeutic approach." <i>Acta Esp Psiquiatr</i> 1; 51 82, pp 46-55 (9 pages)
Week 8 Session 16	Cognitive abilities and cognitive deterioration in the elderly - Key cognitive changes in older adults - Cognitive reserve, deterioration, and decline	- Balogh, K., & Wong, R. Y. (2017). Twelve tips for assessing and managing mild cognitive impairment and major neurocognitive disorder in older people. <i>British Columbia Medical Journal</i>, 59(3). pp 158-164 (6 pages) - Grodstein, F., James, B. D., Chen, Y., Capuano, A. W., Power, M. C., Bennett, D. A., ... & Barnes, L. L. (2024). Identification of Dementia in Medicare Claims Compared to Rigorous Clinical Assessments in African Americans. <i>The Journals of Gerontology: Series A</i>, 79(1): 1272-1278 (6 pages) - McDonald, W. M. (2017). Overview of neurocognitive disorders. <i>Focus</i>, 15(1), 4-12. (8 pages)
Week 9 Session 17	Health and well-being in the elderly - The distinction between aging and disease - The impact of physical factors on health and well-being	- Boeder, J., & Tse, D. C. (2021). Measuring self-perceptions of aging: Differences between measures when predicting health outcomes. <i>The Journals of Gerontology: Series B</i>, 76(5), 825-835. (10 pages) - Kaur, D et. al. (2019). Nutritional interventions for elderly and considerations for the development of geriatric foods. <i>Current aging science</i>, 12(1), 15-27. (12 pages)
Week 9 Session 18	The institutionalized elderly: care and re-socialization (I) - The need for institutionalized care in aging populations - The psychological impact of institutionalization - Re-socialization and Community Reintegration	Bosch-Farré, C., Malagón-Aguilera, M. C., Ballester-Ferrando, D., Bertran-Noguer, C., Bonmatí-Tomás, A., Gelabert-Vilella, S., & Juvinyà-Canal, D. (2020). Healthy ageing in place: enablers and barriers from the perspective of the elderly. A qualitative study. <i>International journal of environmental</i>

		<i>research and public health</i>, 17(18), pp 1-24 (24 pages) • de Medeiros, M. M. D. et. al (2020). Does the institutionalization influence elderly's quality of life? A systematic review and meta-analysis. <i>BMC geriatrics</i>, 20, 1-25. (24 pages) • Soumya Raj, K., Anagha Raj, M., & Amulya, N. (2020). Level of stress and coping strategies among institutionalised and non-institutionalised elderly. <i>Indian J. Public Health</i>, 11(03), 637-642 (5 pages)
Week 10 Session 19	The institutionalized elderly: conventional and non-pharmacological therapies (II) • Conventional therapies for institutionalized elderly • Non-pharmacological therapies in elder care • Therapeutic approaches for behavioral and mood disorders	• Ambrosi, C., Zaiontz, C., Peragine, G., Sarchi, S., & Bona, F. (2019). Randomized controlled study on the effectiveness of animal-assisted therapy on depression, anxiety, and illness perception in institutionalized elderly. <i>Psychogeriatrics</i>, 19(1), 55-64. (9 pages) • Douglas, S., James, I., & Ballard, C. (2004). Non-pharmacological interventions in dementia. <i>Advances in psychiatric treatment</i>, 10(3), 171-177. (6 pages) • Santagata, F., Massaia, M., & D'Amelio, P. (2021). The doll therapy as a first line treatment for behavioral and psychologic symptoms of dementia in nursing homes residents: a randomized, controlled study. <i>BMC geriatrics</i>, 21, 1-9. (8 pages)
Week 11 Session 20	Elder abuse • Forms of elder abuse • Risk factors and consequences • Identifying elder abuse	• Corbi, G. et. al (2019). Elder abuse: perception and knowledge of the phenomenon by healthcare workers from two Italian hospitals. <i>Internal and Emergency Medicine</i>, 14, 549-555. (6 pages) • Storey, J. E. (2020). Risk factors for elder abuse and neglect: A review of the literature. <i>Aggression and violent behavior</i>, 50 (32 pages) • Yunus, R. M., Hairi, N. N., & Choo, W. Y. (2019). Consequences of elder abuse and neglect: A systematic review of observational studies. <i>Trauma, Violence, & Abuse</i>, 20(2), 197-213. (16 pages)
Week 11 Session 21	Course-related trip: nursing home visit	
Week 12 Session 22	Course recap and review	

Week 12 Session 23	Final exam	

COURSE-RELATED TRIPS:

- Visit to an adult outpatient center
- Nursing home visit

REQUIRED READINGS:

- Ambrosi, C., Zaiontz, C., Peragine, G., Sarchi, S., & Bona, F. (2019). Randomized controlled study on the effectiveness of animal-assisted therapy on depression, anxiety, and illness perception in institutionalized elderly. *Psychogeriatrics*, 19(1), 55-64.
- Balogh, K., & Wong, R. Y. (2017). Twelve tips for assessing and managing mild cognitive impairment and major neurocognitive disorder in older people. *British Columbia Medical Journal*, 59(3).
- Boeder, J., & Tse, D. C. (2021). Measuring self-perceptions of aging: Differences between measures when predicting health outcomes. *The Journals of Gerontology: Series B*, 76(5), 825-835.
- Borrell-Carrió, F., Suchman, A. L., & Epstein, R. M. (2004). The biopsychosocial model 25 years later: principles, practice, and scientific inquiry. *The Annals of Family Medicine*, 2(6), 576-582.
- Bosch-Farré, C., Malagón-Aguilera, M. C., Ballester-Ferrando, D., Bertran-Noguer, C., Bonmatí-Tomás, A., Gelabert-Vilella, S., & Juvinyà-Canal, D. (2020). Healthy ageing in place: enablers and barriers from the perspective of the elderly. A qualitative study. *International journal of environmental research and public health*, 17(18), 6451.
- Corbi, G., Grattagliano, I., Sabbà, C., Fiore, G., Spina, S., Ferrara, N., & Campobasso, C. P. (2019). Elder abuse: perception and knowledge of the phenomenon by healthcare workers from two Italian hospitals. *Internal and Emergency Medicine*, 14, 549-555.
- Costa Jr, P. T., McCrae, R. R., & Löckenhoff, C. E. (2019). Personality across the life span. *Annual review of psychology*, 70, 423-448.
- de Medeiros, M. M. D., Carletti, T. M., Magno, M. B., Maia, L. C., Cavalcanti, Y. W., & Rodrigues-Garcia, R. C. M. (2020). Does the institutionalization influence elderly's quality of life? A systematic review and meta-analysis. *BMC geriatrics*, 20, 1-25.
- Douglas, S., James, I., & Ballard, C. (2004). Non-pharmacological interventions in dementia. *Advances in psychiatric treatment*, 10(3), 171-177.
- Ekselius, L. (2018). Personality disorder: a disease in disguise. *Uppsala journal of medical sciences*, 123(4), 194-204.
- Fraley, R. C. (2019). Attachment in adulthood: Recent developments, emerging debates, and future directions. *Annual review of psychology*, 70, 401-422.
- Fraley, R. C., & Roisman, G. I. (2019). The development of adult attachment styles: four lessons. *Current opinion in psychology*, 25, 26-30.
- Gavazzi, S. M., & Lim, J. Y. (2023). Family development theory. In *Families with Adolescents: Bridging the Gaps Between Theory, Research, and Practice* (pp. 25-34). Cham: Springer International Publishing.
- Grapsas, S., Brummelman, E., Back, M. D., & Denissen, J. J. (2020). The "why" and "how" of narcissism: A process model of narcissistic status pursuit. *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, 15(1), 150-172.
- Grodstein, F., James, B. D., Chen, Y., Capuano, A. W., Power, M. C., Bennett, D. A., ... & Barnes, L. L. (2024). Identification of Dementia in Medicare Claims Compared to Rigorous Clinical Assessments in African Americans. *The Journals of Gerontology: Series A*, 79(1), 235-245.
- Kaur, D., Rasane, P., Singh, J., Kaur, S., Kumar, V., Mahato, D. K., ... & Kumar, S. (2019). Nutritional interventions for elderly and considerations for the development of geriatric foods. *Current aging science*, 12(1), 15-27.
- Kornadt, A. E., Kessler, E. M., Wurm, S., Bowen, C. E., Gabrian, M., & Klusmann, V. (2020). Views on ageing: A lifespan perspective. *European Journal of Ageing*, 17, 387-401.
- McDonald, W. M. (2017). Overview of neurocognitive disorders. *Focus*, 15(1), 4-12.

- Penders, K. A., Peeters, I. G., Metsemakers, J. F., & Van Alphen, S. P. (2020). Personality disorders in older adults: A review of epidemiology, assessment, and treatment. *Current Psychiatry Reports*, 22, 1-14.
- Reynolds, C.F., Jeste D.V., Perminder S., et al (2022) Mental health care for older adults: recent advances and new directions in clinical practice and research *World Psychiatry*, 21 (3), 336-363
- Santagata, F., Massaia, M., & D'Amelio, P. (2021). The doll therapy as a first line treatment for behavioral and psychologic symptoms of dementia in nursing homes residents: a randomized, controlled study. *BMC geriatrics*, 21, 1-9.
- Soumya Raj, K., Anagha Raj, M., & Amulya, N. (2020). Level of stress and coping strategies among institutionalised and non-institutionalised elderly. *Indian J. Public Health*, 11(03), 637.
- Storey, J. E. (2020). Risk factors for elder abuse and neglect: A review of the literature. *Aggression and violent behavior*, 50, 101339.
- Tripathi, A., Das, A., & Kar, S. K. (2019). Biopsychosocial model in contemporary psychiatry: Current validity and future prospects. *Indian journal of psychological medicine*, 41(6), 582-585.
- Van Assche, L., Van de Ven, L., Vandenbulcke, M., & Luyten, P. (2020). Ghosts from the past? The association between childhood interpersonal trauma, attachment and anxiety and depression in late life. *Aging & mental health*, 24(6), 898-905.
- Whitbourne, S. K., & Whitbourne, S. B. (2020) Adult Development and Aging: Biopsychosocial Perspectives, EMEA Edition, 7th Edition. Wiley Publishers Chapt. 2, 8; 9
- Zamora-Bengasa B., Sesmero-Alvarez S., Del Yerro-Alvarez M.J., Aguera-Ortiz L.F., Lopez-Alvarez J., Elderly patients with adaptive disorder diagnosis in psychogeriatry interconsultation: clinical profile and therapeutic approach (2023) *Acta Esp Psiquiatr* 1; 51 82) 46-55

RECOMMENDED READINGS:

- Baltes, P. B. (2019). Life-span developmental psychology: Observations on history and theory revisited. In *Developmental psychology* (pp. 79-112). Routledge.
- Clark, L. A., Cuthbert, B., Lewis-Fernández, R., Narrow, W. E., & Reed, G. M. (2017). Three approaches to understanding and classifying mental disorder: ICD-11, DSM-5, and the National Institute of Mental Health's Research Domain Criteria (RDoC). *Psychological Science in the Public Interest*, 18(2), 72-145.
- Gower, M. Second Phase Parenting: Attachment and parenting adult children. In *Safety, Danger, and Protection in the Family and Community*
- Karantzas, G. C., Romano, D., & Lee, J. (2019). Attachment and aged care: a systematic review of current research. *Current opinion in psychology*, 25, 37-46.
- Lindayani, L., Hendra, A., Juniarni, L., & Nurdina, G. (2020). Effectiveness of mindfulness based stress reduction on depression in elderly: A systematic review. *Journal Of Nursing Practice*, 4(1), 8-12.
- (pp. 195-207). Routledge.
- Southern, S., & Sullivan, R. D. (2021). Family violence in context: An intergenerational systemic model. *The Family Journal*, 29(3), 260-291.
- Shrira, A., Palgi, Y., & Diehl, M. (2022). Advancing the field of subjective views of aging: An overview of recent achievements. *Subjective views of aging: Theory, research, and practice*, 11-37.
- Valdivieso-Jiménez, G. (2018). Borderline personality disorder in the elderly: brief review. *MOJ Gerontol. Ger*, 3, 395-398.