

**Tompkins Cortland Community College**  
**Master Course Syllabus**

**Course Discipline and Number: PSYC 208**  
**Course Title: Adult Psychology**

**Year: 2023-2024**  
**Credit Hours: 3**

**Attendance Policy:** *To maintain good grades, regular attendance in class is necessary. Absence from class is considered a serious matter and absence never excuses a student from class work. It is the responsibility of all instructors to distribute reasonable attendance policies in writing during the first week of class. Students are required to comply with the attendance policy set by each of their instructors. Students are not penalized if they are unable to attend classes or participate in exams on particular days because of religious beliefs, in accordance with Chapter 161, Section 224-a of the Education Law of the State of New York. Students who plan to be absent from classroom activity for religious reasons should discuss the absence in advance with their instructors. See college catalog for more information.*

**Services for Students with Disabilities:** *It is the College's policy to provide, on an individual basis, appropriate academic adjustments for students with disabilities, which may affect their ability to fully participate in program or course activities or to meet course requirements. Students with disabilities should contact the Coordinator of Access and Equity Services, to discuss their particular need for accommodations. All course materials are available in alternate formats upon request.*

### **Course Description**

Adult development is studied from the following major perspectives of research design and methodology: theories of adult development, age divisions (young, middle, late adulthood, and old age), physiology, cognition, perception, gender roles and personality, work, physical and social/family environments. Recent developments in research and theory in the field of adult development and gerontology are discussed. Either a research paper or a summary of a primary research article is required. PSYC 208 fulfills the SUNY General Education Social Science requirement. Prerequisites: PSYC 103; MATH 090 and RDNG 116 if required by placement testing; prior completion or concurrent enrollment in ENGL 100. 3 Cr. (3 Lec.) Fall semester.

### **Course Context/Audience**

This course may be used as an elective in the Liberal Arts: Social Sciences associate degree program. The course emphasizes the following social sciences program outcomes:

Graduates of the Social Sciences program will be able to

1. Demonstrate a range of appropriate and effective written and oral communication skills that reflect social scientific analysis, reasoning, and argumentation.
2. Determine when social science information is needed and demonstrate the ability to locate, critically evaluate, and effectively use such information.
3. Apply social science research skills, methods, and theoretical principles.
4. Demonstrate an understanding of global interdependence and an appreciation of human behavior within diverse cultural contexts.

### **Basic Skills/Entry Level Expectations**

**Writing:** WC College level writing skills are required. See course co-requisites or pre-requisites.

**Math:** M2 Completed MATH 090 (if needed) - Course requires only the use of basic mathematical skills.

**Reading:** R4 Before taking this course, students must satisfactorily complete RDNG 116 or have assessment indicating that no reading course was required.

### **Course Goals**

This course will survey the major areas of the field of adult development and aging. The major perspective is from Developmental Psychology, although this course contains research and theory from Anthropology, Sociology and the

field of Gerontology. The student, upon completion of the course, will be able to: Describe research methodologies used in the field of adult development. Describe major theories of personality development during the adult years. Identify the cognitive aspects of change for adult development. Describe the development of moral judgment and the growth of meaning during the adult years. Identify aspects of gender role development in the aging process. Identify aspects of adult health, physical changes and sexuality. Describe major theories of social involvement during the adult years. Describe social aspects of family interactions and their impact on the adult. Use the American Psychological Association (APA) style of citing for in-text citations. Be an efficient searcher for information on the Internet. Both web - based searching and electronic academic data-base searching.

In addition the student will: Demonstrate a deep understanding of adult's development in the following areas: physical, cognitive, social-emotional, work, relationships, stress, death and dying and moral or spiritual development.

Develop criteria to evaluate information about adult development and related human development issues and to think critically about all information. Thinking critically about adult development/behavior has been defined as being able to: Apply a developmental framework to understand behavior Make accurate observations, descriptions, and inferences about adult development. Identify the sociohistorical, cultural contexts that influence adult development. Apply developmental concepts to enhance personal adaptation. Pursue alternative explanations to understand adult development comprehensively. Evaluate the quality of conclusions and strategies related to adult development research. Engage in perspective taking to better understand adult development. Use knowledge about adult development to improve human welfare. Demonstrate an appreciation of individual differences in adult development. Create arguments based on developmental concepts.

Understand and demonstrate the proper use of the scientific method i.e. know how research is conducted in the social sciences, be able to apply the results of research and understand the role of "skepticism" in the scientific study of human behavior.

### Course Objectives/Topics

Objective/Topic	# of Hours
Topic 1: Defining the Adult Journey: Assumptions, Definitions, and Methods As a result of reading, studying and participating in the learning activities, students should be able to 1. Explain stability/change in adulthood and demonstrate knowledge of these concepts by creating original examples of the following terms: Shared Age-Graded Changes, Cultural and Cohort Effects, Unique, Non-shared Events 2. Explain continuity in adulthood and demonstrate knowledge of these concepts by citing research results and creating original examples of the following concepts: biological explanations of continuity, behavior genetics, environmental sources of continuity 3. Define and create specific behavioral examples of the following terms: adulthood, young adulthood, middle adulthood, old age, young old, old old and oldest old, aging maturation development gain and decline, change 4. Understand and explain the uses, pros, cons and construct examples of different research designs including cross-sectional designs, longitudinal designs, sequential designs, experimental designs, quasi-experimental designs 5. Understand and create an example of the cohort effect. 6. Understand and be able to explain research methods (scientific method): choosing the subjects (sample); collecting information (data): observation, interviews, questionnaires, other standardized tests; analyzing the data: mean scores, correlations and other comparisons; discuss results; revise theory.	3 Hours
Topic: Theories of Adult Change or Development As a result of reading, studying and participating in the learning activities, the student should be able to 1. Demonstrate his/her understanding that there are a variety of theories to explain and predict adult development. 2. Use each of the following theories and the tenets of the theories to explain and predict various aspects of adult development: developmental stage theories (Erikson, Loevinger, others), Vaillant's view of adaptation in adult life, stage theories of adult change: Levinson, life course (George, Caspi, Elder), role theory, role strain, role conflict, family life stages (Duvall), transitions, life-course markers, theories of change without stages: Pearlin & Baltes' life span perspective. 3. Explain some shared flaws and weaknesses in the above theories.	3 Hours
Topic: Physical Changes in Adulthood As a result of reading, studying and participating in the learning activities the student should be able to 1. Distinguish between primary aging and secondary aging (Busse, 1987). 2. Explaining and using examples of all of the biological theories of primary aging: Oxidative Stress; DNA damage; Natural Selection; Genetic Limits; Dietary Intake. 3. Define: life span, longevity, life expectancy. 4. Describe, give examples and be able to explain the psychological effect of physical changes over adulthood: appearance, senses, muscles and bones, cardiovascular and respiratory systems, nervous system, neuro-endocrine system 5. Describe the physiological effects of physical aging on behavior and how these things might affect the person psychologically: slowing down, dexterity, balance, stamina, sleep, sexual activity 6. Summarize	3 Hours

primary changes in the body by age (by decades). 7. Discuss recurrent themes and questions: Are the changes gradual? Which changes represent primary and secondary aging? Explain individual differences in aging patterns and rate 8. Calculate his/her longevity.	
Topic: Health and Health Habits As a result of reading, studying and participating in the learning activities, the student should be able to 1. Explain overall age patterns in health and disease. 2. Explicate the causes of death (mortality). 3. Explicating the general pattern of physical illness with age (morbidity). 4. Understand heart disease, cancer, senile dementia, Alzheimer's disease and the psychological effect these diseases may have on adults of all ages. 5. Clearly explain age changes in mental health, particularly, depression and anxiety. 6. Understand and giving specific behavioral examples of individual differences in health and disease especially in regard to gender differences, social class, racial and ethnic differences, personal health habits and risk behavior, and personality differences and health.	3 Hours
Topic: Cognitive Changes in Adulthood As a result of reading, studying and participating in the learning activities, the student should be able to 1. Discuss age changes in overall intelligence during adulthood, specifically: meanings of consistency and change, correlational consistency in IQ, consistency in absolute level of IQ scores, age changes in IQ subtests, reversing declines in intellectual abilities 2. Explain age changes in memory, define terms and cite evidence on memory changes, and reversing declines in memory abilities. 3. Explain the research on changes in problem solving ability including human factors research with older adults. 4. Describe individual differences in cognitive change: Health, genetics, demographics and Sociobiographical History, intellectual activity, physical exercise and subjective evaluation of decline. 5. Summarizing age patterns associated with cognitive change during the adult years.	4 Hours
Topic: Social Roles in Adulthood As a result of reading, studying and participating in the learning activities, the student should be able to 1. Describe contemporary gender roles and stereotypes in adulthood, including the content of gender stereotypes and the sources/origins of these stereotypes. 2. Describe and give examples of social roles in early, middle and late adulthood: leaving home, becoming a spouse/partner. becoming a parent, the "empty nest", gender roles at mid-life, becoming a grandparent, caring for an aging parent, the generational squeeze, living alone and becoming a care receiver. 3. Describe the research on social roles in various types of families, e.g. lifelong singles, the childless, divorced adults, remarried adults and explain the effect of variations in timing of these events and roles. 4. Show an awareness of the match or mismatch between personal qualities and role demands and the effect of variations in timing. 5. Summarize age changes and social roles throughout the adult life-span.	4 Hours
Topic: Development of Relationships in Adulthood As a result of reading, studying and participating in the learning activities, the student should be able to 1. Understand the underlying nature of adult relationships by applying the following theories to adult behavior: attachment, love, and the convoy model 2. Summarize the research on intimate partnerships in adulthood, especially the research results on choosing a partner, cohabitation relationships, creating a relationship: the role of attachment, partnerships over time, good and bad marriages and gay and lesbian partnerships. 3. Describe the research on relationships with other family members including general patterns of family interaction, parent-child relationships and relationships with siblings. 4. Apply the research results on adult friendships to real life behavior, including defining friendship, choosing friends, friendship patterns over adulthood and individual differences in friendship patterns.	4 Hours
Topic: Work and Work Roles in Adulthood As a result of reading, studying and participating in the learning activities the student should be able to: 1. Describe the importance of work in adulthood: Super's theory of career; gender differences in career patterns; impact of different career patterns for men and women. 2. Explain the research results on how adults choose an occupation including gender effects, family influences, and the role personality and genetics plays in this process. 3. Describe the general age trends in work experience over the adult years; especially be able to cite research results on the effectiveness of retraining, job satisfaction, job commitment, job performance and career advancement. 4. Describe the research on combining work and personal life: work and the individual; work and marriage; work and parenthood; work and care giving for adult family members; household labor; juggling jobs and personal lives. 5. Summarize the research results on retirement including: preparation for retirement, the timing of retirement, reasons for retirement, women and retirement, the decision not to retire, and the effects of retirement.	3 Hours
Topic: Personality Stability and Change As a result of reading, studying and participating in the learning activities the student should be able to: 1. Cite the research results on stability and change in personality across adulthood. 2. Summarize the research results on changes in personality from early to middle adulthood and changes from middle to late adulthood. 3. Explain the changes in	3 Hours

personality over adulthood by understanding the methodological explanations, role changes as explanations and theoretical explanations of personality change: genetics; Erikson, identity, intimacy and generativity; Gutmann and Maslow's theories; self-determination theory and positive psychological functioning. 4. Summarize the research on stability/ change in personality over the adult years.	
Topic: Growth of Meaning As a result of reading, studying and participating in the learning activities, the student should be able to 1. Demonstrate an understanding of why there is a chapter on the growth of meaning. 2. Explain how meaning systems change with age. 3. Summarize how one studies meaning systems. 4. Explain the research results on religious participation over adulthood. 5. Define and apply Kohlberg's theory of the development of moral reasoning and Fowler's theory of faith development. 6. Define and apply Kegan's synthesizing idea and the stages of mystical experience. 7. Explain the process of transition.	3 Hours
Topic: Stress and Resistance As a result of reading, studying, and participating in the learning activities, the student should be able to 1. Define stress: response-oriented theories, stimulus-oriented theories, interactionist approaches and a combined view of stress in adult life. 2. Describe the research results of the effects of stressful experiences on adult functioning, e.g., physical illness, psychological disorders, possible positive effects of stress. 3. Describe individual differences in stress response e.g. stress and age, stress and gender, and stress and discrimination. 4. Explain the research on resistance resources in response to stress, i.e., social support, a sense of personal control, coping behaviors and other resistance resources. 5. Apply the basic principles to widowhood, divorce, parental bereavement and relocation in adulthood.	3 Hours
Topic: Themes of Adult Development As a result of reading, studying and participating in the learning activities the student should be able to: 1. Describe what developmental psychology knows about each of the age periods and highlight the key aspects of that age: Young Adulthood: from 18 to 25, Early Adulthood: from 25 to 40, Middle Adulthood: from 40 to 65, the Biological Clock, the Social Clock, the Mid-life Crisis: Fact or Myth?, Late Adulthood: from 65 to 75, Disengagement in Old Age: Another Myth?, Late, Late Adulthood: from 75 until death.	3 Hours
Topic: Final Stage: Death and Dying As a result of reading, studying and participating in the learning activities the student should be able to: 1. Detail the research results on how most adults view the meaning of death. 2. Summarize research results on age differences and other predictors of fear and anxiety of death. 3. Explain how adults prepare for death. 4. Discuss the process of dying from the following perspectives: Kubler-Ross's stages of dying, an assessment of Kubler-Ross's stages, farewells and individual adaptations to dying. 5. Explain where death occurs. 6. Discuss Physician-assisted suicide. 7. Summarize the research on after death rituals and grieving, including ritual mourning, funerals, ceremonies and the process of grieving.	3 Hours
Topic: The Successful Journey: Individual Differences in Adult Development As a result of reading, studying and participating in the learning activities the student should be able to: 1. Describe the variations in successful adult development including research on overall life satisfaction and other measures of life success. 2. Apply the (textbook's; Helen Bee) model of adult growth and development including trajectories and pathways.	3 Hours

### General Education Goals - Critical Thinking & Social/Global Awareness

CRITICAL THINKING OUTCOMES	HOW DOES THE COURSE ADDRESS THE OUTCOMES (Include required or recommended instructional resources, strategies, learning activities, assignments, etc., that must or could be used to address the goal/outcomes)
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<p>Students will be able to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ develop meaningful questions to address problems or issues.</li> <li>➤ gather, interpret, and evaluate relevant sources of information.</li> <li>➤ reach informed conclusions and solutions.</li> <li>➤ consider analytically the viewpoints of self and others.</li> </ul>	<p>In course projects and discussions, students will be asked to evaluate and apply different theories of adult development to their own experience and the experience of others in a range of stages of adulthood</p> <p>Students will be asked to read and critically evaluate at least one research article related to adult development.</p>
<b>SOCIAL/GLOBAL AWARENESS OUTCOMES</b>	<b>HOW DOES THE COURSE ADDRESS THE OUTCOMES</b> (Include required or recommended instructional resources, strategies, learning activities, assignments, etc., that must or could be used to address the goal/outcomes)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Students will begin to understand how their lives are shaped by the complex world in which they live.</li> <li>➤ Students will understand that their actions have social, economic and environmental consequences.</li> </ul>	<p>Cross cultural differences in social roles, death and dying, work and work roles as well as other areas of adult development will be included in the curriculum.</p>

### Instructional Methods

Lecture  
 Small group projects  
 Media and film and other literary sources of the professors own choosing  
 Interviews

### Methods of Assessment/Evaluation

Method	% Course Grade
Class projects/discussions	20-35%
Essay Midtem/Final exam	10-30%
Research paper or summary and evaluation of a primary research article	5-20%
Quizzes	20-40%
Writing assignments	20-40%

### Text(s)

The Journey of Adulthood, Helen L. Bee & Barbara R. Bjorklund, current edition. Prentice Hall.  
 This book is used for the Adult Development and Aging course at Cornell University.

### Bibliography

see annotated bibliography in any Adult Development and Aging textbook for recent articles and books

Journals:  
 Developmental Psychology

Aging

Current Directions in Psych Science

The Gerontologist

Journal of Marriage and the Family

International Journal of Aging and Human Development

### Other Learning Resources

<b>Audiovisual:</b>
Many related videos available through Films on Demand
The Gin Game” Pulitzer prize winning play about an elderly couple in a Nursing home.
<b>Electronic:</b>
<a href="http://www.hope.edu/academic/psychology/335/webrep2/index.html">http://www.hope.edu/academic/psychology/335/webrep2/index.html</a> ; this is a recent summary of research in the field of adult development.
<b>Other:</b>
No resources specified